

Among Friends

Fall 2007



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

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Please read: All submissions for the Spring Issue 2008 need to be in the hands of the editor NO LATER THAN April 20, 2008. 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.

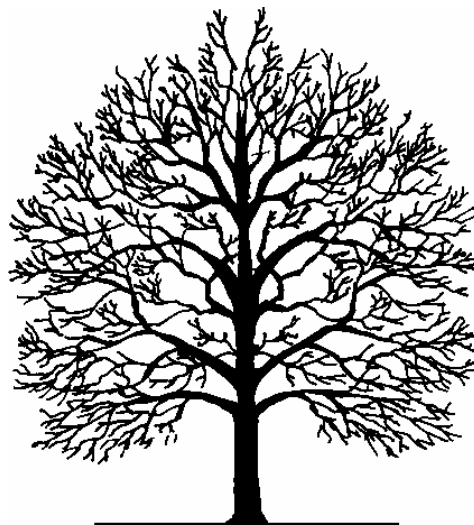
Giving to IYM

The Finance committee has developed a Practices and Procedures resource page for IYM committees and officers. Some of the documents were recently updated, and at Continuing Committee were provided in paper form to Monthly Meetings.

<http://iy.quaker.org/programs/finance/>

On this web page you will find:

- **How to Give to IYM**
- **Policy on Ad hoc Collections**
- **Tips on Planning Retreats**
- **Policy on Travel Reimbursement**
- **Forms for Paying Outside Vendors**
- **Procedure for Making Conference Calls**



To prevent people from “harvesting” email address from our web version of *Among Friends*, all email addresses are written using © rather than @.

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Gatherings: Friends World Committee for Consultation



IYM members attend FWCC Triennial in Dublin. Top row: Greg Woods, David Shiner, Sandra Tamari. Bottom row: Dorothy Day, Nancy Wallace, Dawn Amos, Elizabeth Mertic.

Inspiring FWCC Triennial in Dublin

By Nancy Wallace and David Shiner

The 22nd Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) Triennial took place in Dublin, Ireland in mid-August. It was a wonderful event, as such triennials always are. The special effort undertaken by Ireland Yearly Meeting to insure our comfort was superb, and the fellowship we shared there was warm and deep.

The theme of the triennial was “Finding the Prophetic Voice in Our Time.” Many of the workshops and sermons were organized around this theme. While we can’t say that we

definitively found the prophetic voice, our speakers and discussions helped bring us closer to being able to say what such a voice should say to contemporary Quakers, and to the world.

While there are many important events at every Triennial, the core of the gathering is the “worship and sharing” group. Each worship and sharing group consists of 12-15 Friends from all over the world who meet daily during the triennial. Having everything “gel” for such groups can be challenging, given that unprogrammed Friends from the USA and Britain are brought together with Friends from the Evangelical tradition in Africa and South America, not to mention all the “flavors” of

Quakerism in between. Still, by the end of our sessions (in separate groups), we felt deeply moved by the power of such an incredible exchange between everyone present. As one African Friend said, what we have in common is that we are a family. It really does feel like a family when we meet in these sessions.

At the end of each day we came together for Reflections. Someone read a passage from the Bible in their own language, as long as the language wasn't English, Spanish, or French (the official Triennial languages). The reading was followed by waiting worship. This was a wonderful 15 minute quiet period before bedtime.

The Dublin triennial marked the 70th anniversary of FWCC, which was founded in 1937. On the last night there was a session called "Were you there?" Friends rose to indicate that they had attended earlier FWCC events back to inception. This list of events began with the triennial in New Zealand in 2004, for which both of us (among many others) rose, and continued in reverse chronological order back to the very beginning of FWCC. Each event going back to 1952 had been attended by at least one Friend sitting in the auditorium, although for several of the events it was only one person. In addition, several Friends had family members who had attended the original event 70 years ago. One of the more humorous moments was when the organizers of "Were you there?" referred to a particular event but didn't know where it had taken place. The one person who had attended let them know it was in Sweden.

Later that same evening, a group of adult young Friends did a skit from the FWCC plenary event in 2077, 70 years from now! It was very funny and well received.

Which leads to why the event in 2077 will be a plenary event rather than another triennial. For financial reasons, FWCC will no longer sponsor

a triennial in three years, but rather will have a World Conference during 2012, planned for Nairobi, Kenya. This should be a very interesting world gathering in a very appropriate location. There are now more Friends living in Africa than in all of North America. It is the fastest growing area for Quakers, and they appear to be well aware of their heritage. Some of the stories they related at the triennial are reminiscent of those undertaken by George Fox as related in his journal. They are looking forward to hosting Friends from around the world, and are keen to do so as brilliantly as the Irish did in Dublin.

FWCC Triennial Through a Newcomer's Eyes

By Dawn Amos

I was blessed and honored to serve, along with Greg Woods, as IYM's representative to the Friends World Committee for Consultation Triennial this past August. While we did serve, as part of the decision-making body and by bringing input and discernment to the working group on Young Friends, in fact this gathering served as a deep personal and spiritual gift from IYM to me. I remain awestruck at the intense experience and education IYM Friends have provided for me by sending me to Dublin.

I roomed with four women, from Britain, Canada and Japan. My worship group included English-speaking Friends from Uganda, Kenya, Japan, Europe and North America – younger Friends to elder Friends, men and women. I reunited joyfully with familiar Friends from Latin America, exercising my pidgin Spanish.

Unlike the sad experience of the 2004 Triennial, visas were obtained for all representatives to attend this year, so there were over forty African Friends at the conference. Among these was Joseph Shamala, the pastor of the Kakamega Friends Church who helps organize the Friends Peace Center near Kakamega,



Dawn Amos' worship group at FWCC Triennial in Dublin. Dawn Amos center front.

Kenya, where my family worked in a service project this summer. I felt a special connection to western Kenya Friends from my work camp experience, and introduced myself to as many Kenyan reps as I could, in part to thank them for Kenyan hospitality.

The great majority of world Friends practice their faith with a different language than mine, a Christian and even evangelical language. In the U.S., there have been those who wounded with this language, condemning and advocating violence in the name of the Prince of Peace. For many years I have tried to heal from these wounds and open my heart to the deep fulfillment and love expressed by Christian Friends. Being an IYM rep to FWCC has been a crucial opportunity to develop this openness. I will say, though, that I was severely tested at the Triennial.

The conference began on Saturday, and I

remained open and accepting until Friday. Perhaps living for days in a spiritual community made me vulnerable. The last two of the daily plenary addresses were by evangelical Friends, and during the final one I became so frustrated that I thought I might leap over the railing of the auditorium risers, just to escape. I found myself in the Pastoral Care office, giving myself permission to vent my spleen upon a patient Australian Friend, complaining about "self-righteous exhortations." I don't know exactly what set me off, but I will read the transcript to see if it was just the intense context of the address that nearly sent me over the edge. I am also very certain that the speaker is a fine and loving Friend, so this experience was more about my hearing than his speaking.

In reading the transcripts of the earlier addresses, I can see now that what resonated with me was the pain of being called to prophesy as a community in an often-deaf

world. I get so distracted by the world's suffering, that I myself become deaf to the message that the Kingdom of God is always around us, that God is always available to us. The two introductory messages at the Triennial, by Doreen Dowd and Marion McNaughton, are online at <http://www.fwcctriennialtranscripts.blogspot.com/> and I think you will really enjoy them. Call me at 866-262-1625 if you would like to receive a paper copy.

Friends, I can never thank you enough for sending me to the Triennial. I hope you will ask me about it and about FWCC's work all over the world. IYM has been a faithful supporter of this organization, which speaks volumes about our yearly meeting's openness to the ministry and Light of very different Friends.

Triennial: Learning about our Quaker World Family

By Sandra Tamari

The committee supporting the work of the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) in New York asked me to represent them at the Triennial in Dublin this summer. I have served on the QUNO committee since 2005 when the committee was restructured under a new memorandum of understanding between FWCC and AFSC relating to the QUNO-NY work. Our committee represents the diversity of the Quaker experience with five of our ten members appointed by the FWCC World Office and five of us nominated by AFSC. I have IYM's dear Carol Bartles (who was serving on AFSC nominating committee) to thank for my inclusion in this amazing work. My meetings at Quaker House in New York were my first exposure to the wider world of Quakers. I have developed amazing friendships with evangelical Quakers from the United States and Africa. I have become acquainted with the concerns of Friends in Europe and the Middle East. I have been amazed by the breadth of knowledge our

community holds and our long tradition of addressing international injustices through the mechanisms of the United Nations. It has been a humbling honor to serve QUNO.

When asked to attend the Triennial, I was immediately doubtful of my ability to represent the committee. I am the youngest member of the group both chronologically and as a member of the Society of Friends. (I've been a member of St. Louis Monthly Meeting only since 2005, after attending for several years.) My fellow committee members assured me that they thought I was ready to represent the group and sent me to Dublin. How grateful I am for their decision and for the opportunity.

Reflecting on the experience, I realize that part of the reason I was asked to attend Triennial was to learn about how QUNO's work relates to the Quaker world family. I was able to meet with Quakers from around the world and talk to them about their hopes and dilemmas. With this knowledge I am in a much better position to advise the staff of QUNO on future directions for program work. I can see the face of Henry, my new friend from eastern Kenya and fellow Triennial-goer, telling me about his experiences educating young, desperate Kenyan men who are caught up in a culture of violence and who express their worthiness by bearing weapons. Henry is using alternatives to violence techniques to convince these young men to lay down their arms. No longer will international discussions of small weapons disarmament be merely an academic discussion. I see Henry's face and hear his voice. His words now inform my being and heart on this issue.

The Triennial organizers scheduled several interest group forums that provided smaller venues for discussion on all kinds of issues of concern to Friends ranging from sharing of world resources to the Bible on homosexuality. I participated in an interest group on the work of QUNO.

Representatives from the staff of both the Geneva and New York offices were in attendance, including David Atwood, director of QUNO-Geneva and interim director at QUNO-New York, Rachel Brett, UN representative in Geneva, Jill Terrell, UN representative in New York and co-clerk of the QUNO Geneva committee, Michael Eccles, Britain Yearly Meeting. We all were surprised by the high turnout. We crowded into our small classroom in Kings College and talked for nearly two hours on Quaker work at the United Nations, the value of “quiet diplomacy,” and the amazing power of listening to all sides of a conflict with openness. The participants were deeply committed to the work of QUNO and repeatedly expressed appreciation for the QUNO staff and concern for their spiritual well-being as they engage in difficult work. We QUNO representatives walked away with a renewed sense of how valued our efforts are to the world community of Friends.

In a foolhardy moment, I committed to co-facilitating one of the worship and sharing groups at Triennial. Despite initial misgivings about how to deal with the cultural and religious difference among us, our group developed overwhelming trust and love over the course of the week. I have tears in my eyes as I think about my circle of Friends who came from Kenya, Japan, India, Ireland, England, and the United States. We ranged in age from 18 to 80. We cried and laughed with one another. We had beautiful voices among us and we sang in several languages. We prayed and felt God’s love for our gathering and for the world. I know that many of us feel that we have renewed joy and happiness that we carry back to our home communities.

I shared a room with five women in their teens and 20s. Needless to say, I did not get much sleep during the Triennial. Our late night

conversations taught me much about perspectives of young Friends in North America and Europe. I can confidently say that with spiritually-centered young people like my roommates, Quakerism is alive and well for the next generation.

When I asked an experienced Friend who had previously attended Triennial how I should prepare for the experience, she simply said there is no preparation, but the experience will change you forever. I was unaware of how true this statement was. I am very thankful to AFSC and QUNO for the blessed opportunity to experience Triennial.

If you’d like more information on how the Quaker United Nations Office represents you at the UN, please see www.quno.org or contact me at sandratamari@hotmail.com or 618-288-8986, and I’d be happy to talk with you.

FWCC Triennial Reflections

By Greg Woods

I loved my experience at the FWCC Triennial. Before I went, I didn’t know what to expect, but I assumed that it would be similar to the World Gathering of Young Friends (WGYF) and it was. One reason for the similar feelings between the two conferences was that more than a dozen participants from the WGYF attended the triennial. We and other young adult Friends met together several times during the week to decide what to do with the leftover money from the 2005 conference in Lancaster, England, because the planners wanted to release these leftover funds, so that the money could be used to help bring Young Adult Friends together, instead of sitting in bank accounts. These times together were very productive and Spirit-led as we discerned about where God is leading us and how God is calling Young Friends to gather. A lot of great ideas

flowed from these times together. In the end we decided to give the remaining funds over to the FWCC Central Committee to create an international Young Adults Friends committee with representation from all the regions. This committee could help, in many ways, to forward the vision of WGYF.

This year's Triennial theme focused on "Finding the Prophetic Voice for Our Time." Every morning we had a speaker who challenged us on this theme: "What is our voice as Quakers to the world?" They encouraged us to listen to what God was telling us to do.

The messages shared with us each morning represented the current diversity of Friends. Lizz Roe, a British Friend, spoke about trying to live her life to have as little as an ecological impact as possible and what that means for her. Bill Medlin of Indiana YM spoke about the obeying God's calling. Stephen Wamboka of Uganda YM spoke about the need to grow the Quaker church through evangelicalism.

A favorite part of my week was simply being able to talk with Friends face to face from all over the world. In my room, there were Friends from Africa, Europe, and Latin America. I enjoyed using my Spanish a couple times to converse with Friends from Latin America. Like my other activities with FWCC, I continued to learn a lot about Friends and Quakerism by talking with Friends from the different branches and different countries.

Throughout the conference as I listened to the speakers and shared fellowship with Friends from across the world, I thought about the theme in the context of my own life: "What is my Prophetic Voice?" and "Am I being obedient to God's Leading?" Currently I am in middle of a lot of transition, having just graduated from college and looking for what is next in my life. Throughout the triennial, I took

time to sit, to pray, and to listen, so I can hear what God is calling me to do next in life. I didn't receive clear answers, but I realized that I wanted to know Quakerism better, especially the diversity. During the conference a friend mentioned to me that she needed a housemate in Greensboro, NC, so currently I am living here in Greensboro, attending First Friends Church, a FUM-affiliated church, and working with their youth group alongside another Triennial participant, Sheila Hoyer. Also I serve as a Friendly Adult Presence (FAP) once a month for Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting & Association teen retreats. I am exploring the diversity of Friends here, attending different meetings for worship every week.

In the end, I think this could be our Prophetic voice for the world, if we Friends could overcome our diversity, to communicate and have fellowship with each other in everyday life, as we do at FWCC Triennials. In the past I have visited unprogrammed meetings that are within several miles of programmed and evangelical Friends churches and they do not even know about the churches or much less go there to worship. I am positive that the inverse of this is true too. Why can we break bread with other denominations through our ecumenical work, but not with our fellow Friends?

Some Impressions FWCC Triennial

By Elizabeth Mertic

For the first time ever we experimented with "real-time transcription" in the plenary sessions. A court stenographer sat at the front of the hall and keyed in the spoken words (in English) which were immediately projected onto a white screen. Those who have some hearing impairment, as well as those who may not understand the many accents of spoken English from Friends in Africa, India, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, England, Ireland, Moscow, Norway, Finland, Sweden, not to mention

the several American accents were invited to sit near the front and read what was being said. Britain Yearly Meeting has adopted this practice for their yearly meeting business sessions.

For our seven days of morning plenary worship we were blessed to hear seven different Friends' messages on our theme. Two of these messages spoke profoundly to me. The speaker on day three was Lizz Roe, an English Friend. She told of her efforts to tread more lightly on the earth and how her changed patterns have unfolded and led to more changes. She no longer travels by air. She does not own a car. She eats a vegetarian diet; grows much of her own food; and cooks it from "scratch". She makes some of her clothes and finds other clothing in second hand shops.

Day four was Excursions Day. I went to Newgrange, where we went down into a passage tomb and learned about a people who built the elaborate structures well before the pyramids of Egypt were erected. Inside the passage tomb we stood shoulder to shoulder in the very small space as we looked up at the corbelled roof. The busload of us on this excursion included Friends from all the flavors and cultures and we were all gaining something to take home with us.

On Day 5 the message came from Ken Comfort who pastors the Reedwood Friends Church in Portland, OR. Ken had asked a number of people from the northwest to assist him during this worship. Thus, we heard verses from 1st Corinthians in different translations and in the voices of young, old, male and female. Ken talked about what our lives could look like if we became fully obedient to the will of God. This particular plenary worship was very powerful for me; I felt that I was in the presence of the Holy Spirit/God as Mother/Father.

Our last evening together we gathered in the

Gatherings: Blue River Quarterly

lecture hall which had

been decorated for the celebration. There were a variety of musical and comedy offerings with a very funny skit done by young adult Friends who let us know that they have been paying attention to such matters as global warming. The skit was set in 2077 and the location was accessible only by swimming to it. With such creative responses, we from the elder generation can relax and know that future FWCC plenary gatherings are in good hands.

Gathering Joy at Blue River Quarterly By Maurine Pyle, Field Secretary

It is a little-known-fact that the Blue River runs through Indiana and not Illinois. Our own Blue River Quarterly is named for that river and reminds us of the peregrinations of 19th century Quakers from east to west. Quaker pilgrims continue to travel to quarterly meeting to be



Lilliputians capture a giant at BRQ.



Friends gather after worship at Blue River Quarterly at the lakefront chapel.

What happens at a quarterly meeting? This time we enjoyed hiking, singing, walking the labyrinth, dipping our toes in the lake, horseback riding, canoeing and kayaking, and a big bonfire with marshmallows. In between we held a friendship-building workshop, meeting for worship, and meeting for business. Jeannie Marvin of Clear Creek Meeting is the new clerk of the quarterly. For some participants from small meetings, having the chance to observe Quaker

together twice each year in the fall and spring. Perhaps the theme of this reunion could be “Shall we gather at Blue River?”

practice was enlightening. We also watched a slide show and heard a presentation from the Amos family about their summer work camp experience in Kenya for the African Great

On a sunny hot weekend in late September, 54 Quakers gathered at DuBois Center in southern Illinois to deepen their relationships as Friends. The biggest surprise was the large number of children who attended this year. There were nineteen -- babies, toddlers, elementary and middle school kids. Their voices rang out happily through the woods. The graybeard and gray-haired elders enjoyed their raucous joyful din. The majority of the youngsters came from St. Louis Meeting which is enjoying a rapid growth of young families. Children also came along from Clear Creek and Southern Illinois Friends Meeting.



Children enjoy fellowship and nature.

Lakes Initiative.

Gatherings: Illinois Yearly Meeting 2007



Attendees of Illinois Yearly Meeting 2007.

The grade school group presented a movie they made about a Holocaust story which

Right: Young Friends giving puppet show at IYM.

Below: Steve Kuhn and Emily Wills reading new published and last Harry Potter book.

depicted danger and adventure. The wee ones tie-dyed T-shirts and made sidewalk chalk pictures. They also sang the Magic Penny song for us and gave out real pennies to the audience.



Everyone is looking forward to another gathering at Camp Menno Haven in Tiskilwa next spring. Shall we gather once again at Blue River Quarterly?



Above: Sebrina Tingley and Marylou Carlson showing contentment and connecting.



Right: Ken Nurenberg and Casey Kashnig, Adult Young Friends, working on epistle.



Left: Dawn Amos and Patricia McMillen show quilt at IYM. The quilt was made by the IYM Women's Group as a gift for Women Friends in Kenya.

Gatherings: Friends General Conference '07

Praying for the Quality of Worship at The Gathering

By Mariellen Gilpin

Sue Davison, Brad Laird, Monica Tetzlaff, Sophie de la Mar, and I all went to Friends General Conference in River Falls, Wisconsin, in early July, and attended a workshop called "Rediscovering Eldering," led by Elaine Emily. I can't begin to tell you what a powerful experience it was to worship every day with a whole roomful of Friends whose calling it is to pray for the quality of worship and nurture others' spiritual lives. I will share with you a few vignettes from the workshop.

Elaine introduced the two Friends who were her spiritual nurturers during the workshop. Each morning the three of them met for worship an hour before the workshop began. The room where we met was soaked in prayer before we arrived. Both spiritual nurturers participated now and again in our discussions, but mostly they were focused on praying for us and for the quality of our worship. When we walked into the room, we fell naturally into a deep focused silence that lasted about half an hour before Elaine began to speak. That first morning when Elaine finally spoke, she smiled and said, "I can feel from the quality of the silence that you are all experienced pray-ers."

One morning we broke into pairs and took turns holding one another in the Light for a full five minutes each. We were encouraged to use whatever style of prayer we were most comfortable with. The focus person was instructed to close his or her eyes and note any impressions we received while we were being prayed for. I was the first focus person, and I dutifully closed my eyes, but not before I looked into the amazing blue eyes of Monica, my pray-er, seated across from me. My overwhelming impression

was that I was being loved, and I felt I didn't deserve this. It was an effort of will to relax into the experience and let myself be loved. Shortly I realized the love was coming to me in waves or pulses, sometimes with bursts of light.

Then it was my turn to be the pray-er, and Monica's turn to be the focus person. I thought fast, because my illness means I can't safely hold someone in the Light myself—to focus on praying for someone for a full five minutes would quickly make me hallucinate. So, I asked Jesus to hold the focus person in the Light for me, and repeated the request in various formulations, each shorter than the last, until the time was up.

Then we had an opportunity to compare impressions. I asked about the pulsing sensation, and Monica explained she had been sending love and compassion on her breath. And Monica in her turn reported that when she was focus person, she had felt she was being rocked as if in a fishing boat like those Jesus must have known. We looked at each other with amazement at this demonstration of the power of prayer to impact another. Never before had either of us known the precise instant in which we were prayed for, and never before had we focused so completely on the experience that we could receive so much information about the pray-er and her prayer. We felt the experience had been truly an intimate one; our relationship with one another was profoundly deepened and changed. We had each been loved, and we knew it in a way neither of us had ever experienced. During the group discussion, Brad warned the group we should never pray in that way for someone of the opposite sex unless there was a third person present. It was too much like falling in love. This was way more intimacy than we were ready for with someone whom we hadn't known until a few hours before.

Another day we gathered in groups of five or six; our instructions were to hold each person in the little group in the Light for a total of fifteen minutes altogether. This was difficult for me, because right after the workshop I was scheduled to

lead a group presentation devoted to promoting my book, *Discovering God as Companion*. I constantly had to rope my mind and lead it by the nose back to praying for the other people in my group. At the end I reported it had been really hard work and explained why; it turned out that another person responsible for a session immediately afterward simply hadn't tried to do the exercise. I was exhausted and yet exhilarated: the quality of the silence in that roomful of Friends all praying for one another at the same time can only be described as full of grace.

Another day we gathered in groups of three, with one person being the person with a problem, another the spiritual nurturer, and the third person observing from the point of view of the focus person's meeting. I asked to be the person with the problem, which I proceeded to air to the other two. My spiritual nurturer, Sue, helped me achieve more clarity with obvious joy to be of such service to me. And then, both Sue and Brad, the observer, volunteered to come to my second book presentation and pray me through it. I was exceedingly grateful.

And, as a matter of fact, two other Friends from the workshop also volunteered to pray my second presentation. Elaine Emily came as well, as did a number of Friends who have

written for WCTS over the years. I can't tell you what a steadying influence those five seasoned pray-ers had on me, and on the group. One of the effects of my medication is that sometimes when I'm talking off the cuff, a critical word or phrase simply escapes me, and I stand there with egg on my face while I struggle to communicate with some other phrase than the perfect one which escaped. Talking to eighty people turned out to be something I could do thanks to the five spiritual nurturers and a roomful of Friendly auditors, who seemed to understand that the book was something they wanted and needed to know about. Afterwards I was both exhilarated and at the same time aware that I'd left my knees back at the dorm room, and that I should go immediately to my room and reclaim them, preferably lying down. Two nurturers held me in the Light until I reached my room; I was carried across the campus on a bed of prayer.

The last day of the workshop, Elaine Emily asked us to form groups to write an epistle; at once I suggested we five write an epistle to Illinois yearly meeting. It was truly a gathered meeting for business; Monica wrote steadily as the four of us proposed a sentence here, a thought there, with a single dream of bringing back to IYM the deeply focused worship experiences we had had together.

Epistle to Illinois Yearly Meeting

Dearly Beloved Friends in Illinois Yearly Meeting and the monthly meetings in IYM,

The five of us, Susanna Davison, Sophie De La Mar, Brad Laird, Mariellen Gilpin, and Monica Tetzlaff, attended a Friends General Conference (FGC) workshop on eldering led by Elaine Emily and eldered by Bob Schmitt. We have experienced the power of being in a whole roomful of elders working for the quality of worship and calling out each other's gifts. We are eager to bring these experiences to IYM. We know that the old forms of eldering were laid down for good reasons, that the misuse of authority in the past leaves us wary. However, we have rediscovered the heart of eldering and its foundation in love. Elderling may also be called spiritual nurture. True eldering is rooted and grounded in love for the community and the individuals in it. It is widely understood that everyone can minister. We have experienced that ministry is deepened by eldering. An elder praying for the quality of the ministry can work as a spiritual midwife, helping birth the ministry. We acknowledge that there are many elders in IYM. It is important that we recognize and support this gift. We need to broaden our common understanding of what eldering is and to deepen our practice of it. We propose to call out elders and those who have a potential for eldering through an eldering workshop. We hope that IYM can unite with our intention.

Service

The Amos Service Trip to Kenya

Dawn Amos

Thirty-four individuals and eight groups, mostly from IYM, contributed nearly \$8,000 to send our family to Kenya to participate in an African Great Lakes Initiative (AGLI) work camp during July 2007. These and many others also supported us in spirit, several of whom thanked us for what they saw as a courageous undertaking and a visit of goodwill.

We have returned home, happy and healthy, to share with you a great deal of good news. Though the media focuses on the negative, our experience in Kakamega was happy, construc-

tive, enlightening, and inspiring, if sometimes bewildering. As I've told many of you, and as you may read in our reports at <http://quakerservice.blogspot.com>, there were two lessons of the trip that best describe our experience.

The first came from 8-year-old Marlena. When an African neighbor here in Carbondale asked her what it was like in Kenya, she replied "Oh, the same as it is here." While at first I wondered what planet she had been on when we were in Africa, I came to understand that to her, people go about their lives in much the same way as here – eating, sleeping, errands, school, church, playing. This was a profound wisdom for me, because it meant that she had fully adapted to the differences, especially regarding water, elec-



Before and after pictures of work done in Kenya.



Team of workers in Kenya.

tricity, food, toilets, and transportation, but also to accents, cultural cues, and population density. The kernel of truth is that we're all the same, despite our environments.

The second came from Mark, who noted very early that "Everything in Kenya is exciting, even going to the bathroom." When looked at this way, each new experience was acceptable for what it was, and not only acceptable, but quite interesting. The adventure sometimes had the "edge" feel of hang-gliding!

While Africa does have profound needs and problems, the good news is that there are local residents and groups who work tirelessly to address them. Many of you have met Malesi Kinaro, in whose home we stayed in the village of Hirumbi. We witnessed Malesi and her daughter Winnie taking frequent 10-hour,

bumpy bus rides between Nairobi and Kakamega, to facilitate Alternatives to Violence Program (AVP) workshops, or to organize the programs that offer the workshops. Their dedication to peace work persists 24x7.

While we were there, they held their first ever *Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities* (HROC) workshop in Kenya. This program was originally developed to reconcile neighbors after the Rwanda genocide. It brings together perpetrator-victims and survivor-victims of ethnic violence, teaches them about trauma, and helps each one recognize that all are traumatized by violence, and all can choose to seek out the good in each other.

All of the dozen local Kenyan work camp team members were, like us, taking five weeks out of their working lives to help construct the

Friends Peace Center buildings. They lived in the dormitory at the work site and rarely got back to their homes in this period. Each one, we learned in our own AVP workshop, has dreams and aspirations for serving in the world.

The Kakamega Friends Church has hundreds of parishioners, holding several services a week, including a youth service where hundreds of kids sang, danced and clapped their appreciation for God's gifts and each other. On the church grounds is a huge orphanage, which is supported by a partnership with New England Yearly Meeting. The young pastor there, Joseph Shamala, has a great vision for uniting the work of Kenyan yearly meetings and expanding the Friends Peace Center into a large regional retreat facility that can fund its own programs and staff.

On a personal note, the AGLI partnership arranged for robust care of our family and the rest of the work camp team, with generous meals, comfortable sleeping accommodations, and two weekend "out trips" as a break from our steady construction of the building. They organized the building project adeptly, making good use of the twenty pairs of willing hands on our team. While there were no mechanical devices used on the project, our strength of numbers still made fairly quick work out of the hauling of bricks, stone, and mortar and the assembly of the masonry walls of the structure.



Building the walls of Friends Peace Center with willing hands.

I could go on for hours about specific experiences, but check out the web site named above for more observations, and be sure to ask one of the Amoses about it when you see us.

The building we worked on is a large, six room structure which is now almost half complete. It will probably be finished by future work camps, but you can still have a part in promoting peace-building skills in Kenya by contributing toward the \$10,000 that will finish this building. The Amos family will match all contributions made in the 4th quarter of 2007, up to \$1,000. So double the effect of your gift, by sending a tax-deductible donation to **Friends Peace Teams / AGLI**, with "Amos/Lubao Peace Center" in the memo line. The address is 1001 Park Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63104. Thank you all for your support of this effective ministry of peace.

Project Lakota Update

By Greg Woods

This summer Candy and I went up to the Lakota Nation in late July and early August. Due to other conflicts, I could only be there for four days, but Candy and five other people were there for about two weeks. Again we camped near Lake Oglala, but due to some construction on the dam happening this summer, the lake was not there. We were all disappointed about this, especially the two children of Candy's friend, Beatrice, who were all excited about swimming. They even had their swimsuits on the last leg of the car trip in anticipated of being able to take a swim immediately upon arrival. We wished we had a lake many times, especially on the day when the temperature rose to 105 degrees.

One day I visited several Lakota friends across the reservation. The whole trip all across the reservation took me eight hours and I drove over 250 miles, because it is about the size of Connecticut. One friend told me that she has to choose between paying her telephone bill and buying food for her grandchildren. Another told me that she has been waiting 18 years for a tribal house. These stories are common on the reservation, especially with the small amount the government spends there continues to dwindle as federal funding gets cut to fund tax cuts and the continuing armed interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

After I left to attend Illinois Yearly Meeting, Candy and the others started on resealing the logs on the One Feather family cabin. They worked a lot with Partnership for Housing by working on a small house that used to be their office, getting it ready to be used by a family and helping to put the finishing touches on the Casey family Self-Help home. They also added a new subfloor in Minerva Blacksmith's trailer and tiled the floor in the kitchen, hallways, bath-

room and living room which originally had big gaping holes, patched two roofs for two elder women homeowners, and helped an elder man who lives in a very small one-room place by building a shade outside (like most, he had no air conditioning), and a small table with a place to hang a few pots and pans outside.

Our work on the Lakota Nation is different from other groups, especially other religious groups. Other groups go in and say they are going to build this and that and other religious groups go in and set up Vacation Bible Schools for the children. Instead we come and ask what needs to be done. We try to plan ahead and let everyone know what we are planning to do, but sometimes plans change and other projects come up. We would love to build more log homes, like the one we built for Gerald, but sometimes we have enough money just to make minor repairs to houses. These repairs are necessary for Lakota families to continue living in them through the winter. People still get sick and die there, especially the young and elderly from inadequate housing during the winter.

Candy and I have spent seven years raising money to help the Lakota, while we stayed busy with our personal lives and careers. When Project Lakota started, I was barely 16 and in May of this year, I graduated from college with a degree in Peace & Global Studies. For some of the past seven years, Candy dedicated herself to fulltime volunteer work with Project Lakota, the Joint Service Project, and Katrina but now she is back to fulltime (and more) teaching. Even with that, we are still dedicated and will continue this project for a long time – as long as grass grows.

Feel free to contact Candy (314-623-7829 or candyboydwrite@yahoo.com) or me (woodsgr@earlham.edu or 765-994-6113). Also visit our website <http://iym.quaker.org/projectlakota>

Meeting Reports

Downers Grove

By Sue Styer

Last April, Downers Grove Friends Meeting held an on-site retreat on The Quaker Peace Testimony, led by Lonnie Valentine from Earlham School of Religion. *The Peaceable Kingdom* by Edward Hicks (1780-1849) led into Lonnie Valentine's presentation.

We welcomed Susan Gilmore from Mountain View Monthly Meeting in Denver, CO. We welcomed her at the Memorial Day Weekend picnic. In addition, the two meeting chefs (Jesse Davison, newly returned from South Africa, and Sam Ostergaard) were our grillmeisters. We also welcomed new member Tom Fairbank this fall. Tom is a newly-minted junior high social studies teacher.

Our Peace, Social and Environmental Concerns committee organized a Sustainable Living Fair on June 9 at the College of DuPage. A few hundred people filtered through during the day. We had an informational table on conscientious objection and the peace testimony.

Mark Forsythe departed this world late June 5 while under the care of hospice. Gerald Bodmer passed away recently. Longtime member Joe Matt, recently retired to Iowa with his wife Barbara, also passed away this summer. We remember their spirits and hold their families in the Light.

We reached a conclusion on the remaining design features for our new meetinghouse and turned a final concept over to the architects and our builder. We are hoping to break ground in early 2008.

Anne Jones started writing a song about cicadas during the last cicada eruption 17 years ago and finished it this summer during the outbreak we

had this summer. It's been incubating along with the bugs. Here is it:

*Red-eyed bug, up high in the Maple tree
Red-eyed bug, alone you will never be
With your thousand friends, you sing a song that
never ends,
You climb up the tree and mate,
Only to die- but wait!
Your children live underground,
Seventeen years till the next time around
When we'll say "Wow", cicadas are great!*

Lake Forest

By Pam Kuhn

Exciting things are happening at Lake Forest Friends Meeting. We have just completed a two-year listening project concerning finances. About 35 Friends (half of our community) were interviewed and mused on various aspects of finances at the Meeting. We have now summarized these and are starting to think about how to use them to strengthen our meeting. The most difficult question was "How do we discern which organizations to support financially and how much to give to them?" Answers to this and other questions will hopefully help to give the Finance Committee direction and help the meeting as a whole to be more involved with the process. The process of meeting individually with Friends was a joy and energizing for all.

The other project that we have been working on for some time is the question of how we can support individual ministry at Lake Forest Friends Meeting. Last spring our Ministry and Counsel Committee seasoned this and brought it to the meeting requesting an ad hoc committee be formed to look at it further. At the time of this writing the ad hoc committee is working on this question and hopes to be reporting shortly to the

meeting.

Three Friends, two relatively new, one seasoned, have come together calling themselves Outreach Advocates. They have made observations about what it feels like to be a newcomer at the meeting. Things that we just didn't notice: like our signs are being overgrown with buckthorn and the need to help new people get involved in projects as a way of getting involved quickly. Just hearing these observations has helped us to be more intentional in trying to help people adjust to our community.

We are looking forward to welcoming Illinois Yearly Meeting Friends to our meetinghouse on March 1 for the Spring Continuing Committee.

Peoria-Galesburg Meeting

By Elke Narkiewicz

Peoria-Galesburg Meeting continues to meet every First Day morning at the Narkiewicz home at 504 North 2nd Street in Monmouth, IL. Business Meeting is second First Day. We have been using Marsha Holliday's guide book *Exploring Quakerism* every 3rd or 4th First Day to explore a topic using a worship sharing format. We have enjoyed the consistent participation of Nora Vera-Godwin from Keokuk, Iowa, for the worship sharing. This has been an enriching practice for our small meeting, and we are getting to know each other more deeply.

Outreach continues to be of great focus. We are listed in surrounding newspapers, publish information about each worship-sharing, inviting interested seekers to join us. Area colleges have our information for students. We are in the process of making a sign for our meeting which we will leave up year-round. This will hopefully help newcomers feel more at ease in finding us and help our community know we're here. We have two new attenders: Ellie Beach and Patti Sweeter, who have each been involved with Friends in the past. It is with joy that we share their presence each First Day.

Several of us attended the fall Blue River Quarterly in southern Illinois and enjoyed fellowship with Friends and enriching connections with each other.

South Bend

By Denise Thompson-Slaughter

For International Day of Prayer for Peace, the Young Friends in South Bend Meeting made "Pinwheels for Peace," with peaceful sayings written on the blades. These were displayed in the raised flowerbed (really an old horse-watering trough) outside the Charles Martin Center, although they mysteriously disappeared after the first day. The children are now looking forward, as are many of the adults, to our annual outing to a corn-maze and to our November retreat.

South Bend Friends agreed this spring to move Meeting for Business until after Meeting for Worship to prevent time constraints from affecting our deliberations. This is part of a general move to having a second-hour slot for activities, rather than scheduling events at 9:00 AM, when many Friends found it difficult to attend. So far, the "second hour," with Friends bringing a bag lunch, seems to be working well. We are also exploring the feasibility of starting a worship-group, under the care of South Bend Friends, in Goshen.

South Bend Friends have many reasons to celebrate this year. Most exciting is that we have a new infant in the meeting for the first time in probably a dozen years! James Louis Bradley Cobb was born on September 10th to attenders Catherine Pellegrino and Chris Cobb. The women of the meeting held a non-material baby shower for Catherine at the end of August, compiling for her a group-made book of readings, writings, and art about children and motherhood. Also in September, long-time Friends

John and Ann Miller transferred their membership from West Richmond Friends Meeting to South Bend. Last fall, Chris Morrissey transferred his membership from California, and this summer, his wife, JaVaughn Fernanders became a member, as well. In addition, JaVaughn is to be congratulated on her new position as IYM Youth Coordinator!

Urbana-Champaign

By Mariellen Gilpin

We have had a healthy attendance at worship this summer and fall — triple the attendance we regularly had three years ago, before we moved into the new meetinghouse. We're looking around us and thinking, "How do we nurture all this growth?" and we're coming up with three overlapping circles: Spiritual Nurture, Building Community, and Nurturing Newcomers. With those overlaps in mind, we've reached out in various ways.

Quad Day and Adult Young Friends Quad Day is an institution at the University — all the campus organizations have a booth on the Quad and the incoming students all descend in droves to connect with the organizations of their choice. For a number of years, this has been an institution we have run with a lot of grayheads. But over the summer, Andrea and Tim Bretl invited our students to a potluck at their house, and those students contributed their creative energies to the Quad Day effort. They helped staff the booth, which helped attract students. They decided to host a potluck on campus for the students who expressed interest during Quad Day. One of our students made a flier advertising the potluck, with a picture of the Quaker Oats guy with the slogan, "Think this is all Quakers eat? Think again." Only one new student showed up at the special potluck, but he came to worship the next day, and our students are busy contacting the others on the


signup sheet to invite them again. We are blessed with all this energy devoted to attracting other young people.

Quaker Basics We had a series of four meetings before worship to explain some basic things about Quakerism: a session about silent worship — difficulties and solutions to difficulties — a session on the peace testimony, and two sessions on Quaker history, which we advertised as "350 Years of Quaker History in 45 Minutes." Peter Lasersohn did a great job with these talks on our history, clearing up confusions among oldtimers as well as newcomers. His talks were a real tour de force, and several of us have urged Peter to publish this summary of our history. IYM Friends can find Peter's notes for his presentations on the website: <http://www.quaker.org/urbana/>

Procedures Handbook While you're checking out our website, look for the *Handbook of Meeting Procedures*, which is undergoing approval by business meeting at this time. A labor of love by five devoted Friends, this nearly 40-page document was written to inform old and new Friends alike how the work of the meeting gets done. It covers everything from good manners in business meeting to how to clean the toilets. Feel free to print the document and use it to start your own Handbook of Meeting Procedures.


Vacation Friends School We had between 9 and 13 kids on any given day of this week-long day camp, started by Brenda Koenig with Ellen Baranowski, plus at least that many adult volunteers (not all at once, of course). It was a wonderful opportunity for the kids and adults to get to know each other better. We played games, sang songs, baked, danced, collected moths, did arts and crafts, made paper, dressed up in costumes, relaxed in the hammock, played endless games with large empty boxes, and worked together in silence every day. Every day we talked about a testimony. A favorite

Think this is how
Quakers eat?



Think again.

See how real Quakers do lunch.
Come join us for a Fall semester kick-off lunch
with the Young Adult's group.
Room ??? Illini Union
Food served at Noon
Saturday, August 25



activity was “passing the squeeze” at closing circle. When asked, the kids said their favorite things about Vacation Friends School were: baking cookies, dressing in costumes, playing imagination games with boxes and, most importantly, playing with friends. The kids also really appreciated that they could choose most of their activities themselves (We always started the day with choosing activities).

Float Trips on the Middle Fork In June and again in September, Friends converged to canoe, kayak, paddleboat, or tube down the Middle Fork. We had a brown bag lunch together. Everyone had a great time, even though the water was really low in September. Nobody got too sunburned, although those in a tube sometimes had back trouble after sitting in an awkward position for three hours. Our new clerk, Sandy Bales, suggested the Canoe Outing, and we have decided it’s going to be a tradition. We are looking for other good ideas for community-building through shared fun.

Labor Day Parade The Unions sponsor a family-oriented parade on Labor Day, and this was the first year we have participated. The First Day School made a float based on a child’s wagon, and some of us joined the kids for the parade. Our subject was Immigration Reform, and our slogan was, “A Place at the Table.” The Jobs with Justice people marched right behind us. The friendly onlookers cheered us on, calling, “Go, Quakers!”

Friendly Eights In June we started small group potlucks for Friends to get to know each other better. There were four groups, one of them a restaurant group. Each group met on its own schedule. We all had such a good time we decided to scramble the groups with a new signup sheet, so we can all get to know other Friends and eat more delicious Quaker food. Or explore different restaurants together.

Spiritual Nurture Groups This fall we are starting worship-sharing groups, each group having

five or six members, and each group selecting its own schedule of meeting and taking turns designing a query for the worship-sharing. The first meetings of the Spiritual Nurture groups will be the week of October 15-19. We are looking forward to introducing worship-sharing to our newcomers as a way to get to know one another in a more spiritual way.

Friend in Residence We have invited Maurine Pyle, IYM’s Field Secretary, to reside in our community for a year, and Maurine is busy discerning whether and how she can come be among us. At the very least, she plans to visit us more often and longer. When she comes to see us, we work hard to book her up, rushing her from one Friendly session to another. She says she loves being treated as someone who has a function while she’s here. We look forward to an exciting year with Maurine, one way or another.

Peace and Service A number of new initiatives came from Peace and Service committee over the summer. First, a singer-songwriter from Tucson named Patricia Morrison contacted us, offering to present a fundraiser for us. We invited the community, and several Mennonites came. Her voice filled the meeting room with lovely music. A freewill offering raised \$430 for African Great Lakes Initiative and Friendship with Cambodia.

Also, Ned Stowe of Friends Committee on National Legislation joined us for worship one Sunday and talked to us about the work of FCNL. It was good to see our old friend Ned, who attended this meeting in the seventies and eighties, and who got his first job at FCNL based on a glowing letter Cam Satterthwaite wrote about him.

Finally, David Zarembka, his daughter Joy Zarembka, and two African Quakers came for an evening of conversation about the African Great Lakes/Friends Peace Teams effort to rebuild community after genocide. We had on hand and sold some copies of the AGLI book, *Seeking Peace in Africa*, and of Joy Zarembka’s book, *Pigment of Your Imagination*. Again, we reached out to the community with this presentation in our lovely new meetinghouse.

Upper Fox Valley

By Angie Reeks

This past year has been a busy and exciting one for Upper Fox Valley Quaker Meeting (UFVQM). We have welcomed four new, regular attenders to our meeting: Mike and Joni Bohne, Jennel Lampe, and Paulette Leonard. They all contribute greatly to the meeting.

UFVQM was well represented at the annual gathering of Illinois Yearly Meeting in McNabb with at least eight in attendance. We were also very well represented at the FGC gathering this summer with at least eleven folks (six adults & five youth) in attendance in Wisconsin.

Meg Nelson graduated from high school this spring and has since begun her first year of college at Shimer College in Chicago. She reports that she is enjoying this experience greatly.

Another young Friend and meeting member, Alia Hammerstone, attends Northern Illinois University. She has become a Resident Assistant in her dorm and has plans to teach history at the high school level upon completion of her schooling.

Our Second annual Old-fashioned Corn Roast and Pot Luck picnic for Metropolitan Chicago General Meeting was a huge success with 81 people in attendance including several from Blue River Quarterly Meeting (Peter Lasersohn, Sharon Haworth, their son Nathan, and Margie Haworth). This was held at the Pioneer Tree Farm and hosted by the Upper Fox Valley Quaker Meeting. John Hackman and some musician F/friends played providing us with great musical entertainment.

Our meeting continues with its study group. We have made several changes including studying the Bible. Recently we decided to move our meeting time to each Sunday at 8:30 AM and are currently studying the *Twelve Quakers And...* series.

Other Reports

ACFIA Update

By Grayce Mesner

A report for the Associated Committee of Friends on Indian Affairs (ACFIA) was written for the Illinois Yearly Meeting Minute Book so this report will just contain a few updates.

The Iowa Yearly Meeting has accepted the Mesquakie Friends Center as a direct mission. Victor and Brenda White will continue their work at Mesquakie but Iowa Yearly Meeting will provide guidance and leadership.

Kickapoo Friends Center continues to function under ACFIA, but details are being worked out to allow the center to become a mission of Mid America Evangelical Friends Yearly Meeting. The 2008 Annual Meeting will be held at Kickapoo Friends Center in McCloud, OK, April 3 - 5, 2008.

If you wish to be on a mailing list notify Jill McNamara - acfia1869@yahoo.com or at 403 S. Postlewait, Alexis, IL 61412.

Olney

By Grayce Mesner

The school year is off to a good beginning, with 32 returning students and 25 who are new to Olney. Both the junior and senior classes are again at full enrollment. There are students from 17 states in the U.S. and 11 other countries. There are a number of new teachers and staff who have enthusiastically jumped right in to life at the school, with plenty of seasoned staff and teachers to mentor them as they learn the ropes. All of the standard classes are augmented by a rich assortment of electives, including gardening, Quakerism, psychology, Trees and

Gods, Hip Hop and Culture, piano, chorus and ceramics.

During Homecoming the weekend of Oct. 13 and 14, the Saturday evening program was presented by the West Virginia University African Drum and Dance Ensemble, one of many groups in the WVU Division of Music's World Music Center.

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.

Opportunities

End-of-Winter Retreat 08

By Mariellen Gilpin

Do you wish you could help your meetings for worship reach a deeper, more spiritual level? Do you wonder how you can help someone in your meeting move a little closer to God's path for their life? Do you wish you could experience the power of prayer? Come to Camp Menno Haven, Tiskilwa, Illinois, March 29-30, for an experiential Winter Retreat on spiritual nurturing.

Our presenters will be: *Elaine Emily*, a longtime Friends minister from California, presenter of retreats and the 2007 FGC Gathering workshop on "Rediscovering Eldering" which the four of us (Brad Laird, Monica Tetzlaff, Sue Davison, and Mariellen Gilpin) attended in July 2007. Come meet Elaine, and be changed as we have been changed. (You can read Mariellen's account of her experience at FGC Gathering 2007 in this issue of *Among Friends*.)

Also, *Erin McDougall*, a Young Adult Friend (YAF) from Vancouver, British Columbia, currently attending Earlham School of Religion, will share with us the YAF dream of convergent Quakerism. YAF have experienced a deep unity of Spirit across the different branches of Quakerism and are working to reunite us after almost 200 years of suspicion.

Also present will be Elaine's traveling elder, Bob Schmitt of Minneapolis. He will be joined in his work by Maurine Pyle, IYM's own Field Secretary. These Friends' entire mission will be to center us all in Spirit by soaking us in prayer.

The Winter Retreat will begin at 10:00 am on Saturday, March 29, and end after lunch on Sunday. Friends are invited to plan on arriving Friday evening, so they can be fresh and invigorated by a good Menno Haven breakfast when we begin Saturday at ten o'clock.

As Jesus said of his ministry, "Come and see."

Come and see your old IYM Friends in a new light.

Come and see your love for new and familiar Friends grow in a few hours time.

Come and see your sense of your own mission among Friends blossom.

Come and see what all the fuss is about.

Come and see yourself change in profound ways.

This is a wonderful opportunity for IYM Friends to experience some of the same powerful worship experiences that so inspired and challenged your Winter Retreat Planning Committee members during FGC Gathering. Your view of Quakerism, and of your own power to help midwife a deeper ministry among Friends through focused prayer and spiritual nurture, will never be quite the same.

Menno Haven is a really nice camp: cozy heated bunkrooms with cozy heated bathrooms; motel-style rooms, each with one queen bed and one bunk bed, and a private bath—everything wheelchair accessible; food cooked by people who really understand how Quakers prefer to eat; comfortable meeting space overlooking the Illinois River Valley; an elevator in the main building.

All are welcome—Young Friends, Young Adult Friends, monthly meeting members and attenders, IYM Standing Committees, members of monthly meeting committees on Ministry or Advancement, old Friends, new Friends, friends of Friends, and all Friends who hunger for a closer walk with God. It's not just teens who enjoy Midwinter Quakes. Come and bring a friend. The more the merrier!

No one should decide not to come because of cost. We have some scholarship funds available for part or all of the cost, particularly if you are a Young Friend or Young Adult Friend. Those who can do so are invited to contribute a little extra to help those short of funds. And, the more Friends who let us know they'd like to come, the lower the cost for each of us. Y'all come!

Costs are likely to approximate about \$75 per person for Saturday night's dormitory space and meals. Alternatively, it'll cost about \$150 per person for meals and a single hotel room occupancy for Saturday night, \$110 for double room

occupancy and meals, or Friends can triple up in the hotel rooms and save a little, also. Coming Friday night will add another \$75 for a single room and breakfast, \$45 for a double with breakfast, or \$30 for dorm space and breakfast. These costs are approximate, based on fees last year. (Menno Haven has not yet figured the costs for 2008.)

Contact Sue Davison for more information, to request scholarship help, and to register. Rates per person will be announced via email shortly. Sue Davison, shrdavison@mac.com, 1301 Irving Avenue, Wheaton IL 60187, 630-665-

Subscribe to E-newsletter from American Friends Service Committee

The AFSC has a monthly "Toward Peace and Justice" e-newsletter. You can subscribe at <http://afsc.org/news/newsletr.htm>.

Get up-to-minute information of service projects. For example, the **2008 Mexico Summer Project for youth will take place from June 26-August 9, 2008.** Applications are being accepted now.

April 3 – 6, 2008 FWCC Gathering in Indiana

Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) will meet April 3 - 6, 2008 at Waycross Episcopal Camp in Morgantown, IN.

All Friends are welcome to join us for business, worship, workshops and fellowship with friends from the Americas. Pre-registration is requested. Online registration begins in November, 2007. For more information go to www.fwccamericas.org.

IYM is not too distant to assist the local arrangements committee, with hospitality for meeting attenders or in dozens of other ways. Please think about hosting Friends in your meeting before and after the event, or planning a tour, or putting together a yearly meeting display to help introduce Friends to our region, or taking a more active role with local arrangements.

Our midwest FWCC staffer, Susan Lee Barton, has created a list of 40 ways to help. Contact her at susanleeb@fwccamericas.org.

8661.

Simple Opportunities For Friends To Move Faith To Action: Living The Peace Testimony

By Dawn Rubbert

How many times have you encountered a situation – seeing someone homeless or disenfranchised, hearing of an unfair law, hearing of the dead in Iraq – and felt a nudge of the Spirit to do . . . something . . . but what? Some time ago I agreed to write an article informing St. Louis F/friends of ways we can, with little effort, be more active and effective regarding current peace and justice issues. Thought I would share this endeavor with the wider circle of IYM Friends. The suggestions below focus on ways you can be more active without leaving your home.

“Whether in times of war or times of peace the Quaker is under peculiar obligation to assist and to forward movements and forces which make for peace in the world and which bind men together in ties of unity and fellowship.”

~~Rufus Jones; *The Quaker Peace Position* ~~

The American Friends Service Committee

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) carries out service, development, social justice, and peace programs throughout the world. Founded by Quakers in 1917 to provide conscientious objectors with an opportunity to aid civilian war victims, AFSC’s work attracts the support and partnership of people of many races, religions, and cultures.

AFSC’s work is based on the Quaker belief in the worth of every person and faith in the power of love to overcome violence and injustice. The organization’s mission and achievements won worldwide recognition in 1947 when it accepted the Nobel Peace Prize with the British Friends Service Council on behalf of all Quakers.

The AFSC is directed by a Quaker board and staffed by Quakers and other people of faith

who share the Friends’ desire for peace and social justice. If you are interested in serving on the board or other AFSC committees talk to Dawn Rubbert.

AFSC offers several email subscriptions for Friends and others to keep informed regarding issues that the Service Committee is working on. There are also a number of topical newsletters to which you can subscribe, online. You can choose one or more of the following at the website below:

To subscribe to online newsletters go to <http://www.afsc.org/news/newsletr.htm>

- AFSC Monthly E-newsletter - Updates on our work and ways you can get involved;
- Faces of Hope Campaign News - monthly updates from the Middle East and action alerts to support peace in the region;
- Project Voice Update - monthly email about AFSC’s immigrants rights work;
- Wage Peace Campaign E-newsletter - bi-weekly updates on peace activism and resources

There are also printed newsletters available for those who do not use computers. Contact AFSC in Philadelphia (215 241-7000), in Chicago (312-427-2533) or in St. Louis (314-862-5773).

Learn more about AFSC programs in the US and overseas at www.afsc.org.

Friends Committee on National Legislation

The Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) is the largest peace lobby in Washington, DC. Founded in 1943 by members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), FCNL staff and volunteers work with a nationwide network of tens of thousands of people from many different races, religions, and cultures to advocate social and economic justice, peace, and good government

FCNL is also the oldest registered, ecumenical lobby in Washington, DC. A General Commit-

tee made up of some 220 Quakers from around the country sets the organization's legislative priorities and policies. FCNL's multi-issue advocacy connects historic Quaker testimonies on peace, equality, simplicity, and truth with peace and social justice issues which the United States government is or should be addressing.

FCNL offers email updates with action suggestions on a variety of legislative issues. You can sign up for any of the topics below at <http://www.fcnl.org/email/>

- weekly update of events concerning nuclear weapons, disarmament, and nonproliferation -- updates and information about work to build a more peaceful world and the peaceful prevention of deadly conflict
- weekly updates on civil liberties and human rights developments and information
- every two weeks — updates and action suggestions on legislation affecting Native Americans
- information of special interest to young adults about the issues FCNL works on and about upcoming events
- periodic updates from the U.S. Campaign to Ban Landmines (USCBL), a coalition of approximately 500 groups dedicated to a total ban on antipersonnel landmines. FCNL is the current coordinating organization of the USCBL.

Learn more about FCNL at www.fcnl.org.

Human Rights Action Service (HRAS)

For folks who are concerned, but lack time to respond to current issues. A subscription service that charges \$50 per year, HRAS is operated by St. Louis activist and war tax resister, Bill Ramsey, a former AFSC staffer of 20 years. Subscribers receive the following:

- a personalized letter or fax sent in their name to a government official or political organization in response to a specific instance of human rights abuse. You may preview your letters, if you wish, and are always encouraged to rec-

ommend human rights cases to HRAS.

- An informative *Buyers Guide to Human Rights* featuring advice on making wise consumer choices as well as updates on boycotts.
- A copy of the Human Rights Media Watch with in-depth analysis of the media's coverage of human rights issues to help you become a more critical newspaper reader and radio listener.

Subscribers may choose to receive print versions via regular mail or electronic versions via email.

For more information, go to <http://www.humanrightsaction.net/> or phone 314-725-5303.

Progressive Secretary (PS)

PS is a free letter writing cooperative. Jim Harris, founder and sole operator till mid-1999, describes himself as "a sixties activist and a Quaker." After treatment for leukemia left him partially disabled, he decided to devote himself to progressive service by using his computer skills and his knowledge of activism. Initially PS was financed by Jim alone -- he used his own limited funds to purchase the computer and software upon which PS's work is based. PS now gladly accepts contributions to help pay for equipment and the constant upgrades needed as the service grows. Jim maintains overall coordination of PS but concentrates increasingly on technical operations since being joined by Pat Murphy, also a Quaker, who coordinates letters. Pat is a long time activist, educator, and writer who volunteered for the AFSC, the Florida Coalition for Peace and Justice, and many other causes. An experienced administrator and writer, Pat retired in 1991 as Five College Professor of African Studies, based at Smith College, Northampton, MA. Pat now has degenerative mobility problems that force him to spend most of his time at the computer. Jim and Pat depend upon literally scores of volunteers to accomplish the work of PS; services include: sending out progressive email letters to Con-

gress, the President, and other officials on peace, ecology, civil rights and other issues. Letters are suggested by participants in the cooperative and are sent to you as a proposal. If you tell us to “send”, then the letters are sent to your Congress people and others. If you like, you can send the letters yourself. Letters are not sent without your specific approval; your name and email are never given out except to recipients of your letters.

Learn more at <http://ProgressiveSecretary.Org>.

Personal reflections

Statement of Environmental Concern: Towards a Personal Testimony of Right Relation with the Earth

By Adrian Fisher

In this time of global warming, oil depletion, and habitat destruction, it goes without saying that many people (and most Friends) realize that our way of life must shift dramatically. Something, many things, must be done. Environmentalism has even become trendy, fodder for slogans, light-hearted news features, and feel-good advertising. Yet if we who live in industrial nations rely on purely secular science, technology, and “buying green” to save us and our planet, without considering the divine spirit or our place in creation, we are also relying on cultural structures, beliefs, and habits of thought that have contributed to our present deadly dilemma.

In the secular push to somehow maintain our anthropocentric global economy, I believe we should not forget the other living beings and ecological systems with which we share our planet, on which our lives depend. It is true that humans must utilize creation in order to live. It is true that humans have dominion over the earth, whether we would or no. Yet humankind’s failure to live in right relation with the

earth has led to our mindless living upon creation in the relation of masters upon slaves—we have whipped, manacled, destroyed, and laid waste. Right relation with God, with our Inward Guide, requires that we live in right relation with the earth, that we re-define dominion, and re-reverence creation: for “there we see God.”

Our Western civilization is undeniably great — intellectually, artistically, and technologically. As a middle-class American, I admit I enjoy the benefits. I love my comfortable life. Other comfortable North Americans, including many Friends like me, might be tempted to see environmentalism as negative and even puritanical. Environmentalists, secular and Friendly alike, urge us to reduce our consumption, to restrain ourselves, to sacrifice ease, comfort, pleasure — and economic benefits; not unlike the owners of slaves who were asked to give up the ease, comfort, pleasure — and economic benefits of a way of life that exploited other humans. Many slave owners thought only in terms of the destruction of their existing way of life; they couldn’t, or wouldn’t, envision and carry out cultural changes leading to a different way of life. So it is with many of us today.

It has been said that the average middle-class American uses the energy-worth of approximately three hundred slaves to support a “normal” lifestyle. When the power goes out during a storm, or conversely, when utilizing the blessings of modern medicine, one realizes, perhaps briefly, what there is indeed to lose. One wishes there might be an easy way out without the necessity of rethinking and possibly changing every aspect of one’s life: perhaps calculating our carbon footprints and purchasing carbon offsets might suffice.

Many early Friends might have emphasized something else. They saw the built environment, human creations (palaces, cathedrals, luxurious clothes) and “forms” as impediments to being able to experience the Inner Light, to heed our Inward Guide. The things of “the world” were

human-created distractions from the inward experience of God. The “steeplehouse” was considered a monument to humankind, not God — often precisely *not* the place to encounter the Inner Light. By contrast, Meeting for Worship could be — and was — held anywhere, and could be most “gathered” when held out-of-doors. I personally have found a deep connection between experiencing the inner light and a sense of right relation with earth/nature, a short cut to the ineffable, if you will. This is not the same as nature worship, or animism; it is not propitiating the spirits of the trees, or hoping to avert earthquakes through prayer. Anyone who has spent time working in a garden, walking by a river through a woods, or traversing a hill while leaving off self-concerns and remaining open to one’s surroundings will probably understand. Thus it was that George Fox had a great vision on Pendle Hill, in surroundings vast and open to the sky.

Today, our climate-controlled buildings, our cars, electronic entertainments, out-of-season fruits and vegetables, our conveniences — could be considered the accoutrements of a great, modern steeplehouse. We, who are wedded to preserving our normal way of life, might only think in terms of destruction, of what we have to lose, rather than in terms of cultural change. In addition, for concerned urban Friends, who live within a human-built environment, enmeshed in the global economy, the temptation might be to feel powerless. Many of us might have limited daily relations with nature and perhaps thus with the Inner Light. But I have come to know through experience that to lose a sense of connection with the earth community is to substitute the human-built, technological environment — the part — for the whole of creation; or at least to behave as if one does. Once we lose the connection to all of creation and thus to God, it is easy, surrounded with human works, to forget that the earth is not also a human creation to be tinkered with, or replaceable if it breaks. The earth does not become technologically outmoded.

Since George Fox, Friends have long spoken and written about our responsibility to use creation wisely and in moderation, to reverence creation as “that of God.” Many have pointed out that heeding our Inward Guide, an aspect of the Presence we seek during Meeting for Worship, leads to, as Conservative Friend Marshall Massey recently wrote, “awareness and consideration of the lives and feelings and potential sufferings of ... other living beings”— in a sense of empathic, gut-level knowing and understanding, rather than greeting-card sentimentality or intellectual objectivity and analysis. This sense led to early Friends’ true appreciation of the natural world, to John Woolman’s and Joshua Evans’ care for animals as well as humans, to early Quaker schools stressing such subjects as botany, and to such early and influential “natural philosophers” as John and William Bartram.

Though there is no specific Friend’s testimony for right relation with the earth that I know of, for me such a testimony has come to be a synthesis of the others or even the primary one from which all others come, for to me it is a testament to right relationship with our Inward Guide. Right relation with the earth requires us to “keep low” ; requires stewardship, including knowing when to leave well enough alone; requires simplicity, the opposite of hubris, arrogance, and pride in the way we conduct ourselves; requires equality as we consider the earth community’s right to exist and live as equal to our own; requires peace as we extend the concept of non-violence to the environment; and requires integrity and honesty, because pretense can’t be involved when we live according to the logic of sustainability.

Secular environmentalists remind us of all the pertinent, extremely real, extremely human reasons to “save the planet.” Yet there are reasons of the spirit, as well, reasons that people of many faiths are embracing and acting upon, as readers of Roger S. Gottlieb’s *A Greener Faith*

will know. As a Friend, I believe humans are called by God to live in mindful engagement *with* the earth community, not *upon* the earth. I believe our civilization must not only look for new sources of energy, but also must undergo a change of heart, of spirit, of cultural values and ways of life. None of us truly own our portion of the earth, nor does humankind own creation

— we hold it in trust. In many ways our industrial culture (and by extension the global economy), though great, is a death-dealing juggernaut. I believe Friends are called to live by different values; we are led to seek responsible and sustainable ways to live, so as to pass on our trust, so as to generate life. As a Friend, I seek to live in right relation with the earth.

A Quaker Etiquette for Meeting For Worship with a Concern for Business

Brought to St. Louis Friends Meeting by Lynn Fitz-Hugh, University Friends Meeting, Seattle, Washington

1. Respect the meeting time. Come into the meeting promptly and stay to the end.
2. Maintain a sense of worship during meeting for business by centering, keeping focused, staying open to the Spirit, and holding the meeting in the Light.
3. Sift and season concerns before bringing them to meeting for business. Discuss your issue or idea with the appropriate committee or with the Meeting clerk to discern whether (and when) it should come to the meeting as a whole.
4. Come willing to change your mind. Allow for others to change theirs.
5. Listen carefully; listen “between the words.” Give full attention to what others say and how they say it, to understand their intent as well as their actual words.
6. Test your message before you speak: Does it arise from the Spirit? Does it add new Light to the discussion?
7. When you are ready to speak, raise your hand and wait for the clerk to call on you. Wait for the previous speaker to finish before you speak.
8. Address the meeting as a whole through the clerk. In meeting for business we come together to seek divine guidance for group decisions; it is not the place for private conversation or for debate. If you must disagree with someone, do so charitably, with love and respect. Ask yourself whether meeting for business is the proper place to express your disagreement.
9. Try not to repeat or to rephrase another person’s message. If you support what someone else has said, do so briefly -- for example: “I agree.” or “That Friend speaks my mind.”
10. Speak briefly and clearly. Speak so that everyone can hear you and choose your words carefully, remembering our testimonies of simplicity and truth.
11. Speak for yourself and from your own experience, without generalizing about what “everyone knows” or what “those people” think.
12. After you have spoken, let go of it. Your contribution has become part of the group’s progress toward discerning the Truth for this meeting at this time.
13. When the clerk or the recording clerk proposes a minute, respond thoughtfully. Either express agreement (nod or say “approved”) or raise your hand to comment if you are clear that a minute is not yet right. If you must stand aside or stand opposed, do so in love and humility.
14. Prepare to go home saying “we decided” rather than “they decided.”

my soul sings quietly today
as i do daily things
driving, washing, planning, talking
i hear my soul burbling joyfully underneath
i smile

people ask me why i'm cheerful
with the state of the world the way it is
i do grieve for the state of the world
but the state of my soul
is singing

— *Barbara Clearbridge*

sitting in meeting
deep in the absolute quiet
of listening within for God's word
aware of spirit light shining out through us like the sun on water
we're listening
and glistening

— *Barbara Clearbridge*