

10th Month, 7th Day, 1988

Blue River Quarterly - Rivercross
Retreat Center

Barbara Bradshaw opened meeting
with silence.

Barbara has been trying to collect
notes from past Quarterly Meetings.
(Archives: John Hoffman, Illinois
Historical Society, 306 Library, 1408 W.
Gregory Drive, Urbana, Ill. 61801

State of Meeting LeDers & Reports

St. Louis Meeting Barbara Bradshaw
Decatur - Alfred Dupree

Columbia - Bob Wexon

Clear Creek - Grayce Hawthth

Urbana, Champaign - Chris ~~James~~ Jcius

Southern Illinois - Peg Norton

Bloomington Normal - Mary Cunningham

Terre Haute - Frank & Julie Young

Bob Wexon suggested that we write
a LeDer to Helen Jean and Don Nelson
wishing them a happy anniversary

3:00 pm. break for tea until 3:30

Reconvened with silence

Bob Wexon ~~was~~ nominated Grayce Hawthth

To be new clerk of Blue Roost
Quarterly

Next Quarterly Meeting

Some weekend ~~soon~~ after Easter
which falls 4th Month (April) 3rd Day
Peg Morton & Bob Wixon suggested
Elise Brubaker as possible speaker for the
next Quarterly Meeting

Columbia Monthly Meeting
State of the Meeting Report to Blue River Quarterly Meeting
Oct. 15, 1988

Last year (Sept. 1987 to date) found Columbia Friends somewhat in a spiritual doldrum. Our spiritual life had its ups and downs this past year and the Meeting's programs were only partially supported. Attendance at our Monthly Meetings for Business has unfortunately been limited to a few regulars. Serving as hosts for the Illinois Yearly Meeting Continuing Committee in March, 1988, drew us together to meet the needed tasks for hospitality for visiting Friends. After much prayerful searching last spring, we made a number of changes, such as having our Adult Discussion Group meet first, now at 9:30 a.m., and followed by our silent Meeting for Worship at 10:30 a.m. This fall the Advancement Committee placed some advertisements in the student newspaper, has placed some personal notes on the Newsletter to our infrequent attenders and has improved the outreach of the Meeting's small Library.

The now regular appearance of a several page bimonthly Meeting Newsletter and on alternate months, a one page Meeting Calendar, has facilitated communication within the Meeting, reduced somewhat the need for verbal announcements and improved the attendance at Meeting functions. We use these two publications to announce programs in Advancement, Ministry and Worship and Religious Education areas. The faithfulness and endurance of the several Friends preparing these publications is warmly appreciated by all.

The revitalized Ministry and Worship Committee has had an excellent series of First Day Discussions on guidance in our personal lives, Queries, George Fox's messages, the meaning of membership, military taxes and conscience, and others yet to come. Several members attended Mo. Valley Friends Conference on Sept. 23-25 with Elise Boulding developing the theme of "Touching the Future - The Ultimate Spiritual Journey". Most all of our members joined in the depth of loving fellowship and a sense of renewed personal commitment for our first Friends wedding in several years, as our Clerk, Gertrude Marshall exchanged marriage vows with Robert Marble on Friday, October 7, 1988, in a worship service under the care of our Meeting ('twas beautiful).

The Environmental Concerns Committee planned several gatherings that led to the preparation and approval by Monthly Meeting of a set of environmental queries; these were forwarded to Illinois Yearly Meeting. This committee also planned the 16th annual Quaker Family Float Trip for Saturday, June 4th, 1988; 13 children and 19 adults rafted down the Meramec River and became better acquainted with each other, with the tadpoles, turtles and wildflowers encountered and with God's Spirit that invigorates all of nature's beautiful assets. After camping overnight, we migrated to nearby Ononodoga Cave and enjoyed its beautiful display of stalactites, stalagmites and circular ridges of limestone surrounding small pools of water. To start the fall season, we drove 90 miles to the

northwest to Swan Lake National Wildlife Refuge on Sunday, Oct. 11, 1988. 11 children and 14 adults went on this Meeting Outing and saw 1000's of wild migrating geese and ducks, enjoyed the precision of their high flying V's, and also saw 6 herons and 11 deer.

Our dedicated members on the Religious Education Committee have struggled with the small size of the First Day School, the wide stretch of ages attending, the unpredictable attendance for even the best prepared teacher, and the competition of other areas for families with two working parents. After sifting many ideas, this Committee has recommended three principles for this fall - 1) greater coherence in the classes by having a broad theme within which volunteer teachers will pick particular subjects which fit their own beliefs and experiences. This fall's theme will be Old Testament Bible stories. 2) A monthly age-based lesson sequence - preschoolers on 1st Sunday of the month, K-3rd grade on second Sunday, 4th-6th grades on the third Sunday and intergenerational on the fourth Sunday. 3) Greater participation of other adults as volunteers.

This report has covered mainly this fall's thoughts of our five active committees. Hopefully, we can report at a later date, that their activities have brought the desired quickening and sensitizing of our corporate spiritual life as Friends.

Robert Wixom
for Columbia Monthly Meeting

October 10, 1988
Decatur Monthly Meeting
State of the Meeting

We continue to have eight members and attenders who meet regularly in our homes. In spite of our small size our meetings for worship often contain inspiring messages. Unfortunately we have no children or youths.

Gary Reynolds is making good progress in his recovery from a stroke he suffered in July.

Our members and attenders have been involved with voter registration, environmental education, a recycling network, working with the Decatur Peace Alliance, local schools and charities, and working on Yearly Meeting site maintenance.

Alfred Dupree

STATE OF THE MEETING REPORT, September, 1988

As reported in our last statement, April 1988, there has been an ongoing attempt in our Meeting to reconcile the need of adults to preserve the benefit of silent worship with the need of the many children now attending to be brought into the spirit and appreciation of the silence. Several things are being done to bring this about:

The First Day School Committee has initiated an experimental "Junior Meeting for Worship" on the third First Day of each month for all children and Young Friends (except teenagers) to gather in Friends House with their teachers, parents and any adults who are interested. The meeting includes centering down, singing, stories and unprogrammed worship.

On fifth First Days, which occur in four months of the year, children will stay during the entire Meeting for Worship if they wish to, but some special features will be programmed into the hour to make it more meaningful to them.

A general willingness is being sought in the adults to let parents keep their children in Meeting for Worship as long as they wish, if they do not annoy or disrupt with their noise.

The First Day School and Ministry and Caring Committees will evaluate these approaches from time to time to see how they are working out. There seem to be increasing good will and determination among us to make the integration of children into the spiritual and social life of the Meeting a growing and satisfying experience for all.

This would seem to be the appropriate place to report on four additions to our baby population since last April: Jim and Leslie Stuart went to Brazil to get their Serenity, born on May 4, and returned with her and 14-month old Sebastian Jacob who was severely malnourished, but is now, like his sister, a thriving, bright-eyed baby. Caryn Renee was born to Yvonne Hill and David Wixom on August 20 and John Harold was born to Kathie and Harold Poe on August 19 and, although premature, is now at home and doing well. Our loving good wishes go out to all of these babies and their parents.

Our First Day attendance is in the seventies and eighties now, but we have sadly had to part with several dear members lately: John Brady has moved to the Philadelphia area, Nan Joyner - to Barnesville, Ohio, Jean Roberts - to Lorraine Ohio and, most recently, Tom and Jacque Thirikel and their children, Sarah and Benjamin - to Kansas City. All of them are very much missed and we wish them well in their new lives.

Fortunately we have gained ~~two~~ ² new members recently, Zachary Metz-Bradshaw, son of Barbara and Vaughn Bradshaw, who is attending Oak ~~wood~~ ^{Wopa} Friends School, and ~~Mary Phillips, who has transferred her membership from Sunrise Preparative Meeting in Springfield, Mo. bringing with her her two children, Maria and Damon, in Poughkeepsie, New York.~~

Andrea Hamilton, a long-time attender in our Meeting was married to Frank Flinn in our Meeting House on July 30. The wedding was followed by a joyous celebration in the community hall of the hospitable Lutheran church near us, a pattern which seems to be evolving for our weddings.

We are looking forward to the wedding under the care of the Meeting of member Chris Tigh and Joe Katrosh on October 29.

Two new committees have been formed: the Committee for Environmental Concerns and the Neighborhood, Play Yard Committee, which is creating a safe, happy outdoor space for our toddlers.

Our Meeting reaches out to our neighborhood and the world through several individuals, groups and activities. Among them we might mention representatives to Rock Hill Ministries, to Interfaith Dialogues, members serving on the AFSC Program Committee, on the COPE Committee (which helps paroled prisoners adjust to society), on the Religious Outreach Committee of the Nuclear Freeze Campaign, on the Companion Communities Committee (helping refugees from Honduras re-establish their homes in El Salva-

dor), and members concerned with the Pro-Nica Friends in Managua, not to mention members who are working through the Peace Committee of the Meeting on counter-military recruitment in area high schools and promoting letter-writing to Congresspeople on issues suggested by FCNL on the first First Day of the month.

It is sign-up time for the re-grouping of Friendly Dozens which will meet monthly in homes for potlucks and discussions of a great variety of topics suggested by the Advancement Committee and interested individuals. Some of these are: George Fox, John Woolman, Parenting, Friends' History, Simple Living, Making Music together, Spiritual Journeys, Hidden Service, and Creating Community.

Our Fall retreat at Camp Tambo near Union is almost upon us as we write this. The Advancement Committee has chosen "Conflict Resolution" as the main topic and there will be individual discussion groups and workshops on applying conflict resolution in the home, at work, in the community, internationally, etc.

The Women's Group continues to meet in homes twice a month for worship-sharing and is proving to be a source for caring and concern for one another which is very important to those who take part.

Finally, after trying to summarize all the above, we realize as always that "Love is the hardest lesson" and that we never can learn it completely, no matter how many opportunities we strive to create in our Meetings for Worship and for Business, in all our committees and groups, large and small. Still we keep trying and we think that some progress is being made.

Submitted by Tony Bryan and Eldora Spiegelberg

September 27, 1988

As always, at the beginning of the academic year, the Meeting rejoices in the return of old students and the arrival of new ones, either coming from other meetings or exploring Quakerism for the first time. We will miss Caton and Linda Roberts and their daughter Leah, one of our student families, and wish them well in their new location.

We were saddened by the death of Robert Bales, husband of Sandy and father of Melinda and Thad, who was a major force in saving the local prairie environment along the Salt Fork of the Vermillion River. Following his memorial service on August 21, a gathering of his family and many friends was held at the Meeting House.

A concern has been brought to the Meeting about our position on gay and lesbian issues, especially that of same sex marriages. It was pointed out that the Meeting has no clear statement as to whether or not gays, ^{and bisexuals} and lesbians are considered to be full participants in the Meeting community and are as welcome as heterosexuals. The Ministry and Oversight Committee has undertaken to lead the Meeting's consideration of these issues. As a first step, it is putting together a small anthology of readings to be distributed to the Meeting community. The second step will be to hold discussions so that all concerned will have the opportunity to express their opinions. We hope that a greater understanding of the problems faced by gays and lesbians will result from this measured and thoughtful approach. The third step will be to draft a statement of the Meeting's position on homosexuality, the place of gays and lesbians among Friends, and same sex marriages (or statements of commitment). In this undertaking, we are helped by the knowledge that other meetings are trying to respond to these same concerns.

Among other items of interest, we are now mailing out our newsletter to those who request it, keeping our larger circle of friends and attenders informed of the life of the Meeting. Because of the drought, work on the Peace Garden has been on hold but will ^{continue with the} return of cooler weather. A birthday party for Dorothy Romack was held at the Meeting House on September 10. Music was provided by "Thad and the Boys."

We have missed the presence of many long-standing friends but rejoice that they have had so many rich and varied traveling experiences. Janet and Ken Southwood journeyed to Mexico, visiting Friends House in Mexico City. Frankie and Mahlon Day have been Elderhosteling at various sites in the U.S. Bobbi Trist and Rebecca and Avram Golden-Trist visited friends and relatives as well as several Meetings in Germany and Switzerland. Gene and Virginia Gilmore are currently traveling in Europe.

An important spiritual concern recently brought before the Meeting is the function of the Queries. Rather than using those provided in the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice, for the past several years it has been our custom to compose Queries in the context of current Meeting concerns. The Meeting is now being asked whether or not these Queries have been helpful in guiding the life of the community and whether or not we should return to taking some, if not all, our Queries from Faith and Practice. Our hope is to continue to improve our Queries so that they become ever more useful guidelines for our individual and communal life.