

April 16, 2011 - Saturday 11:15 a.m.

ILYM Planning - We are responsible for FUN during the June 15-19, 2011 sessions. Steve Tamari convened as he is the Over-All Clerk.

Present:

David Finke (Columbia)

Dale Gardner (Urbana-Champaign)

Sharon Haworth (Urbana-Champaign)

Peter Lasersohn (Urbana-Champaign)

Margaret Katranides (St. Louis)

Janet Means (Lake Forest)

Grayce Mesner (Clear Creek)

Neil Mesner (Clear Creek)

Fariba Murray (Bloomington-Normal)

Dawn Rubbert (St. Louis)

Steve Tamari (St. Louis)

Mira Tanna (St. Louis)

Bobbi Trist (Urbana-Champaign)

David Wixom (St. Louis)

The theme for this year's sessions is "As Way Opens: Discerning our Path in the Light."

Children's morning classes are Thursday through Saturday, 9-noon. Christina Schultz has agreed to be a support person. Two or three teachers are needed for each age group.

- Wee Friends will be the responsibility of Clear Creek Friends
- Bobbi Trist will be responsible for ages 3-5. More help is needed
- Craft Tent Coordinator - Bloomington-Normal Friends
- Dale Gardner will be the lead coordinator with help from Carol Hill. A third person is needed.
- Margaret Katranides and Diane Dennis have accepted responsibility for the 9 - 11 age group.
- Maureen Pyle and Dawn Amos have agreed to work with middle school young friends. More volunteers are needed.
- Morning snacks will be coordinated by Beth Schobernd.

> Steve will coordinate contacting others for assistance: Christina Schultz, Mike Ruberton, Kelly and Andre Bono, Sophie de la Mar, Ginny Hoffman, and Michael Batinski. Dawn is willing to help approach some of these Friends.

> We talked about having the 6-11 children's program reflect the YM Theme. It was suggested that they might focus on such topics as the difference between a leading and making a choice; and/or what is a path; and/or what is discernment. We will continue to develop the planning via a forum on the Blue River Quarterly Website. Peter Lasersohn encouraged us to make use of the wealth there.

Afternoon Activity Coordinators

- Bloomington-Normal Friends will coordinate the Craft tent (Christina Schultz and Larry Stout)
- Spoon River will coordinate recreation: field trips, nature walks, swimming, etc.

Evening Activity Coordinators:

- Field Trip Coordinators - Spoon River MM
- Wednesday night movies -Sean West will coordinate.
- Thursday night hayride & campfire: Erin Taylor will coordinate.
- Friday night is folk dancing. Grayce will arrange for the musicians.
- Saturday night service project - work is love made visible. Kevin Schultz will co-coordinate.

Following a period of silence we adjourned for lunch.

BRQ Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business

April 16, 2011 - 3:15 p.m.

Present (those in bold type attended all or part of the business sessions)

David Finke (Columbia)

Fernando Freire (Dunland)

Priscila Freire (Duneland)

Dale Gardner (Urbana-Champaign)

Sharon Haworth (Urbana-Champaign)

Peter Lasersohn (Urbana-Champaign)

Margaret Katranides (St. Louis)

Janet Means (Lake Forest)

Grayce Mesner (Clear Creek)

Neil Mesner (Clear Creek)

Fariba Murray (Bloomington-Normal)

Dawn Rubbert (St. Louis)

Christina Schulz (Bloomington-Normal)

Sandra Tamari (St. Louis)

Steve Tamari (St. Louis)

Mira Tanna (St. Louis)

Erin Taylor (Spoon River)

Bobbi Trist (Urbana-Champaign)

Sean West (Spoon River)

David Wixom (St. Louis)

Young Friends:

Sam Davis (10 mos.), Daniel Freire (7), Liam Gardner, (11) Quinn Gardner (7), Anya Gardner (6), Nathan Lasersohn (8), Ryan Merz (11); Gwen Schulz (4), Amal Tamari (10), Jad Tamari (8), Kiran Nwakanma (8), Priya Nwakanma (6), Lorelei West (4)

1) Following a Friday evening of storms, hale and threats of tornadoes, thirteen F/friends gathered in silence on this gray, chilly Saturday afternoon amidst signs of early Spring. In all twenty adults and thirteen young F/friends participated in this gathering.

2) The clerk dispensed with the normal order so that Margie Haworth Davis could present the written treasurer's report (attached). We are grateful to Fernando Freire from Duneland Meeting who traveled here to lead a session about Quaker Integrity. Fernando and family attended BRQ sessions at their own cost and initially refused an honorarium. Sharon and Dale will speak with Fernando about whether he would like BRQ to make a charitable contribution of \$200 in his name.

3) Friends expressed joyful gratitude to those who organized the program for young Friends this weekend: Christina Schulz, Erin Taylor and Sean West.

4) The clerk reviewed the agenda and called for additional items. David Finke brought to our attention the new publication of Young Adult Friends called The Quake. A copy is available on the display table. Zoe Rei was and is instrumental in bringing this about. David suggested that to support this endeavor Friends consider subscribing as individuals and as meetings.

6) A call for announcements yielded several offerings. Grayce called our attention to displays for What Canst Thou Say, Right Sharing of World Resources, Pendle Hill and Olney Friends School. Grayce also shared that there are cards for us to sign for Mariellen Gilpin and Beth Showbernd. Dawn Rubbert shared that the latest PeaceWays/Friends Peace Teams is available on the display table along with David Zarembka's newly released book on his life in Africa. It was noted that there is also a large announcement from ILYM Religious Education.

7) Mariellen Gilpin, Nancy Finke and David Wixom served as our Nominating Committee. David Wixom reported for the committee. No one has been found to serve as clerk. The committee will continue seeking someone and that name will be brought forward at the Fall Quarterly. David will continue to clerk until the new appointment is approved. Steve Tamari has agreed to serve as the recording clerk. Margie Haworth Davis is willing to continue as our treasurer. Meeting approved and these Friends begin service at the rise of these quarterly sessions.

8) David Wixom reported that there is new worship group in St Louis called Big Muddy Quakers. It is made up of people who previously attended and some who are members of St. Louis MM. At this time they have not requested affiliation with Blue River Quarterly or Illinois Yearly Meeting. We recognize that this group of individuals are following their leadings and we wish them success in following the spirit.

9) 2011 Fall quarterly will meet the fourth weekend of September at (23-24-25) Dubois Center (Note: It is also reserved for the fourth weekend of September 2012.) We will offer two sessions of horseback riding; one for half an hour and another for one hour. St. Louis MM is responsible for adult programming in Fall 2011 and plan to bring a speaker from FGC on the general topic of deepening our spiritual lives and our relationships with each other. Columbia, Southern Illinois, and Rolla meetings are responsible for the children's program.

10) State of the Society Reports were read and are inserted below.

Urbana-Champaign Friends Meeting State of Society Report 2011

The spiritual state of our Meeting is generally positive, though we do have our challenges.

Our membership turns over at a steady pace, due mostly to ours being a university town. The overall mix of ages and families and number of attendees remains relatively constant with overall attendance generally ranging from 25 to 30 on any given First Day.

Our meetings for worship remain blessed with much silence. We treasure the messages when they are shared. Although this is very peaceful, we wonder if the lack of Ministry leaves people wanting more.

Our spiritual education activities moved from Thursday evenings to Sunday mornings and continue to attract a committed cadre of seekers, most recently exploring Quaker Roots. After being blessed with a great many communal, intergenerational activities last year, this year there have been fewer. Nevertheless, we have been fortunate to host a family pizza party, holiday meals at the Meeting House, and fundraisers.

Our religious education with children is a source of joy. We have a healthy number of younger children from several families who enjoy First Day School and other child- and family-oriented activities we have organized. These include regular First Day School, even through the summer, a week-long summer day camp, a new teen group working on a film project, as well as the regular

family worship. Many adults make these events possible and also feel enriched by the experience. Recent RE activities have included exploring the outdoor world, and learning about Quaker testimonies. On the concerns side Religious Education works hard to recruit adults to lead First Day School classes.

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 raise money for our emergency fund, which is available to needy members of the community. We have collected clothing and books for the safe haven community. We have been collecting books for prisoners. Many of the activities mentioned above build community. In addition, we have a monthly potluck after meeting for worship.

Individuals of the Meeting have been having a number of personal cares, concerns or crises. So the Meeting has convened several different committees for clearness, for care and/or for support, sharing individual burdens with the rest of us. As needed, the Meeting and individual members and families have been very forthcoming.

The **Springfield Worship Group** continues under our care and has submitted the following report.

Summoned by spiritual yearnings, Springfield Friends Worship Group continues its journey with trust in one another, and in the leading of the Holy Spirit to discern those pathways of compassionate service to our fellow creatures, drawn by His hand through the trials and troubles of this life.

We continue to meet weekly in search of the spiritual and intellectual sustenance we receive from our community of seekers. Our group remains small but dedicated, with attendance ranging from six to twelve adults. We have enjoyed several visitors this year, and continue to welcome those who choose to spend time with us.

Our current status as a Worship Group defines us most accurately. We elected to have a clerk, a recording clerk, and a librarian, and to hold Meeting for Business once a month (with creative and delicious potlucks afterward). As a group, we discussed and considered the option of becoming a Preparatory Meeting, but believe that the Worship Group defines where we are developmentally at this time.

As individuals, our religious experiences are varied, which adds to the richness of our discussions. Several members are involved in community efforts to bring about change, such as the Greater Springfield Interfaith Association, Homeless United for Change, Central Illinois Nonprofit Resource Center, Pax Christi, the 3 R Project (Reading Reduces Recidivism-books to prisons), and the U of I Extension's Master Naturalist program. We report on the progress of these efforts during Meeting for Business.

Our Worship Group community is stable and sound. Urbana-Champaign Friends Meeting continues our care, and we share our weekly e-mail "Friendly Updates" with them.

This year was productive for us collectively, as efforts to work on our end-of-life "Five Wishes" and memorial planning came to fruition. We went through the emotional process of sharing our wishes, concerns, fears, and hopes about our final stages of life. We plan to share our journey this summer during Illinois Yearly Meeting.

We have enjoyed selecting challenging queries, which we share during the months with five Sundays. This becomes a quarterly occurrence, and allows us time to prepare thoughtful responses. Some queries were born out of our end-of-life discussions and have allowed for very emotional interactions.

Once a month, our group prepares and serves a meal at Helping Hands, a local homeless shelter. We enjoy this service project, and look forward to the fellowship and expressions of gratitude from the residents each month.

Our group receives sustenance from each other, from our query-sharing to our ongoing study of the Quaker Roots materials. We support each other as fellow worshipers, but also as friends and family.

Clear Creek State of Society Report 2011

It is not a secret that Clear Creek has a natural affinity for the buildings on the Illinois Yearly Meeting site. We enjoy grabbing screwdrivers, paintbrushes, brooms and cloths to spend several blissful hours repairing or cleaning wood cupboards, floors and banisters. This year we moved awkward mattresses and beds up tight stairs with improbable odds of reaching targeted bedrooms. We painted the inside of cupboards, hung pamphlet shelves, borrowed help from Kyle Wilson (Clancy Wilson's grandnephew) to haul a giant bookcase into the library. As usual, Dick Ashdown's red truck was invaluable in moving the mattresses, box springs and bookcase from Beth Schobernd's house to Clear Creek House. We also rolled a heavy safe that has been stored in the library closet slowly out over flattened boxes onto Dick's truck. On the same day, we picked up a beautiful oak table donated by Dick and hauled it from his house into the library.

Our focus on Clear Creek House repairs and furnishing dominated our thoughts and activities this year. We volunteered time, effort and thought to create a more comfortable and cozy environment that complements the completed renovation. At some point, we began to feel that our care for the building had nudged away time spent on our spiritual program. With this in mind, we decided to turn our attention away from building activities for a while to regain our sense of identity as a lively spiritual community.

Our year was warmed by the gentle influence and activities of our young Friends and adult Young Friends.

Claire and Laure Goode reminded us how much fun we had in the fall when we crushed and squeezed apples through an old fashion cider press. They asked to repeat this fun event this past fall. It was a wonderful example of how our Young Friends influenced the spirit of our community.

When Carol Bartles returned from her visit to Andrew Bartles, in Lebanon, she gave an account of his volunteer work at an orphanage founded by the French and his attendance at a very old Quaker meeting associated with a Friends school. The members there have asked him to represent their Meeting at the Triennial Gathering in Africa next year. His courage in engaging with an international community reminds us to remain open to new experiences.

Spring was just peeking around the corner when we received news of the birth of Rose Dennis's baby boy, Milo James Johnson. We were thrilled when after a short rest she and Milo visited our Meeting. We could barely take our eyes off his peaceful face. A baby shower was held in his honor and on that day, Margie Haworth-Davis and her baby Sam Davis also visited our Meeting. It was as if we had a double blessing.

Zoe Rei began publishing "The Quake" which is a magazine for Young Adult Friends. It is her hope to provide this space for expression to all Adult Young Friends within all the Quaker branches. We are excited to witness this creative union with the Young Adult Friends and look forward to reading what they have to say.

Sara Raffensperger is going through the long transition between her last busy year of high school and the prospect of leaving this coming fall for college. She is looking forward to assisting Scott Greenler with an F.G.C. extreme Frisbee workshop this coming summer. Her gentle humor is always a welcome presence in our midst.

Kiva Schobernd's delight in speaking with honest expression and her appreciation for celebrating life lightens our hearts. We especially enjoyed hearing of her dancing in the rain with her fellow girl scouts while they sold cookies.

Zara Schobernd is our youngest Friend. She moves with a gentle manner and kindness toward animals that reminds us that quiet actions can speak effectively. These Young Friends have been a blessing to our hearts as their presence, whether near or far away, infuse our gathering with quiet joy and hope for the future life of our Meeting.

**State of Society Report, Columbia Friends Meeting
approved by Meeting for Business 4-10-11**

In considering how the Life of the Spirit has fared among us during 2010, we gladly report that its fruits of Joy and Love continue to prevail among us. We find this in our worship, our witness in the world, and our organizational life.

We find a sense of being more knit together through our central act of Waiting Worship, which many experience as truly Gathered. Patience and friendship grow slowly, but perceptibly. We were free from the need to address inappropriate behavior.

A testimony to the commitment to Meeting is found in a very high participation rate when we attend to Business, which is orderly and worshipful. For a number of months we had a small but regular midweek Meeting downtown, although we never succeeded in expanding beyond our own numbers. The desire to deepen our encounters with the Divine and with each other led to establishment of a Spiritual Friends group.

There were several Silent Retreats at the meetinghouse during the year. Meetings for Learning, monthly Fun Nights, and Cleaning Days all have been opportunities to get to know each other better.

Although attendance by children remained spotty, we are prepared for them, welcome them, and are blessed when they can attend.

When we look at our presence in the wider community, we see a number of events: We continue to be strongly involved in peace witness and opposition to capital punishment. The weekly peace vigil at the Post Office is in its 27th year. Assisting homeless and hungry people through gifts of cash, food, materials, and time occurs through 4 different organizations. Having an attractive table and literature at Earth Day and the Sustainability Fair provides an annual opportunity for visibility of our concerns, and sometimes leads to visitors worshipping with us.

And this year we had a qualitatively new opportunity. Following some years of conflict over GLBT issues and a lengthy period of self-examination, we found ourselves clear to participate willingly and joyously with a table at PrideFest, sponsored by "The Center Project," which also has shared speakers with us. Two Friends substantially helped plan and carry out an Interfaith Worship at this event, broadening our sense of connectedness with various marginalized peoples and other faith communities.

We've found it's important for us to be linked with Friends from beyond Columbia. This was the year when we began regular monthly intervisitation and worship with a small group of Quakers in Fayette (about 30 miles distant.) We have had friendly correspondence with Pat Wixom, whose presence we miss and for whom we had a celebratory send-off party. We hosted a regional "Salt and Light" event coordinated by Friends World Committee for Consultation, benefiting from insights by Quakers from Ireland and North Carolina on confronting conflict. We were energized in arranging housing, food, and fellowship for 22 Friends attending ILYM's spring Continuing Committee.

The tradition of having Visiting Friends who travel in the ministry is being revived among us. At the beginning of the year we launched an adult curriculum on "Engaging Early Friends," introduced by its author Helene Pollock from Philadelphia, who also showed us the benefit of in-home "Opportunities" for prayer and personal consultation. Twice we had Mariellen Gilpin from ILYM's Ministry and Advancement committee as she led us in a retreat and also Early Friends study. These relationships of love and support continue to bless us.

While we mostly want to report satisfactions, there are also long-standing challenges for which we ask Friends to hold us in The Light. Our meeting is aging, and we're unsure how well we can provide for each other's physical needs. While worship may be satisfying to those attending, we are not experiencing numerical growth, although visitors continue to find us via the Internet. The ratio of active member/attenders to the number of our committee positions is some cause for concern, and we wonder if we're wearing people out. We've wondered whether a shared local project could give us greater cohesiveness as to goals and identity. In terms of our physical space, we have rearranged the library for greater ease of use and comfort. But we also realize our Meetinghouse has limitations to which we're beginning to give more focused attention. We identified some issues and choices in the fall and now are looking forward to gaining outside help in the year to come.

We appreciate having this regular reflection on how well we respond to the promptings of God's Spirit, and we will welcome Friends assisting us in becoming more faithful.

St Louis Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

St Louis Friends and Attenders alike were asked to respond to a set of queries to aid us in discerning the current state of the Meeting. Upon reviewing the responses we observed that F/friends reflected varying levels of knowledge and participation; varying levels of need; and a diversity of gifts. Some find Meeting for worship strong and inspirational while others desire more depth. There is a longing for more small-group interaction so folks can get to know each other and a longing for more opportunities for Quaker education. Within the differences expressed we found a common thread running through all; the desire for spiritual growth.

When speaking of membership F/friends strongly linked it with commitment: commitment to the Meeting fiscally; commitment to continued spiritual seeking and growth; commitment to share one's gifts, talents and strengths with the Meeting community, and commitment to nurture and care for the community and its physical property.

As is customary, much of the work of the Meeting is organized through committees. There is a sense that many current committees are functioning well while others are floundering a bit and

perhaps need additional members. We seem to have a fairly large number of members and attenders not serving on a committee while some serve on two or more.

We found a fairly strong sentiment that our Meeting should have more concerted effort of ministering to our neighbors. We take on some short-term involvements such as gifts for the elderly at Christmas, canned food drives, and food and blankets for the homeless. Some feel personally led to work in the community as individuals, including AVP (Alternatives to Violence Project) in a prison. Others long for the Meeting to work together on a long-term project to

provide service. This is viewed as a means of getting to know each other better by laboring together and as an opportunity for spiritual growth.

Recently we received 5 letters requesting membership. Three Friends have been hugged into membership, as is our custom. The clearness process continues for two friends including an attender at Rolla Preparative Meeting. We lost one elderly member through death in December. She had not been able to attend for some years. We have received a request for marriage under the care of the Meeting in June. One family brought us a new wee Friend through adoption. Many of us have already begun our process of grieving for the loss of a family of 4 who are moving to Florida this summer. All of this is indicative of our continual growth and loss contributing to a feeling of shrinking and swelling simultaneously.

We thanked those who brought reports and noted hopefulness to receive reports from Southern Illinois Friends, Bloomington-Normal, Spoon River Friends and Rolla.

12) The minutes to this point were approved.

13) Sandra Tamari brought to us a concern about TIAA-CREF, and BDS (Boycott-Divestment-Sanctions) in support of Palestine. They are a pension fund business and invest in a bus company that that only serves the settlements and not the Palestinians, a company that provides weapons to Israel, Caterpillar which sells bulldozers specifically outfitted for military use such as bulldozing homes and orchards; and Motorola which designs and sells surveillance systems to Israel. The AFSC uses TIAA-CREF. St. Louis Friends have sent a letter to AFSC asking them to encourage TIAA-CREF to divest from these five companies. [See statement below.] BRQ unites with the statement of St. Louis Friends and will both contact AFSC to express our concern and take the concern to ILYM sessions this summer asking that they also unite with this statement. There is a website where our clerk can sign on to this concern, as St. Louis Friends have done.

There are plans to hold a workshop early in YM sessions to acquaint Friends with this issue. BRQ can submit this concern to be included in the advance documents.

Minute approved by St. Louis Monthly Meeting: Palestinian civil society organizations have asked for support of a boycott, divestment and sanctions action (BDS) against the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land, until Israel complies with international law. The St. Louis Religious Society of

Friends affirm the nonviolent nature of the BDS movement and its support of the fundamental equality of all parties in this conflict. We see BDS as a challenge to discriminatory Israeli state policies that diminish the humanity of another people. It is a nonviolent challenge to political systems and institutions, not individuals, that deny the equality of Israeli Jews and Palestinians.

In keeping with this belief, St. Louis Meeting requests that the American Friends Service Committee approach TIAA-CREF, the company which invests their employee pension funds, to insist that they divest from companies providing military arms to Israel. These arms are being used to build the "separation" wall which in fact confiscates Palestinian land and water, to maintain and augment the illegal Jewish Israeli settlements on Palestinian lands, to enforce ethnic cleansing in East Jerusalem, to harass and kill Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza, and to maintain the

apartheid system of unequal rights, depriving Palestinians of the rights guaranteed by the United Nations to all people.

These companies, in which TIAA-CREF invests, include Veolia, Elbit, Caterpillar, Motorola Solutions, and Northrop Grumman.

We ask that our Clerk write to AFSC with this message and to make this statement public to the media. We also ask the Clerk to forward this minute to Blue River Quarterly Meeting for its consideration.

14) We will gather tomorrow at 9:30 to conclude our business. Following a brief silence we adjourned for dinner.

April 17, 2011 - Sunday 9:30 a.m.

15) Friend Tom Paxson shared with Friends a statement from the World Council of Churches titled *An Ecumenical Call to Just Peace*. He requested that we distribute the document widely for consideration. Bobbi Trist presented the concern to BRQ and read pertinent sections from the 7 page document. Dawn reported that this document was sent to BRQ Friends via email and that the ILYM Peace Resources Committee considered this statement at their meeting a few weeks ago and is encouraging Friends in the YM to read and consider this statement. It is, or soon will be, posted on both the ILYM website [insert url] and the PRC blog [insert url]. The Peace & Services Committee of Urbana-Champaign MM has united with this statement.

We welcome the receipt of this document and are much appreciative of Friends influences on its development, particularly the diligent labors of Tom Paxson. We celebrate the growing awareness that has led to its creation. BRQ Friends unite with the Spirit of this document and recommend it for study by individual Friends, monthly meetings and by ILYM.

We agreed to contact Tom and Judi to learn if they will attend YM sessions this year. If so we request that he offer a workshop about this document. It was noted that if Tom is not attending Barbara Kessel from Urbana-Champaign might be willing to lead a workshop. We need also to be aware that it may be too late to add a new workshop for this summer's sessions.

16) Friends approved the minutes above and we adjourned to prepare for worship.