

Unabridged Memorials and State of Society Reports

Note: due to printing space limitations in the Minute Book, Memorial Minutes and State of Society Reports over 1,000 words were abridged (Memorial Minutes and State of Society Reports generally run 300-600 words). Following are the unabridged texts. Italicized words do not appear in the abridged text printed in the Minute Book.

Memorial

Darian T. Thalmann

Darian Tracy Thalmann was born October 9, 1975 in Hammond, IN. Due to his mother's ill health and long hospitalization, it was deemed necessary for infant Darian's survival that he be delivered somewhat early by caesarian section. After a short time in the hospital nursery, Darian was diagnosed with "failure to thrive" and his mother was advised by the obstetrician to take him home and "hold him, talk to him, sing to him, and love him until he has the will to live." *The pediatrician, however, was against taking him home at that time, believing that Darian's best chance for survival was to remain in hospital care. It was a difficult decision, but Darian's mother brought him home after agreeing to take him to the Child Life Center several times a week to be evaluated.*

Darian was a beautiful small child with flaming red hair who grew slowly and intermittently. Early on, it became apparent that he was significantly different than his older siblings; *he did not like to be touched or hold eye contact; he did not like bright colors; he could not tolerate loud noises; he preferred solitary play that involved repetitive elements. He was seen by many specialists who could not agree upon a cause or course of treatment. At the end of Darian's kindergarten year, he was placed in special education. School was a difficult place for him as everything seemed geared toward stimulation, such as brightly colored bulletin boards, objects and pictures hanging from the ceiling tiles, musical games and clapping games.* It was not until Darian was a teenager that he was diagnosed with autism.

Darian's two main interests, from grade school years into adult years, were reptiles and remote control vehicles. This turned out to be very beneficial for him. It was through his love of snakes that Darian learned to read and he developed an extensive vocabulary. *Every week, Darian and his mother checked out books from the library about snakes, turtles, and lizards and read them together every evening.* For years, every Sunday after Quaker Meeting, Darian's mother took him to the pet and hobby shop where he spent a couple of hours holding the snakes and other reptiles. He enjoyed talking with his friends, the owners about their reptiles, as well as discussing their selection of remote control vehicles. Darian's step-father, Tom, also spent many hours a week with Darian working with the remote control vehicles. *Darian had long term subscriptions to several special interest magazines on these subjects which he read and reread.*

Over the years, through his love of snakes, Darian learned geography, climate, habitat, conservation and environmental concerns. He was a skilled amateur herpetologist. There were many recycled aquariums throughout his home housing his large collection of live snakes. After discovering the cost of feeding small rodents to his first few snakes, Darian and his mother began raising mice. The garage became the mouse farm where they learned that mice reproduce rapidly.

Darian began attending Duneland Friends Meeting (Quaker) with his mother and other siblings when he was five years old. He was a regular participant in First Day School and other Friends' activities. *He enjoyed taking a few of his snakes to the local homeless shelter when the meeting's children took their pets to share with the children living at the local homeless shelter.* He also loved going to Illinois Yearly Meeting (Quaker) annual sessions every summer in McNabb, Illinois until he graduated from high school. *He loved walking to the "frog pond" and catching fireflies. He looked*

forward to going out at night to look at the stars with David Finke and John Garra, knowledgeable Friends who brought their telescopes and/or special binoculars.

As a teen he enjoyed hanging out with the other teens. They always made him welcome and accepted his quietness and lower levels of participation. *Darian was a valued member of the group, even while watching from the meetinghouse steps as they played long games of Frisbee late in the afternoon or walking with them to Friends cemetery in the evening.* In 1992, on his own initiative, Darian requested membership in Duneland Friends Meeting, which was granted on February 9 of that year.

In his grade school years, Darian was placed in special education classes for “retarded youth” as the language of the time specified, or in classes for the “severely emotionally disturbed”. When he reached high school age, Darian’s family insisted he be mainstreamed into regular classes as there were no appropriate classes for him in the small rural district where they lived. Later testing revealed that Darian had a narrow range of genius which could potentially open up other opportunities for education and employment. These opportunities did not develop as Darian began showing signs of schizophrenia in his senior year of high school. Two years after graduation Darian was committed to a state mental hospital where he remained for three years. At one point during this time, Darian was near death when he suffered a severe reaction to the anti-psychotic drugs given to him.

Darian reached a place of moderate stability (without the support of medications) about eight years ago and successfully maintained an apartment. *He preferred to stay in touch by telephone and called family regularly.* Late last February Darian laid down on the floor in his apartment and did not move until he was discovered by his landlord. He was taken by ambulance to the hospital where doctors said he had been only a couple of days from death. *Over the next several months, Darian was moved back and forth among three different hospitals from Warsaw, in northern Indiana, Indianapolis, center state, and Evansville on the southern tip.* After many months in the hospital, he was released to a skilled-care nursing home in October where he received excellent care.

Darian lacked the will to live. He had given up walking since he had lain down in his apartment months before. Now wheelchair bound, he had regressed to the point that he needed total care. His family was notified in November that he had stopped eating and was declining. Darian’s sister came to spend a couple of days with him and his mother stayed at his bedside his last 3 weeks. During this time, Darian’s mind was clear and at peace. He knew he was much loved and passed away shortly after 4:00 AM November 29, 2016 at the age of 41 years.

Darian is survived by his mother, Roxy Jacobs, and step-father, Tom Jacobs; three siblings, Heidi Badgley, Ronald Van Sessen (wife, Kimberly), Carey Thalmann (wife, Amy); nieces, Ashly Thalmann, Nicole Thalmann, Sarah Van Sessen, and Faith Badgley; nephew, Mark Van Sessen; and father Michael William Thalmann. Preceding him in death in 1962 is his sister, Hope Dawn Badgley.

State of Society

Evanston Meeting of Friends

It has been another vibrant year for our meeting. We have warmly welcomed new members: Robyn Sullivan and her two children, Cooper and Fiona. Michael Conover transferred his membership from Evanston to Northside Friends Meeting. We experienced the joy of the marriage of Colleen Reardon and Henrietta Yardley under the care of the Meeting on October 8, 2016. On January 8, 2017, our long-time member Eleanor Johnson celebrated her 101st birthday with family, some coming from as far as California and Washington for this event. We also experienced sorrow with the losses of Eleanor Johnson and Michael Imlay. *Memorial Meetings for Worship were held on May 20, 2017 for Eleanor and on May 27, 2017 for Michael.*

The midweek Meeting for Worship under the care of Evanston Meeting continues to meet at The Admiral on the Lake, a retirement facility, every Wednesday morning. Several members of the community as well as some members of Evanston Meeting attend the Meeting for Worship and then gather for breakfast afterwards.

The meeting has continued several traditions such as a pancake breakfast meeting the third Sunday of each month, and a Meeting for Learning following the rise of the Meeting for Worship the first and fourth Sundays each month. We now have arranged for volunteers who bring Elizabeth Mertic to and from South Holland so that she may attend the Meeting for Worship and join in fellowship with those attending potluck on every second Sunday of the month. We continue to provide monthly meals for homeless youth at a shelter in Chicago through the Night Ministry. Each Sunday a group continues to meet before Meeting for Worship to sing hymns. Two Friday evenings a month, interested people gather to watch films *selected earlier by the group which is coordinated by our Caretaker, John Knox*. We continue to offer the fall silent retreat at Portiuncula Retreat Center in Frankfort, Illinois.

Inquirers Meetings were held on five consecutive Sundays in February and March 2017. They were well attended and informative sessions with discussions for new attenders who had questions about the Quaker faith. Members of the Meeting shared the weekly topics and facilitated the discussions. A table is reserved for those interested to discuss Quaker beliefs and practices during our monthly potluck meals. The biannual meeting for clerks of the various committees continues to provide support and thereby strengthen committee work. Friendly Dinner Groups meet monthly and several spiritual nurture groups continue to meet regularly.

Discussion about Race is a group that continues to meet every other week for worship sharing with discussion and sponsors a relevant film once a month at the meetinghouse. *Facilitated by Alyce Barry*, it focuses on racial issues, inequities, injustices, privilege, violence and our responses. *The group had also arranged for the artist Deena Uzzell to lead a workshop in creating collages, for field trips to the DuSable museum, and to nearby theaters to view selected films followed by discussion.*

Mary Theis and Phyllis Reynolds traveled to Peru in March/April for a women's retreat on indigenous healing practices. They hope to hold another retreat in Illinois within the next year.

The 2017 Peace Award was presented to Youth & Opportunity United (Y.O.U.) for its outstanding work with young people. In accepting the award, the director Seth Green gave a moving and inspiring talk about the organization's mission in working with local youth. Meredith George was chosen as our Vision Keeper for Interfaith Action of Evanston for her activism in the Chicago area.

Long term childcare workers Norma Dupont and Suzanne Sheridan together with several young Friends continue to provide capable, stable and loving care of our infants and young children during meeting and adult learning programs. It is a joy to have our young families participate in Simple Meals and potluck lunches. Ministry and Counsel and Religious Education Committees sponsored an afternoon program on encouraging increased child and parent attendance last September. This was followed up by an interactive discussion led by Joy Duncan, which focused on increasing the participation of the children and their parents in Meeting for Worship. First Day School has continued to thrive with the attendance of more young children this year. They, and those who engage as their teachers, truly enrich the life of our meeting.

Meeting for Learning provided a variety of programs. Some were led by members and attenders of the meeting. *Karen Carney, David Bragman, and Lisa Bassett shared their personal spiritual journeys. Mark Dennis, Jr., the CEO of the McGaw YMCA and a former Senior pastor of Evanston's Second Baptist Church spoke first to our Religious Education students then after Meeting for Worship he addressed the adults about faith in our actions and acting on our values. David Shiner and Colleen Reardon provided drafts of ILYM's Faith & Practice with the most recent updates. Guest speakers such as Judy Wolicki, the ILYM Field Secretary, led a discussion on spiritual deepening, Brant Rosen from*

AFSC gave us updates as well as plans and activities for the year. Others included Kim Snoddy from RefugeeOne who explained the refugee process; Corrie Wallace, who is an educational and racial equity consultant, created an interactive program; and Deena Uzzell, who presented her research on Black Whalemens and their Quaker connections. Thomas Weber the Head of School at Scattergood Friends came with four students to address the value of their education and life experiences at the boarding school, inviting us to visit. Each event stimulated thoughtful group discussion.

Evanston Friends Meeting is happy to be co-sponsoring a refugee family with RefugeeOne. Meeting was assigned a Rohingya Burmese (Myanmar) family with mother, father, and two children, and has donated funds and begun visiting them. More than 25 members and attenders have agreed to help with everything from donating money, to visiting with the family, helping them learn English, accompanying them to medical appointments, and assisting to find adequate work.

We continue to have our challenges. A longtime concern is that of latecomers whose arrival disrupts the worship of several settled folks. Ministry and Council has distributed a trifold pamphlet on offering and receiving spoken ministry. We are continually seeking ways to increase the caring interaction between our adults and children.

Our monthly newsletter, edited by Kenneth Laughlin, helps to keep us connected, especially for distant friends and those without electronic access, with the minutes from Meeting for Business, the quarterly Treasurer's Report, and the announcements of pending events. Charlotta Koppanyi, the Religious Education coordinator, writes a First Day School report; others provide book reviews and present ecological concerns.

Lake Forest Friends Meeting

There is no question we are living in difficult times. The last decade and a half has been increasingly turbulent and conflict filled. Quakers are familiar with difficult times. It has been the work of Quakers to meet challenges. How this is done individually and as a body is the mystery and embodiment of "being in the Spirit." *Now may be the time to reflect on the concerns, work and messages from past years in discerning the State of the Society in this moment and as we meet the challenges ahead.*

Reading through the last 15 years of The State of the Society Reports of Lake Forest Friends Meeting (LFFM) reveals an open flow over the years, an earnest openness in repeating themes of concern and yearning. While covering the basic data of births and deaths, activities, work of committees along with external activities, there is attention to the inner life of Friends.

This inner reflection appears in the first paragraph of the 2002 State of the Meeting Report: "As Lake Forest Friends Meeting begins its 50th year, it continues to provide spiritual sustenance and growth through causes. We find as a Meeting, we are not as courageous as Friends were in prior centuries. We would like to find more courage and willingness to practice our Faith. Moreover, sometimes the courage is needed not so much when it is time to face the world, but when it is time to disturb the placid waters of our Meeting by asking Friends to hold an issue in the Light and persist until consensus is reached."

The author then refers back in time to Allie Walton, a loved member from the early years of LFFM, with a quotation of Allie's from her 1965 report: "A pacifist knows that there is violence and conflict, but he refuses to admit that violence is the only way to resolve conflict. He tries to live in such a way that violence can be controlled, that the desperately violent situation may not ever arise. I don't think it's really necessary for a man to have to decide that he will never resort to violence. The thing that matters is whether he sincerely believes that war is futile, ridiculous, intolerable and immoral." These became critically important words as the Iraq war loomed ahead March, 2003.

The report of 2003 is long, exuberant and “...an abundant one for LFFM Meeting—abundant with love and concern for our neighbors, including those in other parts of the globe suffering from war, disease, hunger, those in our own country who are homeless and the person sitting next to us whose hand we shake at close of meeting.” Peace Vigils took place in Market Square, along Green Bay road in addition to rallies in Chicago. The Meeting disagreed on how to support the victims in the Israeli/Jewish and Palestinian/Arab conflicts. The Meeting passed a Minute to pray daily at Noon for the World Leaders to seek a non-violent solution to the Iraqi crisis. The report closes with, “When the winds off war have died down (which we trust they eventually will). Let us retain our enthusiasm and commitment.” Tragically, such was not the case, as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan continue along with new ones. Who knew the demands on “enthusiasm and commitment” would be unrelenting.

In 2004, the author of that year’s report refers back to Allie Walton’s 1965 report, urging review of her message. Allie cautioned against over-reliance on past traditions and actions of bygone Quakers. She states, “...Suppose we had no traditions...Suppose we had no reassuring sense of support from the good solid wall of experience behind us, a wall of truths which has been built laboriously by individuals through the years as they sought for their own answers. Are we leaning against this tradition, or are we, by our own lives, adding to it and extending it, giving it breadth and depth in the light of new times and new problems and new ways of life.”

In the midst of ongoing wars, the threat of Climate Change, the presence of Nuclear Arms in a climate of “Global Terrorism”, we are truly in an era of great testing.

In 2005, a struggle surfaces around “how to best support Friends organizations, especially those whose actions at times may not be necessarily coherent with our personal values.” From the 2006 report, “for a Quaker Meeting our efforts to promote peace have lacked unified energy, particularly given we live in a country involved in aggressive war. To explore this we held a Peace and Social Justice Retreat to ground our understanding of the Peace Testimony in our spiritual life in an attempt to re-energize ourselves.” Between 2007 and 2010 emerges the work of the Listening Project on Finance, the development of the Statement of LFFM Values and Organization and the work of restructuring the meeting along five values: Stewardship of the Meeting, Maintaining the LFFM Building and Property, Support for Membership in the Wider Quaker Community, Witness, and Nurture of Lake Forest Friends. The re-organization also supported and fostered a growing sensitivity to the environment and concepts of the “green economy” as practices turned to composting, limiting waste, use of Fair Trade Products, regenerating native plant habitat on the meeting grounds, energy saving practices, etc. The Peace Committee purchased a Peace Pole to be erected on the grounds and for the next three years (2014, 2015, and 2016) a Peace Ceremony was held in honor of the United Nations International Day of Peace which takes place yearly in September.

Another event that speaks to Allie Walton’s plea to meeting “new problems” with “new ways of life” was the crisis this past year when no one was able to fill the position of Presiding Clerk. Undaunted, we entered into a year of rotating clerks. Friends who had previously served as Presiding Clerks and were currently on the Ministry and Worship Committee, each Clerked Meeting for Business for two months. The Meeting showed patience, nurture and support of each. Some details were glossed over but overall our business continued.

Forums and pre-meeting adult religious education programs have been particularly rich and well attended this past year. We had three well-attended and probing discussions on aging as Quakers. One conclusion: The Inner Light never ages. We were fascinated by a unique and useful forum on how to prepare at home for a serious emergency involving a black-out for more than several hours. Our Friendly Bible Study group started up again with study of the Letter of James which highlights faith in actions. Lake Forest Friends continue to be very active in leadership positions and participation in the Wider

Quaker World. The Meeting continued its formal endorsement for the ministry of Jessica Easter who is working as a chaplain in a children's hospital.

The meeting is holding steady in average attendance (27 adults and six young friends) and membership with 141 total members, 64 resident adult members and 10 resident young Friends. New members are Penelope Sasha Colin, an infant member by request of her parents; Thomas and Kathleen McDonald and their sons, Kyle and Tristan, and Arminda Downy Mavromatis. Two births blessed our Meeting: Penelope, daughter of Alexandra and Aaron Colin, and Jonathan Young, son of Katherine and Jay Young. We noted with joy the marriage of Emily Wills to Nick Raef that took place on July 23, 2016. Sadly, there were two deaths: Debbie Schwartz, an away member who lived in Arizona and Al Lang, a Madison resident and a former long-time member of LFFM. Al and his late wife Jenny, founded the still-active Camp Woodbrooke in Southwestern Wisconsin where many younger friends from our Meeting over the years learned about nature and community with a Quaker touch.

The meeting continues its efforts to address humanitarian concerns. The meeting was active on a number of fronts in the past year. The Peace and Social Justice Committee invited representatives from two organizations assisting Syrian refugees to present a forum on the extent of the plight of millions of Syrian refugees in the Middle East, Europe and the United States, including Chicago. One of these organizations, the Karam Foundation, is based in Lake Forest. On a related matter, the meeting co-hosted with the North Suburban Mennonites a presentation by a representative from Refugee One in Chicago which resulted in the meeting agreeing to assist a Congolese family in Chicago with five children. In addition, a number of members attended an open house sponsored by a Mosque in Libertyville called the Islamic Foundation North. Members also attended a rally and dinner sponsored by supporters of the family of Justus Howell a young African American shot and killed two years ago by a Zion police officer. We continue to support Peaceful Communities in their work educating communities on gun control; and their activism in urging better legislation. The Lake County organization, PADS, recognized the valuable work of LFFM volunteers in preparing and serving dinners for homeless people.

These are definitely not ordinary times. *As reflected in our annual reports*, LFFM always manages to confront the vital issues of the times. For a group, a "community" of independent minds, backgrounds and values, to create a common ground of action is an immense task. The "voice" that echoes *in the reports of the past* seems to say "we can do better, we can do more, why can't we get past our loss of momentum?" As Quakers, our devotion to honesty and integrity means that we are willing to question ourselves. Moving forward with an answer is the hard part.

Northside Friends Meeting

Meeting is us! We are members, attenders, visitors, and seekers. We are young, old, and in-between. Some of us are life-long Quakers, others convinced, some come from other religious roots, and others have none at all. We unite in holy silence on First Day. Out of this worship we transition to social hours, pot lucks, Meetings for Business, committee meetings, and second hour programs but it is our worship that defines us. We share our gifts. We celebrate that which is unique in each of us.

The past year has continued to be a time of regrouping and growth, an ongoing process since our 2003-2004 sabbath year. During 2015 fall retreat, we agreed to simplify our structure by retaining just two committees, Ministry and Counsel and House. In 2016, Nominating Committee brought forward a presiding clerk and Second Hour Committee slate. Appointing a presiding clerk has provided immense help keeping things running smoothly. For other meeting tasks, like those of greeter and closer of Meeting for Worship, we ask individuals to step forward as led. This provides both an opportunity to serve meeting and a healthy way to grow our community. To deepen our connection and caring of each

other we added a time for Joys and Sorrows immediately following worship, allowing that which has been important in our lives to be shared.

The Second Hour Committee arranges weekly First Day programs and workshops. These presentations are most always facilitated by our meeting members and attenders and engage us in a further understanding of our Quaker world. We find in them an intimacy, powerful and positive, not always found in those programs facilitated by external guests.

We delight in our children and provide them with activities and teachings, with Ministry & Counsel providing oversight to First Day concerns. We welcome into worship children who want to join us. Sometimes they sit quietly reading a book, or play with toys, or wiggle, as they learn to participate in worship. Sometimes babies, cuddled in parents' arms, join us. Since our paid childcare provider left we moved our focus from childcare to First Day programming, managing to give our children the "village" so necessary to develop their spiritual lives. Our children's recent rigorous rehearsal schedule and performance of a play boosted First Day School attendance. The children's enthusiasm was shared by all and inspired the planning of another play.

Members have formed a Book Club, held a concern for social justice while visiting a near-by mosque, and hosted a visit by 57th Street Meeting. While attending the Chicago Women's March some members wore pink pussy hats while fondly carrying a long-ago-made Northside Friends Meeting banner. We were delighted this became a multi-generational activity, bonding children and adults who participated. A group from meeting attended the powerful Gone But Not Forgotten Quilt exhibit and lecture that called for awareness of those in our communities who have been lost to police violence. Some of us attended the Upper Valley Corn Roast, ILYM Annual Sessions, and the FGC Gathering. In solidarity with Japanese American friends several Northsiders visited the Japanese American Day of Remembrance exhibit at the Chicago History Museum. We hold special concern for Japanese Americans, reinforced by our weekly worship in the Japanese American Service Committee building.

Attendance has consistently remained 15-30 on First Day. Visitors, particularly young adults unfamiliar with Quaker faith and practice, have joined our worship as have those from other meetings who are seasoned Friends. Our door is always open to newcomers.

Though many stay for potluck it is a small group who stays for second hour and Business Meeting. While a small group means that each voice is heard, it also means the work of meeting is falling on a core few. There are some advantages to a small group but we must ensure that work does not become a burden and that Friends step up for financial contributions, child care and education, greeting and closing, and Second Hour facilitation.

Milestones of this past year include: Pamela Calvert and Helen Haug transferred memberships to Northside. Glenn Neumann, a long-time active member, moved to be near family in Colorado. *We hold Glenn in the Light as he settles on a new path.* Tyler Callich served with children's programming and *graciously helped sort thorny issues regarding vetting those working with our children. Recently she transitioned to another house of worship.* Steve Hawk, a regular attender until his health interceded, has died. *We extend our sympathies to his wife, Peggy.* Janice Thompson moved to Paris but remains a member of our meeting. *We are grateful for her attention to environmental concerns.* Daniel Hall requested his membership be transferred to Midcoast Meeting, Damariscotta, Maine. *We send our love along with a letter of transfer.* Adrian Nelson, currently working at L'Arche Tacoma Hope community in Tacoma, WA, lifted up a minute of concern from ze current ministry, seeking our response. Mike Conover transferred his membership to Northside; *Spirit has gifted us.* Ted Ehnle married John Heintz; *a blessing.* Martha Lavey, a recent regular attender, has died; *we mourn.* Andy Harrington and Charlotte Wood-Harrington moved to the Boston area, requesting transfers of memberships to Wellesley Friends Meeting. *Happily, Andy will continue to join us at Northside in early fall and winter.* Ty McGee

faithfully transformed our rented space into a place of worship. *We give thanks for all he does to allow us to focus on worship and fellowship.*

We are not a group led by the elders, but instead, all of us, young through old, have a responsibility for managing the tasks and decisions of meeting. As we consider our state of society we ask ourselves: “Do we provide nurturance to those who come?” “Do we step up to do the work needed to keep Meeting viable and solvent?” “Are we doing enough outreach to attract and keep visitors, particularly those with children?” “Do we successfully engage visitors in our activities?” “Do we help them feel welcome and wanted?” “Do we provide a spiritual home?” “Do we help transfer-of-memberships for those coming from other meetings?”

Always a work-in-progress, we come together, led by Spirit, on First Day. Most notably, there has been fluidity this year in the midst of which we find ourselves relaxed (except about politics) and able to manage the tasks of our meeting with open hearts. We trust each other and are willing to be Friends to one another.

Meeting is us, and we unite, most of all, through the holy silence we share.