

## Blue River Quarterly (BRQ) Spring Session

Fourth Month 20-22, 2018

### Minutes: Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business 4.21.18

---

#### IN ATTENDANCE

Bloomington-Normal: Fariba Murray,  
Christina Schulz

Urbana-Champaign Friends: Margie Haworth,  
David and Kristin Lewis, Peter Lasersohn

Clear Creek: Grayce and Neil Mesner

ILYM Field Secretary: Judy Wolicki

St. Louis: Steve Hinson, Denice Smith,  
Steve Tamari, Dave Wixom

We opened the Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business with silence.

**Minute 1:** Our request to celebrate the 200th anniversary celebration of BRQ Meeting in Fall 2019 has been met with approval and warmth by Friends at the Blue River Friends Church, as communicated by the pastor who manages the care of the Old Blue River Friends Meeting House. We think our preferred date of September 20-22, 2019 will be accepted.

**Minute 2:** Grayce requested a second opinion to decide between the two retreat centers under consideration. Grayce, Margie, and Peter were approved by Friends to make the decision on our behalf, taking into consideration feedback from Friends who review the retreat-center binder following Business Meeting.

**Minute 3:** Friends discussed the need to plan both the activities and logistics for the 200th celebration. Friends revisited a prior Minute to remember that Steve Tamari is the lead of the ad hoc committee to decide upon the 200th celebration planning process.

**Minute 4:** Clear Creek Friends would like to see ILYM pursue the possibility of using solar energy for our campus. Blue River Quarterly received this Minute and approved elevating it to ILYM. BRQ proposes that the Environmental Concerns Committee research solar energy to see if this is an energy source we should pursue, perhaps by participating in a collective operated by an off-site third party energy provider. We remind Friends that central to this request is the issue of preserving the earth—stewardship—and is less financial in nature. We look forward to learning more from the Environmental Concerns Committee to inform our understanding of how to pursue a carbon-neutral footprint, both for our campus, specifically, and for the sake of our commitment to the environment, generally.

**Minute 5:** Report from committee appointed to consider alternative ways to plan QM sessions. The committee met one time but did not determine a plan to engage Southern Small Meetings in time to generate a program for Fall 2018 BRQ. Friends discussed options for determining a way forward. Judy Wolicki, Steve Hinson, and Christina Schulz were approved to serve as a committee to reach out to members in Small Southern Meetings to pursue finding contributors to the Adult Program. Margie Haworth offered to serve as registrar. We reiterated that Fall BRQ will be September 21-23, 2018 at the DuBois Center.

**Minute 6:** Treasurer's Report (follows these Minutes—see Page 3). Friends accepted report.

**Minute 7:** AFSC in St. Louis and St. Louis Friends are planning a weekend Undoing Racism Workshop for October 19-21, 2018 in St. Louis with People's Institute for Survival and Beyond out of New Orleans. The announcement was made at Business Meeting, and Friends discussed making a donation as requested to support fundraising efforts. Peter volunteered to learn more about the amount needed and will report back at Fall BRQ. Friends are encouraged to make this announcement at their Monthly Meetings.

**Meeting 8:** Young Friends joined us and reported out on their activities that complemented the Earth Day theme of Spring Quarterly: Shoebox ovens were explained; solar-paper art was displayed, and a kinetic art sculpture was presented. Baubles and necklaces made out of reused objects, including newspaper, were presented and distributed as gifts to Friends in Business Meeting.

**Minute 9:** State of Society Reports were read. The following Meetings were represented: Bloomington Normal; Clear Creek and the Burlington Friends in its care; St. Louis; Southern Illinois; Spoon River; and Urbana-Champaign. Information was shared about the state of Macomb, Columbia, and Rolla Meetings. Friends accepted these reports and updates with gratitude.

Christina Schulz read these Minutes, and Friends approved.

We adjourned Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business with silence.

**Clear Creek Minute on Solar Energy**  
**Approved April 15, 2018**

Clear Creek Monthly Meeting would like to see Illinois Yearly Meeting pursue the possibility of using solar energy for our Campus. Along with wind energy, solar energy is a safe, non-pollutant source of energy to power our needs. Solar panel grids are presently planned for Marshal and Putnam Counties, where land is being identified to place the necessary installations. We ask that Illinois Yearly Meeting seriously consider further research into solar energy to see if this would be a project we should pursue.

TREASURER'S REPORT TO BLUE RIVER QUARTERLY MEETING  
20-Apr-18

Balance on Hand September 15, 2017: \$5,898.23

DEBITS

|              |                          |          |
|--------------|--------------------------|----------|
| 10/7/2017    | DuBois Center - Fall '17 | 3136.25  |
| TOTAL DEBITS |                          | 3,136.25 |

CREDITS

|               |                             |          |
|---------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| 9/14/2017     | Fall '17 Fees & Donations   | 929.00   |
| 9/19/2017     | Fall '17 Fees & Donations   | 2,549.00 |
| 9/21/2017     | Fall '17 Fees & Donations   | 300.00   |
| 9/30/2017     | Interest - 30 days          | 0.93     |
| 10/31/2017    | Interest - 31 days          | 1.03     |
| 11/30/2017    | Interest - 30 days          | 0.80     |
| 12/20/2017    | Donations                   | 140.00   |
| 12/31/2017    | Interest - 31 days          | 0.84     |
| 1/31/2018     | Interest - 31 days          | 0.85     |
| 2/28/2018     | Interest - 28 days          | 0.77     |
| 3/24/2018     | Spring '18 Fees & Donations | 399.00   |
| 3/24/2018     | Donations                   | 340.00   |
| 3/31/2018     | Interest - 31 days          | 0.86     |
| 4/15/2018     | Spring '18 Fees & Donations | 1,395.00 |
| TOTAL CREDITS |                             | 6,058.08 |

Balance on Hand April 20, 2018: \$8,820.06

Sep '17 - Apr '18 Meeting Contributions:

|            |                    |       |
|------------|--------------------|-------|
| 9/21/2017  | St. Louis          | \$88  |
| 9/21/2017  | Bloomington-Normal | \$72  |
| 12/20/2017 | Southern IL        | \$50  |
| 12/20/2017 | St. Louis          | 90    |
| 3/24/2018  | St. Louis          | \$90  |
| 3/24/2018  | Southern IL        | \$50  |
| 3/24/2018  | Columbia           | \$200 |

Bloomington-Normal Friends Meeting  
State of the Meeting April 2018

Friends in our Meeting have struggled through a year with personal setbacks and frequent worries about political issues in our community and our nation. We are drawing together for support during times of discouragement. We are reaching out in deeper participation in community organizations and in Yearly Meeting activities and committees. As always, our fellowship times with each other often include sharing meals where we try to nourish both spiritual lives and stomachs.

Our largest local event in the past year was our First Annual end of the summer Community of Friends Picnic in September 2017. We were blessed with sunny weather and enjoyed intergenerational games, playing with dogs and grilled food together. Friends from around Bloomington-Normal and other ILYM meetings are welcome to join us for the Second Annual Picnic later this year.

In the past year, we have been trying to attend to our adult attenders' and members' need for learning more about Quaker practices and a desire for more open discussions on topics of faith by holding monthly adult education hours. This year the focus of our study and discussion was primarily the Illinois Faith and Practice from the ILYM website. We appreciate the work that has gone into completing this document over the past several years.

To respond to increased participation from preschoolers (and their parents) in the meeting, we started using the curriculum Growing in the Light for First Day School. Maintaining a "critical mass" of regularly attending children, preparing age appropriate lessons for different age groups, and having sufficient adult volunteers have continued to challenge us.

We are mindful of lessening attendance from some long-time members and are holding them and our influx of new attenders in our thoughts as we try to make decisions that will nurture the spirits and strengths of our meeting. We have been seasoning the proposal to form an ongoing ministry and care committee.

In 2016 and 2017 we often found our numbers at worship were overflowing Friends' living rooms in their homes, so we searched for other larger spaces to meet. We settled on Building 7 at Normandy Village in Normal. This building is part of the former campus of the Illinois Soldiers and Sailors Children School, a residential school for orphans of service members founded after the Civil War by avid supporter of education Jesse Fell, who was raised in a Quaker family in Pennsylvania. Our meeting room is a quiet and serene environment. The building is surrounded by green space near a public fruit garden (Refuge Food Forest) and a playground used by two small private schools also located in the Village area.

## Burlington Worship Group

### State of Society Report

Spring 2018

The Burlington Worship Group currently has five regular participants, with occasional guests or others who drop in. Our meeting tends to be mostly silent, partly because we are a small group, but also because we are all comfortable with the spiritual power of silence. When vocal ministry comes forth, it contributes to the meeting. We always spend a few minutes sharing together after worship.

Our worship group is on Quaker Finder, and we have a listing in *Friends Journal*. We are included in the listing of religious organizations in our local newspaper, *The Burlington Hawkeye*, and we also contribute weekly to their "Church Notes" by providing a "Quaker prayer for worship," usually a quote from an early Friend. We worship at 8:30 AM at the Burlington Art Center, which is an accessible and well-known location. Our information is on the bulletin board at their entrance, along with other groups that use their space.

We gather as friends, comfortable and happy in each other's company. Whatever transpires during worship either uninterrupted silence, song, or speech is worthwhile and meaningful. Those called to speak share messages of value and these messages are relatable, at the heart.

We connect with other Friends in a variety of ways. Our strong links with Clear Creek Meeting continue. We try to take part when we can (even if only represented by one person) in several of their events each year, as well as those of Illinois Yearly Meeting. Two of our members are active with AFSC on the national level.

On several occasions this year, we have also joined with Friends in Iowa. Last summer, four of us worshiped with Salem Quaker Church one Sunday, which was a spirit-filled and meaningful experience. Two members of our worship group hosted several leaders and participants in an Iowa Yearly Meeting (FUM) week-long vacation bible school in Burlington. One member attended the Iowa Yearly Meeting (Con.) Annual Session.

All of us are active in our local community. This enhances both our worship together and our individual community work. Although most of what we do in the community has no explicit Quaker connection, several activities do. Two of us regularly attend an ecumenical weekly Centering Prayer group. Three of us have volunteered with the Alternatives to Violence Program at the Iowa State Penitentiary. Our worship group also has a small fund that helps the local AVP pay for supplies or meals for a gathering. Those of us involved in a local peace vigil are strengthened by Quaker peace values.

Our worship group is small, and we do occasionally cancel, given our schedules. But, for all of us, it is an important part of our spiritual and community life. We find our meeting for worship deepens our commitment to all personal relationships with family, friends, co-workers and those we serve.

Burlington Worship Group

Clear Creek Monthly Meeting  
State of Society Report  
March 18, 2018

Quiet faithfulness. We feel that phrase best sums up the state of our meeting this year. We continue to worship weekly, either in Clear Creek House or in warmer months in the Yearly Meetinghouse. Our numbers range from 5 or 6 to a dozen or more, depending on the week. Messages are few and far between, but always come from a deep spiritual place. We quietly go about the business of nurturing each other and the property entrusted to our care, thankful for our small but strong community.

In an effort to both support our existing families and perhaps draw new ones, this year we committed to providing first day school on a regular basis. One of our members in Macomb agreed to try to provide a children's program one Sunday a month on a trial basis, but illness, weather, and other unforeseen circumstances kept that from working out. Undaunted, we decided to try to provide first day school ourselves and have been doing so for the past several months. These "youth Sundays" are typically the first Sunday of the month, so feel free to join us. More children are always welcome.

We did not have a retreat this year, being busy with other activities, but we did have a Homecoming event in October. We enjoyed worshipping together, first day school activities for the children and a cookout. The weather did not cooperate so that we could have one of Dick's famous hayless rack rides, much to everyone's disappointment. Our annual Easter celebration included worship, children's activities, potluck and an Easter egg hunt.

For the past several years, usually in December, we have sought out the names of needy families in Putnam County whom we might help financially. In the past we have worked through the school district to identify these families, but that was not possible this year so we received suggestions from the Director of the Putnam County EMTs and shared our resources with two deserving families.

We officially welcomed into membership Barbara Bumgarner Malany. Barb grew up in Clear Creek Meeting and has attended often over the years, but had never requested membership. We are pleased to finally be able to formally recognize her as a member.

This year we had two opportunities to work together to share a bit of Clear Creek history and life. We were asked by the Yearly Meeting program committee to present the Thursday evening program at annual sessions, "The Rural Meeting, or What Happens Here the Other 360 Days a Year". This led us to really look at who we are and what we do as a meeting. It proved to be a fascinating exercise. We were surprised to realize how much we do with so few people who are scattered over such a wide territory. It left us humbled and tired. Our program was well received and we received many positive comments about it. Then in October, we presented a similar program to the Magnolia Township Preservation Association Annual Meeting. This program focused more on history and the role of Quakers in the development and growth of the area. We enjoyed preparing these programs and the opportunities they

provided for us to work together and see each other more often as we developed and practiced our presentations.

This summer, long-time member Elizabeth Bumgarner visited us from her home in Florida and offered to give Clear Creek a house she owned in Hennepin, Illinois, near McNabb. We accepted the house with gratitude and the understanding that we had no desire to be landlords and would likely sell the house. We have advertised it locally, within the Yearly Meeting, and in Friends Journal, hoping to attract a Quaker family to the area. It is our hope that we can sell the house within the year and use the proceeds to do good things in the community.

As resident caretakers of the Yearly Meeting property, we spend many hours each year working on the grounds. Last fall, we sacrificed picking up branches around the property to provide a local high school student with a project that would fulfill her community service commitment at school. We are a generous group! We also hired someone to replace the siding on the west wall of the Clear Creek House garage and hope to re-side the north wall this spring. We are looking forward to the coming of spring so that we can get back to connecting with the grounds.

Officially, Beth Carpenter is our clerk this year, with Mike Dennis serving as assistant clerk, but it proves to be more of a tag team or co-clerking arrangement, depending on their travel and family commitments. It works well for us.

We enjoy the visitors who find their way to our door. Each fall we have high school students from Streator who visit us as part of a class assignment and we enjoy meeting and talking with them. Friends at the campus for committee meetings or retreats sometimes join us for worship and we appreciate the energy they bring to us. We encourage you to visit us any time!



## 2017 Spiritual State of Society Report:

For St. Louis Friends Meeting, 2017 was a year of deepening roots, building community, and a greater sense of gatheredness, purpose and accomplishment in the meeting. Throughout the year the meeting possessed a greater understanding of the work we are led to do and how we should engage with it. The support and acceptance of leadings for the meeting, as well as for individuals, have produced much joy for our members and attenders.

Out of this sense of renewed vibrancy, members and attenders are building community and relationships through a variety of sessions. These included Adult Education sessions focusing on queries, as well as a threshing session on the state of our meeting and grounds with a focus on how meeting can better support property committee. Following this threshing session, members and attenders are gathering to work on necessary property tasks prior to Meeting for Worship, and for work days as needed. Members and attenders are growing in understanding of our corporate and individual leadings and commitment and cooperation are growing as a result.

Members and attenders cite the deep, meaningful meetings for worship as one source of the growing work and joy of the meeting. The listening during meeting for worship is genuine, heartfelt and conscientious; the meeting for worship gives people a structure to listen to the Spirit, to themselves and to others. The sense of the Spirit and the urgency of Spirit's leadings during meeting for worship is the source from which all the current work and energy within the meeting flows. Meetings for Worship are fulfilling and Meetings for Worship with a concern for business are efficient while also tender in work and worship. Business Meeting feels strongly led by the spirit, and this also has given the actions and work of meeting a Spirit-led momentum.

Two of our strongest leadings this year were continuing to open as a Winter Outreach shelter for homeless people in our city, and continued examination of racism and racial injustices within our society. In response to the latter topic, meeting was led to write a minute in response to the NCAACP's issued travel advisory for Missouri. The minute affirmed the meeting's commitment to racial justice and to working to end injustice (St. Louis Friends Meeting Minute on Racism found in Appendix A)

Although the minute affirmed our commitment to be a place of refuge and sanctuary for all, we are aware of a lack of diversity - racially, economically, and in the ages of members and attenders. This is the main place where our meeting is currently less than what we would desire. We are led to ask if there is something that we are doing, perhaps without even realizing it, that is off putting to others and is an obstacle to having diversity in our meeting.

We are also aware of our aging population as a meeting and the challenges it presents to our work and maintenance of the meeting and of the meeting house property. We are led to ask how and if we should be doing more outreach to a younger, more diverse population.

As we examine these queries about diversity and outreach, we do take joy in the small number of families with young children who are part of our meeting. When the children - babies through grade school - join us in worship each week, there is a great sense of joy and wholeness with their presence.

The health of the meeting has also benefited from the ways in which the spiritual needs of members and attenders are nurtured outside of Meeting for Worship through Friendly Dozens,

Spiritual Directions, the Quaker Reading Group, participation in Quakerism 101, the attendees dinner, the spring retreat and spiritual discussions on queries at potlucks.

As we continue through 2018 and thoughtfully seek to follow the leadings we feel to include a wider diversity, to confront racism in our community, to continue to provide shelter through Winter Outreach, and to continue to address the repair and maintenance needs of the property, we are deeply grateful for the depth of love and Spirit's leading within our meeting. One member expressed it thusly, "I am not ashamed to say I feel loved, and I feel love towards everybody." This love is the place from which all our work and seeking Spirit's leading grows.

Appendix A:

St. Louis Friends Meeting, Minute on Racism:

In August 2017, the NAACP issued a travel advisory for the state of Missouri advising that "African American travelers, visitors, and Missourians pay special attention and exercise extreme caution when traveling through the state." This advisory was in direct response to the findings of the Missouri Attorney General in Advisory that "African Americans in Missouri are 75 percent more likely to be stopped and searched by law enforcement officers than Caucasians", and to the signing of Bill SB 43 by Governor Greitens. SB 43 weakens discrimination protections for fired employees who are fired based on race, religion, sex or age by requiring them to prove that those things were the main reason for dismissal rather than merely a contributing factor.

Although the initial advisory was set to expire on at the end of August 2017, it remains in effect.

In response to this, and to the ongoing civil unrest against racial injustice in St. Louis in response to the Stockley verdict, St. Louis Monthly Meeting affirms its commitment to racial justice and offers its welcome and sanctuary to all who seek it. We strongly condemn the discrimination and racism that exists in our city and state, and commit ourselves to the ongoing work to end racial injustice in our community.

Further, we call on our members to educate themselves on the findings of the 2016 Vehicle Stops Executive Summary from Missouri Attorney General. This report found that African Americans were stopped and searched at higher rates than Whites in the state of Missouri (<http://ago.mo.gov/home/vehicle-stops-report/2016-executive-summary#summary>)

## 2016 VEHICLE STOPS EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - Josh Hawley

[ago.mo.gov](http://ago.mo.gov)

Concerns by the citizens of Missouri and the Missouri legislature regarding allegations of racial profiling by law enforcement prompted the passage of state law Section 590.650, RSMo (2000), which was enacted Aug. 28, 2000.

## State of Society Report 2018 Urbana-Champaign Friends Meeting

Attendance at our Meeting for Worship continues to grow and spoken ministry has blossomed, often in response to a Query or following a spiritual thread. Long-time Friends and new attenders reflect on the openness of the Meeting. One relative newcomer remarked that she was “grateful to have found this community” for it had provided “hope in my heart that wasn’t there before.” Following the rise of meeting we enjoy extended fellowship at First Sunday bountiful potlucks, Second Sunday sandwich-making for the Daily Bread Soup Kitchen, Third Sunday Business Meetings, and a rich variety of Fourth and Fifth Sunday programs and activities.

Our First Day school has been active and vibrant. A young attender announced one Sunday that he “would rather go to first day school than to the park.” A new teacher has ably led the younger group in projects connected with Quaker beliefs, seasons, and emotions. This year the ’tween-teen friends have begun studying other religious institutions, first hearing a presentation and then attending a service and engaging with congregants. These activities have generated discussion about religious beliefs at Meeting and at home. Our youth decided to raise money at Christmas to help homeless children so they joyously made beautiful glass and salt dough ornaments, which they sold at our Saturday evening Christmas party.

All of our committees have been unusually energetic this year. Advancement committee arranged several activities throughout the seasons. In the summer, we marched under a Friends banner in both the Fourth of July parade and the Gay Pride parade. In the fall, we celebrated an apple festival at a member’s farm where we enjoyed apples, apple cider, and farm animals. One winter afternoon, everyone enjoyed a “human library” activity where Friends’ hidden stories became book titles to be “checked out” and “read” in ten minute discussion segments.

The Peace & Service committee worked to support and raise awareness of social justice issues, ranging from local to international. In April and May 2017, they sponsored two packed discussions about which social issues took priority for our Meeting and whether we wished to work on one together. But with so many friends already involved in social justice work, we could not agree on one project. Instead P&S organized Second Sunday half hour sessions where members described their own work, everything from The Rape Crisis hotline, to Books to Prisoners, training to assist immigrants, and The Ripple Effect (monthly letter writing to immigrants and incarcerated people). In addition, they sponsored Parfaite Ntahuba, a Quaker pastor from Burundi, touring the U.S. on behalf of the African Great Lakes Initiative; she gave two presentations about the services provided to women experiencing gender-based violence.

Ministry and Oversight Committee held two “Quaker Q&A” sessions, which have been popular with members and attenders over the past six years. This year, M&O also invited Peter Lasersohn to discuss his work on the development of an ILYM *Faith and Practice*. As a follow-up, Peter has agreed to lead us this

spring in a discussion that will solicit input for the draft of the book's section on "Gender and Sexuality."

Members' leadings opened up new initiatives this year. A spontaneous after-meeting discussion of the just-announced ban on transgender people in the military led to a broader discussion of how to make transgender and non-binary folk feel more welcome at our meeting. We educated ourselves further during a well-attended forum, garnered proposals, and have so far replaced our men's and women's bathroom signs with non-gendered ones, and encouraged friends to put their preferred pronouns on their name tags.

When a teen friend offered to build bookcases for our library for his Eagle Scout project, we accepted eagerly. With the project completed, the need to clear out the old shelves prompted the library committee and others to begin developing a plan to reshape the collection.

The Meeting, prompted by the Finance committee, agreed to move our invested funds from a local bank to Friends Fiduciary Consolidated Funds in Philadelphia whose investment strategies support Quaker values. Our finances are in good order and "basket" donations for monthly sandwich-making and for the Emergency Fund are strong. But our annual giving is stagnant or declining. We must now focus on generating more (and larger) annual contributions to sustain our property and our activities—along with continuing to encourage members and attenders to contribute their time, energy, and skills by serving as officers or on committees. We are confident that this will happen. As one of our long-standing members noted recently, "A wide-awake spirit is at work among us."