

Bloomington-Normal Friends Meeting

State of Meeting Report Spring 1990

The Bloomington-Normal Friends Meeting continues much as it has all year with little change in schedule or activities. Meeting rotates among six homes, with a Religious Education program for our six children on the first, third, and fifth Sundays. About ten adults join Meeting for Worship fairly regularly. We have not had any Worship-Sharing session this year because of no felt need and informal sharing together by members and attenders in many other ways. No new members have joined us, no~~f~~ have any left.

While outwardly there seems to be little change, inwardly we seem to have been finding centered Meetings for Worship in recent weeks with searching vocal ministry. Changes have gone on the lives of a number us, which has brought forth support and concern, as well as a reappraisal of life. One of our members, Emily Dale, is organizing a March on Washington for Children in Need, planned for May 1991, and we are seeking ways to best help this important effort and are requesting the support of Quarterly and Yearly Meeting. We have also been assisting in the planning for the tenth annual Memorial Day weekend Peace worship service in Bloomington-Normal to celebrate Peace as an alternative to war. Laura Treadway will be a Freshman at Earlham College next year. We have had several new people inquire about Quakerism and join us for Meeting for Worship. In quiet but not always simple, straight-forward, shared ways; some growth in the Spirit of the Meeting and the people who make up its community seems to be taking place.

CLEAR CREEK MONTHLY MEETING
STATE OF THE MEETING REPORT - April 1990

As we reflect over the past year and realize that much is the same as the year before, we know our loss of Anna Mary Wilson has left an empty spot in many aspects of our lives - both personal and Meeting-related. Noone will be able to fill her shoes, but many of us will take over the responsibilities she had so willingly accepted.

Meeting for Business was not always held - are two people so much fewer than three? Discussion group was put on hold until we could meet again at the Meeting-house. Friendly Circle met fewer times, but we did substitute visits to a Meeting member in a nursing home and a guest speaker from AFSC. We had one 5th Sunday activity in July, which is told about in the Winter 1989 Among Friends.

In a year of 365 days it seems to be getting harder and harder to schedule 1 hour out of 52 days for Meeting for Worship. And because we ask ourselves "why" we decided to include queries to guide us to the answers.

- 1) Have I as a Friend at Clear Creek considered what it would be like if noone came to attend Sunday morning worship?
What would it be like if I attended and noone else was there?
- 2) When is my attendance important?
to me as an individual?
to others who are attending?
- 3) Have I examined the reasons for not attending Meeting for Worship?
What are my priorities?
- 4) Am I able to put into words what would be an ideal Meeting for Worship for me?
Do I have an understanding of Quakerism as it relates to Meeting for Worship?
- 5) What can I do to make Meeting for Worship more satisfying for myself?
for others?
- 6) Would I be willing to discuss my needs with one or two members of the Meeting to help make Meeting for Worship a more satisfying experience?

We are hoping for deep thought and discussions in trying to answer these queries as individuals and as a group.

Helen Jean Nelson, Ministry & Counsel
Mildred McQuilkin, Advancement
Sue Pascoe, Clerk
Grayce Haworth, Recording Clerk

STATE OF THE MEETING REPORT

Columbia Monthly Meeting (Spring, 1990)

We continue to meet regularly on First Day mornings at 110 Hitt St., now the Presbyterian Student Center. Our attendance has probably averaged 12 during the past year, with about 15 in recent months. The quality of worship has been generally improving, and some of our meetings have been very satisfying. We feel a need, however, to prepare more during our daily lives, so as to bring to meeting an appropriately open self.

The possibility that our accustomed meeting place might become unavailable to us prompted us to spend much time last year to find another suitable meeting place, either to rent or buy. After several months of searching, we were offered the opportunity to continue renting our accustomed place, with better provision for First Day School. We have accepted this as the best solution at present. Nevertheless, the search was beneficial in pulling the members together and in learning about possibilities and problems, including the financial burden to a small meeting of the purchase of a building that would meet the needs of all.

We have had many good experiences this year. The early Sunday morning worship sharing/discussion groups have been well attended and helpful. An indirect bonus has been the carry-over of spiritual attitudes developed here into the Meeting for Worship, which immediately follows. The topics have covered a wide range, including Quaker social concerns, the spiritual basis for Quaker life, reports of other meetings, and meeting problems, including the search for a new meeting house. In fact, this report was drawn up at one such session by the meeting, the first time it has not been written by one individual. Doing this provided a general review for all, and showed us several possibilities for improvements.

A mid-week discussion group was organized and meets weekly to study Douglas Gwyn's new book, "Unmasking the Idols." It has been found to be stimulating and thought-provoking, in addition to being of value for reviewing our foundations and priorities and developing a more spiritual outlook.

Individual members had been actively addressing important social and environmental concerns, including anti-military, anti-capital punishment, alternatives to violence in prison, nurturing peacemakers, and appreciation/protection of our environment. The Earthcare checklist, "Walking Gently on the Earth," was discussed and seven intergenerational outings were arranged by our environmental committee.

We have been fortunate in having gained two new members, ^{including the birth of a new baby, Nicholas Patton, his} and about 5 new ^{regularly attend} attenders this year, who have brought fresh insights and many valuable contri- ^{family} butions. Some became acquainted with us at our Open House last fall.

Our previously very successful First Day School had problems during the fall, but has been reorganized and is operating well again. We had difficulties with loss of our room, with those running it--all parents of some of the children--not having enough time due to changed personal situations, and to lack of regular attendance by a number of the children. At present, the teaching staff has been expanded to take in adults without young children, and only one major lesson a month is being offered, with study materials available for home instruction.

We continue to regret the loss of some formerly regular attenders and members. In some cases, the loss was unavoidable, due to their having to move away, but in other cases people seem to have discontinued because of problems in balancing work and family responsibilities or the problems that developed in the First Day School. Of course, there may be other reasons we do not know. We fear that we probably do not communicate well enough with visitors and attenders the real meanings of Quaker worship and the importance of the spiritual life and its nurture in our daily lives.

Peoria-Galesburg Monthly Meeting

Attendance at the 10:30 AM Meeting for Worship has seen a slight increase. Particularly welcome are the three children. The attenders from the Peoria area find the drive to Galesburg a long one but come anyway. Their numbers are approaching the point where a worship service in the Peoria region has come under discussion.

The revival of potlucks has produced some much-needed opportunities for fellowship, which otherwise have to be satisfied in the post-worship coffee and discussion period.

Business meeting is irregular, being called principally for budgetary discussions. However, distance from one another and persistent obligations make it very difficult to attempt any activity beyond meeting for worship and support of Friends' activities elsewhere. For example, beginning in mid-May almost every member in the Galesburg area will be out-of-town for many weeks, so that even Meeting for Worship will be impossible until late August. Nevertheless, the members and attenders as individuals are active in worthwhile and time-consuming projects which anyone would recognize as an outgrowth of Friends' concerns.

Friends' Meeting of Rolla
(Preparative)

State of the Meeting, April, 1990

During the past year we have been joined by four new attenders and one family asked to be removed from our rolls.

The first first day of each month we meet at the home of one of our members for study, followed by worship. We have completed a study of Quaker Testimonies using Friends United Meeting material and have now begun a study of The Book of God, by Gabriel Josipovici.

The last first day of each month we meet for worship at the Stanton home, followed by a potluck lunch.

Our scheduled monthly Meeting for Business is the third first day.

There are five children in our group, and we continue to try to find ways to provide first-day school experiences for them. We invited Marlou Carlson to lead us in a week-end seminar last October, which dealt with first-day schools in small meetings. This was an inspiring experience and had a positive effect. In Van Stoecker we have a willing and resourceful teacher, but some children are not receiving the benefits of his teaching on a regular basis.


We had a luncheon meeting with Robert and Ardith Hinshaw, representing FCNL, as they passed through Rolla last spring.

We were very pleased to have a week-end visit from Bob and Pat Wixom last January, representing the Advancement Committee of IYM. They brought with them a young family who had just come from the Soviet Union, and who hoped to emigrate to the US. Another inspiring week end.

Most of us seem to find peace in our rustic meetingshed. The sometimes smoky wood fire in the winter and the songs of birds and insects in the warm weather seem to strengthen our inward experience of God. We hope to enclose the insulation between the rafters and provide a better-fitting door this summer. This will complete work on the structure. We may have to make an additional bench.

We now have a newsletter which is circulated by mail approximately once per month.

Many of the persons on our rolls rarely attend Meeting. The six or seven who do attend faithfully are finding our worship, study and fellowship a vital experience.


George McPherson, Jr.
Recording Clerk.

From Blue River Quarterly Clerk - The July 1990 State of the Meeting report from Rolla was not received soon enough to include in the IYM minute book. In looking back through our Quarterly records, Rolla had turned in a longer report at our spring 1990 meeting, which I feel is worth circulating since they have not had a report in the IYM minute book since 1988.

CALLED MEETING FOR WORSHIP
April 22, 1990

1. The selection committee has found people for the Nominating committee. Melissa Meyer, David Wixom, Tom Short and Doris Fridley have all agreed to serve. We don't have a convenor yet, but one will be chosen. Meeting approved.
2. The IYM Religious Education Committee will give a workshop on storytelling in religious education here at the meetinghouse on September 22 - 23, 1990. Meeting approved.
3. The state of Society report was read, ammended and approved.

STATE OF THE SOCIETY
St. Louis Religious Society of Friends
April, 1990

St. Louis monthly meeting continues with attendance around eighty for meeting for worship and monthly meeting often reaches thirty.

Janet and Andrew Heath have transfered their memberships from the Richmond, Va. meeting. We have been blessed with three babies, Michael Benjamin Smith, Peter Ruberton and Leah Garrison. Roger Sherman has been approved as a new member, and Dawn Rubbert has requested membership. We are saddened at the many vital people who have recently left St. Louis, most recently Jude Reppell who moved to Idaho.

We have over thirty children who attend meeting and at least twenty are there on any given first day. We hired a wonderful young woman to care for the wee ones and are grateful to the volunteers who teach the first day schooll classes. We are running out of room for them. Junior meeting for worship, a once-a-month meeting where all children are welcome seems to be very well liked by some of the age groups. The older children are not as impressed as the younger ones. Our FDS committee continues to work like Trojans.

The fall retreat and Spring retreat saw a marked fall off in attendance, although both were very well recieved.

The fall retreat at Camp Dubois in south Illinois centered on John Punchon's Encounter with Silence. Bob Warbin lead a workshop on speaking in meeting, Diane Boyles lead a worksop on tender listening, and Frank Flynn gave a beginning talk on Bible study.

The annual Sale for Service at Christmas was a big success as was the Easter Breakfast.

Two families gave the gift of seed money for a fund which friends can use to allow them to do humanitarian work. One Friend was aided by this fund to help observe the recent Nicaraguan political scene.

The spring retreat was a one day silent retreat. All who attended felt this was a very worthwhile and fulfilling experience. Because of the response more silent retreats have been and will be scheduled.

Our annual Attenders Dinner also saw a drop in attendance. However the discussion on Why Do We Gather? was noted by many to fall into a worship sharing, making the evening very meaningful and

resulting in the two applications for membership mentioned earlier.

We are not without tensions. We have lost some people who stay away. As one Friend put it, "I can't come to meeting and grit my teeth." We have had some tension-filled meetings for worship with strong ideas and feelings not shared by the whole group stirring a lot of emotions. We continue to address these issues. We ask; How do we create an environment that is accepting and loving and provides each Friend the best environment for that person to build a relationship with God?

During four meetings for business significant time was spent discussing the recommendation of the Peace Committee to rebuild and reinstall in front of the meetinghouse a sign bearing a portion of the Peace Testimony. Agreement could not be reached on the wording of the sign. Some Friends wondered for whose purpose we would install this or any other sign. Since no agreement could be reached, it was agreed that no action would be taken. This stimulated much reflection and discussion about how Friends live out the Peace testimony in their lives now.

We have noticed that there are a few small groups, the womens worship sharing and the Bible study group, which are very strong.

Being overextended seems to be a theme in most of our lives. How do we balance being nurtured in our meeting and giving to and nurturing the meeting? With all our trials and troubles we still feel many intense bonds. We struggle, seek, laugh and love and know that God is there to guide us if we remain open.

FURTHER INFORMATION REGARDING THE MAY 18-20TH QUAKER FAMILY RIVER FLOAT TRIP. CONTACTS: BOB & PAT WIXOM (314) 442-0426. (IN ST. LOUIS CONTACT: TOM SHORT 822-1894.)

The attitude of the parents toward each other is probably the most important single factor in the development of the child.

**by Rachel R. Cadbury in
The Choice Before Us**

Friends with trucks and vans are advised to park in the driveway of the Friends house as they might otherwise get ticked for parking on the street by the Rock Hill police. Friends who do not drive trucks or vans are asked to park elsewhere than the driveway.

Urbana-Champaign Friends Meeting - State of the Meeting

April, 1990

The 19th annual peace bazaar was a great success, well over \$2000 was raised for a variety of local and international organizations supporting peace and social justice. Quite a number of bargains were to be had, including some fine pieces of pottery crafted by Franky and Mahlon Day.

The Young Friends of North America met here over the weekend of April 1 and helped us clean out the Meeting house attic. Members of the Charleston Worship group also attended potluck with us on April 1.

The adult young Friends of the Meeting have been getting together on a weekly basis for music and fellowship.

Ethan Dengate has reported to us that First Day School would like to have more children and would like to renovate some of the downstairs area of the Meeting house as a place for their age group to meet.

We have held a retreat in Macomb, Illinois on Easter weekend. It was a time for the sharing of talents, discussion, growth and joy. We were grateful to have friends from Quincy and Bloomington-Normal attending.

Scott Keyes will be delayed in coming back from Texas by his surgery, but is doing very well and will be back in late April.

During the past several months the Meeting house has been the site of several discussion groups. Last fall we had a successful series tied together under the label of Quakerism 101. A series of discussions on abortion were held and we have also continued our not yet completed examination of same sex marriages. The examination of these subjects has led to the concern that some Friends may mute their sincerely held beliefs in an effort to avoid offending others at a time when honest discussion is called for.

Further serious discussion looms on the horizon. The local First Mennonite Church building is for sale as the Mennonites are moving to a new location. The proposal has been made that we purchase the building for a new larger Meeting house. Our feelings are mixed as to the feasibility and the desirability of making the move. We plan on holding a Meeting at the Mennonite Church to get a feel for the place.

We would like to thank Virginia Gilmore for stepping in to serve as clerk for the last year and Gwen Klassen for agreeing to shoulder the responsibility during the coming year.

We will soon be missing many of our attenders as they leave school and go on to other places. We wish them well in their new endeavors.

**Ministry and Oversight Committee
Urbana-Champaign Friends Meeting**