

**Blue River Quarterly Meeting
Spring 2008 - Fourth Month 11 - 13
Gathered at Mennohaven near Tiskilwa, Illinois**

The following adult Friends (24) from our monthly meetings were in attendance. Those in bold participated in the business session.

Ellen Baranowski, Urbana-Champaign
Michael Batinski, Southern Illinois
Rachel Bradley, Evanston
David H. Finke, Columbia
Mariellen Gilpin, Urbana Champaign
Chris Goode, Clear Creek
Kate Gunnell, Clear Creek
Margie Haworth, Urbana Champaign, Treasurer
Sharon Haworth, Urbana Champaign
Ginny Hoffman, Southern Illinois
Brenda Koenig, Urbana-Champaign
Peter Lasersohn, Urbana Champaign

Jeannie Marvin, Clear Creek, Clerk
Grayce Mesner, Clear Creek
Neil Mesner, Clear Creek
Elke Narkiewicz, Peoria-Galesburg
Tim Narkiewicz, Peoria-Galesburg
Diana Pascoe-Chavez, St. Louis
Drew Phillips, Urbana-Champaign
Maurine Pyle, ILYM Field Secretary
Dawn Rubbert, St. Louis - Recording Clerk
Beth Schobernd, Clear Creek
Kelly, Schobernd, Clear Creek
Bob Wixom, Columbia

The following children (11) were in attendance.

Daschel Chavez, St. Louis MM
Nathan Lasersohn, Urbana-Champaign MM
Sage & Jonas Phillips, Urbana-Champaign MM
Claire & Laure Goode, Clear Creek MM
Stella & Hollis Narkiewicz, Peoria-Galesburg
Kiva and Zara Schobernd, Clear Creek MM
Sophie Bradley, Evanston MM

**Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business
Saturday afternoon & Sunday morning**

Following a period of silence the clerk greeted everyone and called for the presentation of the treasurer's report.

Treasurer's Report -- Margie Haworth presented a written report which is attached. The treasurer requests that in the future we ask registrants to pay when they send in their registration to enable us to pay the site, e.g. Mennohaven or DuBois Center, at the conclusion of our sessions and still maintain our minimum balance in the checking account. Friends accepted this report and approved the recommendation.

State of the Meeting Reports --The clerk asked for the reading of state of the meeting reports from the Monthly Meetings, worship and preparative groups.

Urbana-Champaign -- Peter Lasersohn read the report which is attached, page 4.
St. Louis MM -- Dawn Rubbert read the report, also attached, page 6.

Peoria-Galesburg MM -- Elke Narkiewicz reported, attached, page 7.

Clear Creek -- Jeannie Marvin presented the attached report, bottom of page 7.

Southern Illinois MM - Ginny Hoffman presented an oral report. They have been making strides in having an organized program for their children. A new project is having monthly meetings with dinner and queries which are a source of enjoyment while building a sense of intimacy. A baby sitter is hired for these gatherings. They have had some small growth with one family and two new single individuals.

Reports were not received from other monthly meetings or worship groups. It seems that not all meetings are currently mindful that this is our practice.

Friends are reminded that it is the practice of Blue River Quarterly that all monthly meetings, preparative groups and worship groups present a written State of the Meeting report at each Spring session. This is a means of sharing with each other in some small detail the nature of our celebrations and struggles. These reports help us to have a sense of how to hold each other in the Light throughout the year. If no one from a particular MM or group is able to attend Spring sessions the report should be sent to the Clerk of BRQ for presentation. These reports are then forwarded to the YM for publication.

No one was present from Bloomington-Normal, Springfield or Rolla. A question was raised whether Decatur is still a worship group under the care of Clear Creek MM. It is believed by some that a transition is in process. We agreed to clarify this situation prior to publication of the next ILYM Minute book.

Minutes to this point were read and approved.

BRQ Website - A website could be one repository for information about BRQ history and procedures. Last fall A committee was formed to consider how this might move forward: Peter Lasersohn, Dawn Amos, Steve Hinson and Jenny Donelan volunteered. The committee has not met. The idea is still a useful and valid one and the committee asks to continue their work for another season.

Green Burial Committee -- Margie Haworth reported that as agreed last Fall she spoke to Bobbi Trist who was willing to convene the committee, with support in the form of nudges and reminders from other committee members. At this time there is insufficient interest and energy for the work to continue at the level of our quarterly. With regrets, it became clear that at this time the committee should be laid down. We recognize that this concern remains alive and pertinent among us and are certain the time will come to take this up again.

Concern from St. Louis MM -- At the February 10, 2008 Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business the Meeting was asked for any concerns that need to be taken to Blue River Quarterly or Illinois Yearly Meeting.

A concern was raised that the planners of the children's programming at BRQ and IYM have not been in the habit of contacting MM First Day Schools so that they might prepare children for these events. Communication between the planners of the children's educational programs and First Day Schools should be encouraged. We see this as an opportunity to expand the spiritual development of the children and increase participation of children in the life of the quarterly and yearly meetings.

Those present united with this idea and intend to put this in effect for the Fall BRQ sessions this coming October.

Annual Quaker Float Trip - Bob Wixom shared that he and David Wixom are planning the 35th annual event for Mother's Day weekend. More details are forthcoming via email. A poster for sign-up was made available for those present.

Quarterly Planning

Fall 2008 BRQ will be held at DuBois Center October 24-26. The planning committee co-clerks are Bob Wixom and Dawn Amos. There are a number of Friends involved in the process and we celebrate that they are working actively on the program at this early point.

Spring 2009 sessions will be the responsibility of Urbana-Champaign MM. Friends present spoke favorably of having this session at Mennohaven.

Fall 2009 is the responsibility of St. Louis MM and DuBois Center has been reserved.

A concern arose about the unevenness of our groups as currently set up for planning Quarterly gatherings. The small northern meetings group is smaller than it has ever been and planning responsibilities fall unfairly and unbidden to one or two persons. We agreed to consider whether some changes might be in order when we meet for future sessions.

Jeannie Marvin, Presiding Clerk
Dawn Rubbert, Recording Clerk

State of Society Report - Urbana-Champaign Friends Meeting - Spring 2008

Many of us notice the depth of our silent worship lately. Perhaps this process is helped along by some members, who arrive early in order to soak the meeting room, and the arriving Friends, in prayer. A spring of creativity seems to bubble forth from the silence we share together. This creativity expresses itself in many ways.

Advancement Committee has blessed us with their energy and enthusiasm this year. Among other activities have been Quaker Eights - supper groups that meet monthly at one another's houses (or at a restaurant) - and Spiritual Nurture groups, which meet regularly to worship-share on a query. One of these groups quickly became a close-knit group that doesn't leave it to the convener - if she doesn't move in a timely fashion, other members make the contacts necessary!

Another initiative has been a series of sessions every Thursday on the theme, "Change: Difficulties and Discoveries." Friends are working on deep personal changes and discovering some of the ways in which prayer can support their efforts. A rhythm of arts worship, prayer-experimentation, reflection in journals and in heartfelt discussions, and "homework" has Friends excited about their inner processes. It is hoped that this series will help Friends come to know one another in that which is eternal, and that this may help our normally-silent worship begin to experience more spoken ministry. (Our meeting is blessed with many spiritual nurturers and ministers, but more spoken ministry would be welcomed.)

Advancement Committee suggested that Meeting needed a coordinated prayer effort for needs in our membership, and worked with Ministry and Oversight Committee to create Prayers, Concerns and Celebrations (PCC) moderated by John Holm with the help of a guidance committee. Friends with concerns and celebrations they wish to share with Meeting contact John, who announces the need for prayers during worship or through the meeting email list. Other activities Advancement has sponsored include Vacation Friends School, a dinner-dance and silent auction to raise money for the meeting's Emergency Fund, and two canoe outings.

The Emergency Fund is an initiative of the Peace and Service Committee, and is used to help poor people in the community whose needs sometimes fall through the cracks in the social service network in our cities. Peace and Service continues to make sandwiches for the homeless on Second Sundays and RE and Hospitality raise money in order to support an AIDS orphan through African Great Lakes Initiative. We believe these social justice efforts and many others grow out of the quality of our worship. Meeting's growth and development arises directly from a spiritual foundation.

Urbana-Champaign State of Society Report continued . . .

The Meeting has a new Handbook of Meeting Procedures, which covers everything from good manners in business meeting to how to disinfect the toilets. This forty-page document was the creation of an ad hoc committee at Ministry and Oversight Committee's recommendation, and will be updated yearly. Originally written by seasoned Friends who plumbed their memories of how we do things, we have created a process by which newer Friends will help carry on the work in future years. Recently Ministry and Oversight wrote a new minute on membership for children, which will be added to the Procedures Handbook.

At Christmas the Tweens baked cookies to give to the Catholic Worker House. Religious Education Committee is always looking for teachers. We feel a real need for continuity of First Day School personnel, and definite goals and objectives in our curriculum, carried out over the long term. As a result, some parents would like a paid curriculum coordinator. We have formed an ad hoc committee to consider this and other ways to make an RE program that really attracts young families. This has to be a team effort of the whole meeting.

We are delighted that Brenda Koenig and her children, Corbin, Sage, and Jonas Phillips, became members this year, as have Paul Healey and Rebecca Rohloff. Peter Rohloff's clearness for membership is also in process at this time. We welcome Jonathan Holm and Christopher Hansen's request to be married under our care. We celebrate a decided increase in attendance, particularly by young families. This is very precious to us, because many meetings are aging and fading away. Our decision to provide childcare as well as regular First Day School classes is being blessed by these families.

We have retired our mortgage - and it only took three years, thanks to a small Mortgage Challenge and two small bequests, in addition to regular monthly payments. We saved a significant amount of money in interest by paying off the mortgage so quickly.

We welcome Maurine Pyle, IYM's Field Secretary, on her regular visits to our Meeting. She led two workshops at the end of February, one on how to deal with painful thoughts that sometimes come up during worship, and another on sharing thoughts during silent worship.

All these signs of creative new life and growth come to us as an inheritance from the spiritual nurturing of the Friends who came before us. Our departed Friends left us a culture that helped us come together again as a people, after the divisions caused by the sale of the old meetinghouse, and take the leap of faith necessary to build a new meetinghouse. Friends who perceived the construction of a meetinghouse as opportunity, said to one another, "If we build it, they will come." We continue to reach out to our disaffected Friends, and to nurture one another as

Gathered at Mennohaven near Tiskilwa, Illinois

our old Friends taught us. May we be part of the inheritance of those Friends who come after us, that the Religious Society of Friends in Urbana-Champaign continue a vibrant community.

St. Louis Friends Meeting State of the Society Report - March 2008

After a period of restructuring and change, 2008 finds St. Louis Friends feeling renewed. Our meetings for worship have deepened and grown more gathered. There is a sense that Friends are speaking out of a sense of expectant waiting upon the Light, without prepared speeches. Spoken messages are received with tender listening and space is given to hear one another's ministry.

We adjusted our worship hour to 10:00 am and now follow it immediately with meeting for worship with a concern for business on second First Days. The earlier meeting time combined with a newfound trust that the meetings will not be allowed to go on all afternoon has led to increased participation—much to our joy. However there is a concern that adequate space may not be given to weighty problems. We continue to labor to walk this fine line between efficiency and Spirit led decision-making. Vast improvement has been made by the meeting in not doing committee work in the face of the meeting for worship with a concern for business. At the same time, we are mindful that we are not doing as well with follow up when committees are charged with work as we should be. This is another area where we are striving for balance. Individual Friends continue to learn to discern whether concerns they raise stem from the Spirit, rather than from personal agendas or worries. We are working with a Quaker Etiquette for meeting for business and hope that it will become easier to make the best use of the meeting's time in speaking from the Spirit and letting the chaff fall away. Perhaps in this way we can be both prayerful and timely.

Although we are still feeling our way toward some of the answers to our new work structure in the meeting, there is a sense that we have deeply considered what work of the meeting truly needs to be done, and what could be let go even though we "always have done it." This in turn has led Friends who had been feeling weary and burned out, to feel renewed vigor and a joyful lightness in the work of the meeting. This change is most welcome, even as we acknowledge that we are still working on marrying our new structure with a mindfulness of Quaker process.

Our First Day School continues to grow with nearly thirty children regularly attending. Adults are enjoying a new Friendly Bible Study group and there are a number of thriving spiritual direction groups and friendly dozens groups where friends meet in smaller numbers. We recently held a wonderful attenders' dinner with more than 80 Friends in attendance. We welcome all of these signs of a healthful and growing meeting.

We continue to seek ways to strengthen our witness on behalf of Friends' testimonies; to let our lives speak of simplicity, peace, integrity, community and equality to a world in need of healing.

Peoria-Galesburg State of the Meeting Report - Spring 2008

Our meeting meets every First Day at 10 a.m. We start with a short reading - it may be from a Quaker Reader, Faith and Practice, or may be a query. We end worship by sharing joys and sorrows- a new practice for us. We typically have 6-7 adults and 3 children present, with one of the adults out of worship teaching First Day School. We have First Day School every week and are proud to have a strong program for our children. Following worship on second First Days we have Meeting for business. In our business meetings we consider each month both how we are growing inwardly as individuals and as a community, as well as outwardly as a meeting. Because we desire for our community to grow in both strength and numbers, we choose one new way to implement outreach each month.

On the 4th First Day we continue our practice of having a worship sharing on a topic selected from Marsha Holliday's book, Exploring Quakerism. We have a potluck lunch afterwards and always have lots of goodies to enjoy. We advertise this event in local papers and occasionally receive phone calls of inquiry and visitors.

We have three new attenders who have enriched our community tremendously. Jennifer Nass asks many good questions of us. Her desire to understand the Quaker faith has given us cause to share more of ourselves, our values, and our individual beliefs. Her son Eli- who is 4- has changed the dynamic of our meeting from one with two children who are siblings to that of a small circle of young Friends. We are very grateful for his presence. Susan Simonds is also a new attender. She is a hospice chaplain and brings to us the gift of music. We have started singing $\frac{1}{2}$ hour before worship and everyone enjoys this new practice!

We are looking forward to another visit from Field Secretary Maurine Pyle on May 11th when she will do a program on the Clearness Process. We have invited Bloomington-Normal Meeting Friends to join us and to share in a potluck afterwards. Peoria-Galesburg Meeting Friends are especially grateful to Friend Maurine for her service as Field Secretary. Through her visits and support, she has assisted our meeting to see beyond its small size, to see our potential as a strong spiritual community, and to make ourselves visible to the surrounding community.

Clear Creek State of Society Report - 2008

The most memorable aspect of this year was the winter. Driving through snow, ice and unusually cold temperatures was more difficult than before. We gathered. Despite the long walk to the bathroom which is across the road in the Meeting House. Despite the cold Clear Creek room where we have been meeting with the aid of a portable heater, still we gathered.

On the day of Don Nelson's funeral ice had formed in layers on roads all across Illinois. Some of it was deceptively invisible until you felt the sudden slip of car wheels. His funeral was still well attended by family and local friends.

Clear Creek State of Society Report continued . . .

The Nelson family once again, invited Clear Creek to hold our Winter meetings within their home. So for a few Sundays we gathered in this home on Quaker Lane.

Our personal service projects continued under the dormant, grey winter skies. Grayce and Neil Mesner continued to visit two prisons bringing comfort and friendship to inmates. Carol Bartles gathered insights from her last year of working with AFSC. She has been working with an IYM group to remove barriers and improve accessibility to the Meeting House grounds. Rachel Mershon accompanied another group trip to Mississippi to rebuild houses in the devastated areas left by Katrina. Jeannie Marvin re-joined the volunteer hospice program at her local community hospital. Dick Ashdown faithfully did his best to provide heat in the Clear Creek room so that our meetings were more comfortable. Bob Bartles wrote a business plan for the IYM Development Committee for the new building. Todd Kuzma and Neil Mesner encouraged us not to give up on our adult education program. We began reading from a study guide, "Exploring Quakerism" by Marsha D. Holliday, which has provided lively discussions. Jim and Elizabeth Bumgarner returned early from Florida this year. A few of our lively discussions have taken place in their home and it has been a joy to be with them.

A bright spot during our winter was Andrew Bartles', son of Carol and Bob Bartles, request for membership. Over the years we have witnessed his daring travels to far flung places around the world and his natural ability to communicate and assimilate into different cultures. This year Andrew graduates from Beloit College and we look forward to more of his visits with us.

Ruth Raffensperger is also at Beloit College and she has formed a student Quaker group on campus. She is finding more unity in her life this year.

Diane and Mike Dennis led Youth Quakes with our IYM teenagers and developed a service project with young friends from Clear Creek. They painted tee shirts to earn the money to donate to help the AGLI Friends Peace Team program in Africa.

Beth Shobernd became our new clerk of Meeting. We agreed as a Meeting to a two year term for clerks with a co-clerk to help.

We entered into spring with a common feeling and decision. Clear Creek Meeting must have a warmer place to worship, preferably with a convenient access to a bathroom. We expressed our collective frustration in a minute which we presented to the proper channels and resolved to work with IYM to find a solution.

Spring has come as a most welcome relief. On April 5, 2008, members of IYM gathered at the Meeting House to plant new trees. We look forward to resuming meeting within the main building and welcoming IYM home.