

Business Meeting for Blue River Quarterly
Minutes for 9/16/2006, Camp Brim Shire, St. James, MO

Attending:

- Bloomington Normal Friends Meeting (BNFM) – no one present
- Clear Creek Friends Meeting (CCFM) – Grayce Mesner, Neil Mesner, Michael Dennis
- Columbia Friends Meeting (CFM) – David Finke, Ruth Milledge, Scott Searles, Robert Wixom,
- Decatur Friends Worship Group – no one present
- Rolla Preparative Meeting of Friends (RPM) – Chris Jocius, George McPherson, Brock Womack
- St. Louis Friends Meeting (SLFM) – Nancy Duncan, Steve Hinson, Tom Paxson, Dawn Rubbert
- Southern Illinois Friends Meeting (SIFM) – no one present
- Springfield Worship Group (SWG) – no one present
- Urbana-Champaign Friends Meeting (UCFM) –Mariellen Gilpin, Sharon Haworth, Peter Lasersohn
- Lake Forest Friends Meeting (LFFM) – Maurine Pyle
- Kansas – Jim & Ginger Kenney

Clerk: Peter Lasersohn

Recording: Michael Dennis (CCFM) and Sharon Haworth (UC)

Opening

Meeting began with silent worship.

Meeting Reports

The following informal reports were offered:

- Bloomington Normal Friends Meeting (BNFM) – None given, however, Maurine Pyle plans to talk to BNFM about working more with Urbana Champaign.
- Clear Creek Friends Meeting (CC) – Grayce Mesner reported that remodeling is progressing, they are planning an open house for the local community this fall (Sunday, 10-8-06), and continue to have good Sunday morning discussions. CC Friends mourn the loss of Helen Jean Nelson. Working on re-invigorating first day program for Jr. and High School friends.
- Columbia (COL) Friends Meeting – Columbia Meeting has concluded their sabbatical time. Some committees (as “groups”) have been created or reinstated. Comments were made on its wonderful newsletter.
- Rolla Preparative Meeting– Chris Jocius reported that they are meeting weekly, including a new attender since school started. They are particularly appreciative of correspondence from Margaret Katranides who has been their official contact with St. Louis meeting.

- Saint Louis (STL) Friends Meeting – Dawn Rubbert & Tom Paxson reported that St. Louis continues to get new members though the total number of adult resident members has declined. They have strong attendance, but continue having difficulty keeping committees filled. They are having an afternoon workshop with Janet Underhill (9-23-06) and an all day workshop with John Calvi (10-14-06). They have a great population of 3-5 year olds and a number of babies. They have made the meeting room more acoustically friendly, painted the meeting room and are about to paint the social room. STL Friends will be responsible for Fall 07 BRQ at Dubois Center.

- Southern (So) Illinois Friends Meeting – The clerk read the following written communication:

Our meeting space must change, perhaps by spring 2007. The primary organization that runs the Interfaith Center building, University Christian Ministries, has lost most funding and at best the building will be leveled to create a progressive-theme dorm. In this best case scenario, part of the construction loan would cover intermediate rental space for affiliated organizations like ours, and the replacement building would have meeting space for us all. A feasibility study is under way.

In the worst case scenario, the building will be abandoned. There were partial renovations made last fall as part of "Miracle Day", an event which inspired IYM Clerk Sue Davison's (and Joe's) participation in our name at a sister renovation in Chicago. Unfortunately, this partial renovation claimed our First Day School and meeting storage space to create an accessible bathroom, which is still not complete. All of this work stands to be wasted. In the meantime, there is no A/C, the hot water is being turned off, and we have lost our name on the sign outside.

We have reached unity on inviting IYM Field Secretary Maurine Pyle to help us envision what our meeting space needs to be. We hope to have multiple visits from her this fall and winter. There are lots of enticing possibilities, but we shouldn't settle on any until we have a clear vision.

The bright news is that Friends in the meeting have expanded their financial giving. We voluntarily increased our rent at the Interfaith Center as a good faith gesture to help keep the building in operation longer, and we seem to be committed to our full IYM suggested contribution. One hopes this means we could inspire greater giving in the event we'll need to pay a higher rent (or even a mortgage).

We have been slowly working through Quakerism 101 less than monthly; this was disrupted by summer schedules and the heat. We have one unit left, and a wealth of new materials to study next. The IYM F&P section on

marriage would be especially appropriate to our meeting, which includes a large percentage of middle-aged marriages; we would benefit from mutual spiritual support.

We had four visitors last weekend, typical of the new school year, and can only hope we can retain newcomers in our currently uncomfortable worship environment.

We have four active members and about six active attenders. Two of our "boys" have gone to college and another has graduated high school, leaving three high school boys, two elementary school girls, a pre-K boy and a toddler boy. Not many of these children come to First Day School regularly, and their parents continue to serve as their Religious Education teachers.

On Sept. 2 and 3, we will have hosted the Eyes Wide Open - Illinois exhibit. We have networked with several local organizations and church groups to bring it to Carbondale, with great assistance from AFSC Chicago. This is very exciting and a bit "out there" for our meeting, which does not have a strong history of outreach or advancement.

- Urbana Champaign – Maurine Pyle is coming on 10/20-22/2006 to do a workshop. They are within a year of paying off the mortgage. On 10/8 they are holding a meeting for Brainstorming for spending in 2007. UC Friends are having silent retreats every other month; July's ended with a double rainbow. They have helped several people to move, all into the same neighborhood, which they have nicknamed "Pendle Flats." Three attenders are in the process of seeking membership. The meeting study group is working on readings recommended by Peace Resources Committee. UC Friends are also working on a local radio show dealing with issues related to religion and spirituality; are supporting the efforts of Vermilion County coal miners to unionize, some of whom are members of FUM meetings; and have co-sponsored several activities with other area faith organizations. They would like to hire a religious education coordinator. After several years of relative silence, there has been a recent reemergence of vocal ministry. UCFM is responsible for Spring 07 BRQ at Camp Menno Haven.

Treasurer's Report.

Grayce Mesner distributed a treasurer's report showing a starting balance of \$1275.07, deposits of \$1802.26, and expenses of \$934.44, for an ending balance of \$2142.89. The report was accepted. At the current 9-06 BRQ we have tentatively collected \$1505 but are still incurring expenses.

Other Business

1. Next two meetings are 4/20-22/07 at Camp Menno Haven (coordinated by Urbana Champaign) and 9/21-23/07 at Camp Dubois (coordinated by St.Louis)

2. Support for float trip – It was reported that Mark and Dawn Amos, David Wixom and Randy Cates have taken over the organization of the float trip and are mostly looking to BRQ to announce and promote the trip, not for financial assistance
3. On the proposal for a worship and ministry committee for quarterly meeting – Mariellen reported no progress made yet and asked if others are interested in helping. Hearing none, the idea has been shelved until there is more time and energy.
4. Appointment of nominating committee – Mariellen Gilpin, Ruth Milledge, Dawn Rubbert
5. Young Friends – Mike Dennis reported that IYM Youth oversight is trying to raise \$11,575 to allow the hiring this year of a Youth Coordinator (a position IYM approved contingent on the raising of funds for the first 12 months of salary). Young friends will be making the rounds of several meetings requesting help. BRQ approved donating \$200 towards this cause now and will consider another donation in the spring. BRQ asks its constituent monthly meetings and Friends to support this effort through corporate and individual gifts. BRQ also encourages meeting to recognize that part of the increase in the recommended contribution to IYM will sustain this position.
6. System for Planning BRQ – The clerk read a communication from Margaret Katranides, raising the issue whether our current system for planning Blue River Quarterly sessions is still appropriate. Under this system, planning alternates among four groups of meetings: 1. Urbana Champaign, 2. St. Louis, 3. The “Small Northern Meetings” (Clear Creek, Peoria-Galesburg, Bloomington-Normal, and 4. The “Small Southern Meetings” (Columbia, Southern Illinois, Rolla). Friends want to review how well this is working and how it compares with other options. BRQ appointed Dawn Rubbert and David Finke to gather information from Friends on this issue and report back in the spring.
7. Illinois Coalition for Peace and Justice – The clerk read a communication from Dawn Amos, asking the meeting’s advice regarding possible affiliation with the Illinois Coalition for Peace and Justice. This group has contacted Southern Illinois Meeting about possible membership. However, it has a policy of only allowing three full voting member groups from any one faith denomination. Since 57th Street Meeting and the Chicago office of AFSC are already members, affiliation by Southern Illinois Meeting would preclude possible affiliation by other Friends meetings, including BRQ or IYM; Dawn asks whether it might be more appropriate for Southern Illinois Meeting to step aside to allow BRQ or IYM to affiliate.

After discussion, Friends recommend that if Southern Illinois Meeting has reached unity, they should proceed to join the coalition.

Meeting closed with silent worship.