

ILYM Planning Session - April 4, 11 a.m.

Present: Michael Batinski (SI); Christopher Gude (Oak Park); Margie Haworth (U-C); Sharon Haworth (U-C); Virginia Hoffman (SI); Mariellen Gilpin (U-C); Peggy Boyer Long (Springfield); Peter Lasersohn (U-C); Neil Mesner (CC); Grayce Mesner (CC); Dawn Rubbert (StL); Mira Tanna (StL); Bob Wixom (Columbia); David Wixom (StL); Susan Yorde (U-C)

One coordinator position is unfilled; Clean-up Coordinator. After thoughtful consideration Mira Tanna (St. Louis MM) offered to switch from Overall Coordinator to Clean-up Coordinator and Mariellen Gilpin (Urbana-Champaign MM) agreed to become Overall Coordinator. David Wixom volunteered to be responsible for clean-up of the men's shower room. Neil Mesner (Clear Creek MM) agreed to take down the display panels. Following a brief silence we adjourned.

BRQ Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business

April 4, 3:30 p.m.

Present (those in bold type attended the business sessions/others worked with young Friends):

**Michael Batinski**

**Christopher Goode** (Oak Park)

**Kate Gunnell** (Oak Park)

**Margie Haworth** (Urbana-Champaign)

Sharon Haworth (Urbana-Champaign)

**Virginia Hoffman** (Southern Illinois)

Mariellen Gilpin (Urbana-Champaign)

Jay Larkin (Urbana-Champaign)

Laura Larkin (Urbana-Champaign)

**Peter Lasersohn** (Urbana-Champaign)

**Peggy Boyer Long** (Springfield)

**Neil Mesner** (Clear Creek)

**Grayce Mesner** (Clear Creek)

**Dawn Rubbert** (St. Louis)

Kelly Schobernd (Clear Creek)

**Mira Tanna** (St. Louis)

**Bob Wixom** (Columbia)

**David Wixom** (St. Louis)

Susan Yorde (Urbana-Champaign)

Steven Walsh (Northside)

Children in attendance: Claire Goode; Laure Goode; Sophie & Claire - guests with the Gunnell/Goode family-; Nathan Lasersohn; Marin Larkin; Elsa Larkin; Kieran Nwakanma; Priya Nwakanma; Kiva Schobernd; Zara Schobernd;

1) We gathered in silence this mid-afternoon, a cool day with bright spring sunshine reflecting on the lake. Trees are budding and green is beginning to appear.

2) Dawn Rubbert offered to clerk the beginning of the meeting until a new clerk is approved. Friends agreed.

3) **Nominating Committee** - Grayce Mesner reported that David Wixom is willing to serve as clerk for two years. Normally this service would begin at the rise of today's

meeting. David has agreed to begin his service at these sessions following approval by the Meeting. Dawn Rubbert and Margie Haworth have agreed to continue as recording clerk and treasurer, respectively. Meeting approved.

4) **Treasurer's Report** - Margie Haworth - A written report was presented and accepted. See last page of these minutes for a copy. Friends are reminded that each MM is asked to contribute \$5.00 per adult resident member annually. [NOTE: Only one MM has sent a donation in the past 18 months. It is through these donations that we are able to offer free attendance for young Friends.]

5) **BRQ Webservant Report** - Peter Lasersohn - Peter was approved last fall to serve for one year. Minutes since 1990 are now posted along with a map showing the location of BRQ monthly meetings and worship groups. There is a calendar and Friends can post events there along with other interactive features. We are encouraged to urge folks at our home meetings to use the site. It has information for planning BRQ sessions including sample registration forms. The url is [www.blueriverquarterly.org](http://www.blueriverquarterly.org).

Minutes to this point were read and approved.

6) **Abuse of Solitary Confinement** - Dawn Rubbert presented on behalf of Mariellen Gilpin who brings this concern from Urbana Champaign MM - We were asked to consider endorsing a petition to Illinois legislators regarding the inhumane use of solitary confinement in a Super Maximum Security prison in Tamms, a small town in Southern Illinois. The petition supports proposed state legislation, HB 2633, which calls for guidelines for the use of solitary confinement. This legislation has been endorsed by AFSC Chicago and AFSC Michigan-Criminal Justice Program along with 26+ organizations. Endorsers can sign on via www. The petition reads as follows:

At Tamms supermax prison over 250 men are being held in permanent solitary confinement, year after year, with no communal activity or human contact of any kind. The Department of Corrections has refused to consider policies of due process safeguards. This form of extreme punishment is beyond the bounds of basic human decency.

We ask that you support HB 2633 to bring this prison back in line with its original intent. This legislation will prohibit seriously mentally ill prisoners from supermax incarceration, establish clear procedures for how men are transferred to one-year, unless doing so would pose a risk to guards or other inmates.

Friends approved.

Friends want to bring this issue to ILYM sessions in June. Peggy Boyer Long agreed to track the issue and write for BRQ an appropriate minute to present during ILYM sessions. BRQ clerk, David Wixom agreed to work with Peggy on the language and they will send it to Sharon for the advance documents. Dawn Rubbert agreed to contact the clerk of ILYM,

Tom Paxson, to place this issue on the agenda. We will ask Mariellen Gilpin to present this minute at YM. If Mariellen is unavailable to do so Peggy Boyer Long will report.

There will be a demonstration at Tamms on April 10<sup>th</sup>. Michael Batinski agreed to forward information to the ILYM Administrative Coordinator for dissemination via the email list.

Friends are encouraged to inform themselves on this issue by reading an article titled *Hell's Hole* in the March 30, 2009 issue or the New Yorker Magazine, pps. 36-45.

Minutes to this point were approved.

7) **Quarterly Planning** - Oversight for Springfield Worship group was moved from Clear Creek to U-C. We need to consider how they shall be grouped for purposes of Blue River Quarterly planning responsibilities. We agreed last fall that Springfield Friends be asked about their preference. They would like to be grouped with U-C MM. Friends approved.

**Fall 2009** sessions are the responsibility of St. Louis MM and DuBois Center has been reserved for the weekend of September 18, 19 & 20.

**Spring 2010** sessions are the responsibility of the small northern Meetings and Worship Groups - Bloomington-Normal, Clear Creek, Decatur, and Spoon River (formerly Peoria-Galesburg). Attendance seems to be down at Menno Haven and we wondered whether we should go back to CILCA near Springfield. We agreed to sit with this and talk amongst ourselves this evening. We will have a short meeting tomorrow morning to consider how to proceed.

Minutes to this point were read and approved.

8) **State of the Society Reports** (attached) - No representatives were present from Decatur Worship Group, Bloomington-Normal MM or Spoon River MM.

9) At this point we adjourned for a yummy Menno Haven dinner agreeing to gather on Sunday morning from 8:45 until 9:30. At that time we will hear from the children about their activities this weekend, complete the reading of State of Society reports and the discussion of where to gather a year from now.

**Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business continued**

Firstday, April 5, 8:50 a.m.

10) We gathered after breakfast and heard a report from the children about their fossil and fairy-house projects. One of the adult leaders, a first time attender himself, commented on how miraculously well the children, some of whom were with us for the first time, came together and worked as a group in relative harmony.

11) State of Society Reports continued (attached)

12) We resumed the conversation about where to hold our 2010 spring sessions. Margie shared some financial information to guide us. Cost of BRQ varies and includes the cost of the camp itself, the cost of the children for whom we do not charge but who incur costs of the camps. It appears we will loose about \$600 dollars this session. Fall 2008 at DuBois Center we lost \$555; Spring 2007 at Menno Haven we lost \$209; in 2007 at Dubois we made \$335.00. Having aired our concerns and available background information we agreed to proceed with locating a site for Spring 2010, ideally by the end of this month. Grayce Mesner and Kate Gunnell agreed to do this as part of the small northern meetings planning responsibilities. Two concerns to address at any future location are an appropriate placed for our youth if the weather is inclement and meals that will properly edify vegetarian Friends.

13) The minutes above were read and approved and we entered a brief silent worship before resuming our program on Friends and the history of Money.

**Springfield Worship Group**

The life of the Spirit in our Worship Group continues to grow.

About a year ago, we began monthly Queries. This is handled more in the way of Worship Sharing. We also have instituted a Joys and Concerns session before rise from Silence. In these ways, we have learned more about ourselves and one another and have gained confidence in speaking from the leading of the Spirit. We are concerned that we have little, if any, vocal ministry during Silence. But we believe the Queries and the Joys and Concerns sessions are giving us more confidence and a stronger sense of "permission" to speak.

We have a wide divergence of approaches to our faith, but a strong group connection.

We hold meeting in our homes, with up to a dozen in attendance. We wish to note that the demographics haven't changed for a number of years. Our group is made up of adults who no longer have small children, and we remain ambivalent about holding First Day School, as we have in past years.

We build internal community by sending out a weekly "Friendly Update" e-mail, by holding occasional potlucks in connection with worship, and by going out to lunch occasionally after meeting. Several of us travel together to Winter Retreat or to Yearly.

We participate in the worship and business of our parent Urbana-Champaign Meeting to the extent that we can. In the past year, Urbana-Champaign guided a weekend session for us on Forgiveness. We are planning another workshop with the Meeting in the fall.

Our community service includes preparing and serving a monthly meal at a homeless shelter, which we have done for the past decade, and participating twice a year in local Interfaith programs.

We conduct some outreach for new members. We run a regular contact calendar listing in the local weekly newspaper and we are listed in wider Quaker resources, including *Friends Journal*. We maintain a library of Quaker materials for our group and for seekers.

### **Columbia Meeting**

Columbia Friends Meeting is gathering, worshiping, and seeking God in covenant community back in our own meetinghouse after a thorough cleaning and mold remediation. While the work was being done we spent six weeks out of the building, which was in some ways disruptive and frustrating. But good things came of it as well. We learned to be flexible, and a few Friends opened their homes to everyone for silent worship and social gatherings. We worked together to get the meetinghouse ready for the work, then afterwards to get it back in order. The experience drew us closer together, and our Meetinghouse is cleaner with new carpeting and a new vanity in the bathroom.

We have had contact with many Friends whom others in the Yearly Meeting area might like to know about. Greg Woods is now coordinator of outreach at William Penn House in Washington, D.C. and is shown in *Friends Journal* (Feb. 2009, p.27). David Westling has been traveling in South America and writes us from the coast of Ecuador. Sabina Wangia, a long time Friend and attender at our Meeting visited us in May and has kept us in touch with her Friends Children's Development Initiative in Kenya. Lily Tinker Fortel is very active with the PeaceWorks community in Columbia and recently went to Iran on a People to People visit. She is available to talk about Iran and her visit.

Closer to home, we have had good reports on our monthly rotating of clerks and assistant clerks for Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business. This has given many Friends who are hesitant to take on a year of responsibility a chance to try out clerking. Another change has been the formation of a Meeting for Learning Committee, which organizes our educational meetings. Quakerism 101 has occupied much of our learning time in the last several months. One of our regular educational meetings is the monthly Bible Study.

In addition to the business meetings and meetings for learning, we have monthly Saturday cleanups and Friday Fun Nights. We often share a meal and either talk or play games, but some get-togethers are enhanced by individuals' talents, such as the time when a Friend entertained with her musical band. The Ice Cream Social in the summer was also a big hit. Some special events and activities include: participation in the community's Sustainability Fair, as well as the Interfaith Thanksgiving celebration; donation to the new Medzou Clinic initiated by University medical students; an informative report and demonstration of Godly Play for children by our First Day School Committee Convener who had attended an FGC Religious Education workshop; and the focus on Spirituality and Art in the June issue of our monthly newsletter. Columbia Friends Meeting extends its work by budgeting 16 annual contributions to Quaker organizations, and 18 to other groups, plus ad hoc donations for special concerns. A discussion hosted by the Spiritual Life and Nurture Committee after a Saturday cleanup focused on supporting one another in caring for our meetinghouse, and addressed how our physical space enhances our spiritual life. Community vigils against militarism are ongoing, but what is special about them to us is that one of our Friends, John Schuder, helped initiate these vigils 26 years ago and continues to participate in them.

The Columbia Friends Meeting has maintained its numbers, and has received several visitors, a few of whom have become regular attenders. We were saddened by the loss of a faithful Friend, Hank Koch, who died in December of last year. The last year has presented challenges and losses for the Columbia Friends Meeting, but we have worked together in dealing with them. We strive to support one another in strengthening a shared sense of community, in carrying out Quaker testimonies, and in deepening our spirituality.

### **Urbana-Champaign Meeting**

The spiritual state of our Meeting, and maybe of any Meeting, is hard to put into words. The state is generally positive. One long-time member said she thought of the word "becoming," and that seems like as good a description as any.

Our membership changes at a steady pace, due mostly to ours being a university town. The overall mix of ages and families and number of attenders remains relatively constant.

This year, we took the Springfield Worship Group under our care. (They have submitted their own report; see below.) They join us in Urbana when they can, and one of our members has visited with them and conducted a workshop, on forgiveness. We are strengthened by their participation and feel good about having a spiritual community that others want to take part in.

Our meetings for worship are more silent than some others. Our monthly queries usually spark some vocal ministry, but many other meetings for worship are silent. IYM Field

Secretary Maurine Pyle gave a workshop on vocal ministry, which had a beneficial but short-lived impact.

In other settings, we speak more. Our Thursday night meetings typically have lively and valuable discussions. These Thursday nights, an opportunity for adults to learn more about Quaker values and practices, currently have the theme "Energized by Early Friends." Other themes have been "Seeking and Finding the Light" and "Forgiving: It's a Process."

Our religious education efforts directed at children are a source of both joy and concern. We have a healthy number of younger children who enjoy First Day School and other child-and family-oriented activities we have organized: a week-long summer day camp, a camp-out on the meetinghouse grounds, trick-or-treating for UNICEF, and family worship. Many adults make these events possible and also feel enriched by the experience. On the concerns side: Our Religious Education convener has to work hard to recruit adults to lead First Day School classes, and we have not maintained the critical mass of young teens needed to support a teen program.

Ministry and Oversight formed committees of care to address a serious conflict between members. We sought input from the IYM Field Secretary and IYM Ministry and Advancement members, and have worked extensively with both parties to find a way through. The work continues, but the largest issues have been resolved. The practice of looking for that of God in everyone has been very helpful. We are involved in the local community in various ways. Once a month, we make sandwiches for a local charity that feeds the homeless. We recently held a pancake supper and silent auction to raise money for our emergency fund, which is available to needy members of the community. We host an acupuncture clinic to relieve stress for veterans, current members of the armed forces, and their immediate support networks. We have collected clothing and books for migrant workers and their families. We have also worked with other local organizations on projects of mutual interest, such as helping to pay for a billboard about the true cost of war.

Many of the activities mentioned above build community. In addition, we have a monthly potluck after meeting for worship, and we have revived our Quaker Eights dinner parties.

### **Clear Creek Meeting**

Clear Creek enjoyed the respite year during which no major renovation or construction disrupted our prairie space. But as we settled into the Clear Creek room in the newly situated Junior Yearly Meetinghouse for the winter of 2007/2008, it became obvious to us that space would not be suitable for our needs. It was too difficult to heat and too distant from restroom facilities. We relied on the generosity of the Nelson family for the use of their home. In the spring of 2008, we seriously discussed erecting a small year-round meetinghouse on the cemetery property, but determined doing so would take us

away from the Yearly Meeting grounds with which we have a spiritual tie, and would also hamper the Yearly Meeting's pursuit of new buildings. We reaffirmed our support for the

Yearly Meeting building project and decided to pledge \$50,000 toward "bricks and mortar" costs for the new buildings, and also to offer \$20,000 in matching funds for donations from individuals for construction costs. This Clear Creek Challenge was announced at the 2008 annual sessions and met by April 2009. In addition to lending our financial support, we worked closely with architect Chris Goode, the Site Envisioning and Development Committee, and Maintenance and Planning to develop plans for the new buildings that would meet our needs as a monthly meeting while also being flexible enough to meet the needs of ILYM and other groups that might use the space. We met several times to review the plans and are pleased with the results.

During the winter of 2008/2009 we continued to meet in the Clear Creek room as the weather allowed and in the Nelson home on first Sundays. The power outage in December 2008 caused the plumbing to freeze and burst in both the Meetinghouse and the Nelson home, leaving us refugees once again. We were grateful for the hospitality of Dick Ashdown in whose home we met until the Meetinghouse plumbing was repaired. Our activity focuses on worship each Sunday, with discussion hour prior to worship most weeks. We continue hosting our First Sunday gatherings where we provide First Day School, fellowship and potluck for Central Illinois meetings.

We enjoyed our annual retreat in May, led by Maurine Pyle and Mariellen Gilpin. Our theme was "Holding Thee in the Light." Maurine and Mariellen helped us to consider what we mean by that phrase and how we pray. In October, we hosted Continuing Committee. We are always happy to share the ILYM grounds with others. On January 31, we sponsored a retreat in Normal, inviting Friends from Bloomington/Normal, Spoon River, Decatur and Springfield. Paul Buckley, ILYM Field Secretary, was our facilitator using the theme, "Daily Life/Sunday Worship - What is the Connection?" Since then we have had some wonderful meetings for worship where there has been much welcome sharing as well as connected silence.

Like most meetings, we have had our share of joys and sorrows in the past year. In May, we celebrated with the Bartles family as Andrew graduated from Beloit College. Several of us attended the open house in Andrew's honor at the Bartles home in Grand Detour. Andrew requested membership last spring, and was happily approved during the summer. He is now a student in Barcelona, Spain where he attends the local meeting.

Kris Simon, 72, of Ottawa, passed away March 18 at her home after a bout of pneumonia and other physical problems. After a life of being married to Simon Simon, a Presbyterian minister who died in 1998, and raising 6 children, she made the decision to become a Quaker. She was a ray of sunshine in our meeting, worshipping with us between her many travels and living life to the fullest. Clear Creek Friends led the memorial service in the manner of Friends at the Ottawa Funeral Home.

James McNabb Bumgarner, 89, passed away on April 3 at his home in Port St. Lucie, FL, his family at his side. He enjoyed a diverse career, having served in the U.S. Air Force and retiring at the rank of colonel with 32 years of service. He was also a circuit court judge for 12 years, retiring in 1989. He was recalled twice to the 10th Judicial Circuit bench, in 1991 and 1995. He was a member of many veteran, law, and community organizations. He was a lively member of our discussion groups and always joined us for Meeting for Worship when he was home in Illinois. A memorial service for Jim was held at the ILYM Meetinghouse at McNabb on May 16, 2009.

### **Southern Illinois Monthly Meeting**

Southern Illinois Friends enjoyed a wider commitment to its "life of the meeting" this year, with attendees at business numbering 9 to 14 adults, which is approximately our all time peak. We gather together every couple of months in Friends' homes for a pot luck which usually has a topic that deepens the spiritual life or sense of community in the meeting. Some Friends have participated in a weekly discussion group reading from Woolman's journal. We accepted two members this year, Tom Hensold and Maurine Pyle, but we said goodbye to Lisa Zee (who has moved to California) and our membership remains at 5 resident adults.

Our children's group has also remained steady with five kids: Victor, Corey, Elias, Marlena and Delia, with visits from the "old kids" Noah, Justin, Nate and Adam.

We continue to question the long term suitability of our meeting space, but are making do with our beloved Interfaith Center for the time being. We labored over the question of taking out liability insurance, which was a deepening exercise for us and, having agreed to proceed, we felt the peace of following a call to responsibility. We have also been recognizing our call to support our local Peace Coalition and Good Samaritan House shelter.

We still struggle with doing meaningful outreach, and will soon be discussing whether to change our official name from *Southern Illinois Society of Friends*. A visit from ILYM Field Secretary Paul Buckley inspired further thoughts on the topic of outreach. This spring we are organizing a visit and talk by Getry Agizah of African Great Lakes Initiative,

Kenya. It is an opportunity for us to connect with local groups and make Friends' presence and witness known.

Finally, one of the issues that took us into deep seeking was the prospect of supporting Maurine Pyle's traveling ministry. Maurine's gifts were welcomed by all in our meeting during the past few years, and though we are all new to the role of supporting a traveling minister, we united with joy to walk this path with Maurine. We pray for God's guidance along the way.

## Saint Louis Friends Meeting

As it seems we have reported many times before, things are changing at St. Louis Friends Meeting. In the midst of this transformation - some of it positive, some of it troubling, some of it simply change - the meeting is working to find balance and a deepening sense of spirit.

There is an increased sense of "expectant waiting" in our meetings for worship, with deep and prayerful silence. The overall quantity of vocal ministry has lessened, but what is shared is sincere and meaningful. We have been experimenting with having our first day school Friends join us for the last 15 minutes of meeting for worship rather than for the first 15 minutes. An advantage is that children can experience a meeting already gathered. We feel the process has helped us examine the spiritual needs of both adults and children.

Our struggle with long, difficult meetings for worship with a concern for business has borne very welcome fruit. Friends feel there is a "world of difference" between our hours-long marathon meetings of years past and the well ordered, worshipful, yet blessedly brief meetings for business we now attend. Keeping the meetings to a reasonable length has both enabled and encouraged attendance for more Friends.

On the other hand, our attempt to restructure the way in which we do the meeting's work is an ongoing and sometimes difficult process. Our intention was to increase participation in the work of the meeting and to decrease Quaker burnout by opening up the committee structure. The hope was that this would facilitate broader and more varied opportunities for Friends, while still supporting the life of the meeting. However, two years into the process, we find there is confusion, a sense that important work is not happening, and a concern that we may not truly be nurturing or drawing upon Friends talents. We continue to seek equilibrium in carrying out this important work.

We have a sense that many of our regular members and attenders are coming to meeting less often; we are not clear about what has caused this shift. While it is concerning, it may simply be part of the ebb and flow that every meeting experiences.

Our first day school continues to be strong. Our students recently wrote and performed their own puppet show about stewardship of the earth. We rejoice to see our young Friends growing in the spirit. Perhaps one of the best indicators of the state of our society came when one of our youngest Friends was asked, "What is it like for you to be in meeting for worship?" She replied, "It feels peaceful and kind." That is a fine testimony indeed.

## Treasurer's Report

April 4, 2009

Balance on Hand Sep 30, 2008: \$3,277.40

### DEBITS

10/24/2008	James Taylor - program & travel	300.00
11/11/2008	Menno Haven - Spring '09 Deposit	514.50
11/18/2008	DuBois Center - Fall '08	<u>2,648.75</u>
	TOTAL DEBITS	3,463.25

### CREDITS

10/22/2008	Fall Fees	1,130.00
10/23/2008	Fall Fees	200.00
10/26/2008	Fall Fees	1,313.50
11/11/2008	Donations	200.00
12/31/2008	Interest	8.24
3/18/2009	Spring Fees	348.40
3/24/2009	Spring Fees & Donations	508.40
3/30/2009	Spring Fees	<u>213.40</u>
	TOTAL CREDITS	3,921.94

Balance on Hand April 1, 2009: \$3,736.09

### Oct '08 - Mar '09 Meeting Contributions

11/11/2008	Columbia	\$200
3/24/2009	Columbia	\$200