# *Among Friends*

*Summer 2011*



## Annual Sessions 2011

Published by Illinois Yearly Meeting

## Editor's Note

This issue provides a glimpse at this year's annual sessions. The epistles reflect the experiences of the gathering. Also included are various photographs taken throughout the gathering.

Cover: Gathering for Friday evening dancing on the lawn.
p. 5: Gathering for Thursday evening hayrack ride.
p. 6: Chuck Howenstine showing the youth how to start fire without matches at the Thursday campfire.
p. 8: Playing in the sandbox during free time.
p. 9: Friday evening dancing on the lawn.
p. 12: Worship sharing group on the lawn.
Back page, left column: Nancy Halliday leading the Saturday morning nature tour; Children's program storytelling; Elizabeth Mertic helping with drinks at breakfast; Registration desk and bookstore.
Back page, right column: Bruce Kanarek driving Maurine Pyle in the golf cart used to transport peeple between Clear Creek House and the ILYM meetinghouse.; Sunday gathering for the reading of epistles; Thursday evening campfire; worship sharing group on the lawn.

Wil Brant

Published twice a year, *Among Friends* is a publication of the Illinois Yearly Meeting of Friends and provides a forum about activities within the various meetings and worship groups that make up Illinois Yearly Meeting. *Among Friends* also provides pertinent information provided by Quaker organizations and by interested readers. Readers are reminded that signed articles and letters express the view of the writers and not official positions of Illinois Yearly Meeting.

**www.ilym.org**

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**Graphics**: p. 16, Trees in front of the ILYM meetinghourse, Fariba Murray

Email addresses are written with ☺ rather than @

### Submission Information

All submissions should be sent to the editor. Deadline date for next issue is posted on ILYM website.

Informal articles about your meeting or worship group (not State of Society Reports), plus poetry, artwork, and photos are encouraged and received with appreciation.

# *Among Friends*

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**Annual Sessions**

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# 2011 Illinois Yearly Meeting Epistle

Dear Friends everywhere,

Illinois Yearly Meeting gathered as the full moon's light shone on the Midwest cornfields, symbolizing the divine illumination from which we seek guidance and sustenance. During Sixth month, the 137th annual session met near McNabb, Illinois, with the theme "As Way Opens: Discerning Our Path Forward in the Light."

We welcomed Mary Garman, Professor of Religion at Earlham College, whose lecture "'If it brings you into trouble, it will bring you out again': The paradoxes of a Quietly rambunctious Quaker" showed us examples of earlier Friends who followed their spiritual leadings even into difficult, dangerous situations. In their deepest despair, they experienced their most powerful leadings that brought them beyond their troubles. We were inspired by their courage and faith.

We sought a path forward on addressing the issue of racism, with the help of Vanessa Julye, a Friend from Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting and coordinator for the Friends General Conference Committee on Nurturing Ministries, Ministry on Racism. In her workshops, Friends listened to the Light of other Friends' experiences on how to engage Monthly Meetings with the book, *Fit for Freedom, Not for Friendship: Quakers, African Americans and the Myth of Racial Justice*, and its accompanying study guide. Many generations combined to make a large workshop entitled "Engaging in a Conversation on Racism." Friend Vanessa facilitated our loving listening on this often awkward, but important topic.

In her evening address, Vanessa shared her spiritual journey and led us in exercises on the subject of barriers to welcoming people of color and other issues of diversity. Her elegant story about the giraffe trying to welcome the elephant into his home was deeply moving to Friends. It illustrated the structures that we take for granted and the need to overcome them with love and welcome for our neighbors. The Spirit led us as we considered ways to take action in our Monthly Meetings.

At our previous yearly meeting, we rejoiced in the new property that we had acquired adjacent to our yearly meeting campus. We seek to make this place a refuge for wildlife and for our spirits. Although the management of our property can be complicated, and, at times, frustrating, we conducted our business in a spirit of gratitude for this new property. We waited in silence in Meeting for Business to discern the way forward in love.

Through worship sharing we learned about each other's personal experiences of the nature of the Divine and of the way opening. In an evening program, Friends shared their Light through the creativity of original poetry read aloud at a worshipful pace, music, and dramatization. We welcomed this different kind of opportunity to hear Friends and what inspires them.

These sessions remind us that we can trust our Quaker process to find divine guidance and our community to give us support. We pray you can remove any barriers in finding your way forward.

In Light and love,

Illinois Yearly Meeting

# Epistle of the Adult Young Friends

Dear Friends Everywhere,

How are you? Really, what have you been thinking about lately? This year at ILYM our theme was "As Way Opens: Discerning Our Path Forward in the Light." At our retreat in January we discerned that we want to better integrate with the wider community of Friends. With this in mind, we decided to stay on campus, sign up for more ILYM volunteer jobs, give a greater showing in business meeting, participate in more ILYM workshops, and attend more lectures.

At times we had difficulty conversing with older Friends. We overcame this thanks to meals and overtures from individual Friends.

We participated in many of the workshops, including; "Support for the Journey: An Aging and Saging Group at Downers Grove," "'To ponder well the paths of my feet': Journaling and life in the Spirit," "Grief and Grieving," "Emily Greene Balch: Bridge Builder to Peace, Women, and Internationalism," "Engaging in Conversation on Racism," and "Getting our Final Wishes on Paper." We also enjoyed speakers Mary Garman, a Quiet rambunctious Friend, and Vanessa Julye, who shared some of her spiritual journey and experiences as a woman of color in Friends Meetings and urged Friends to bring awareness of this difference of experience back to their monthly meetings.

We made connections during worship sharing and the celebration of the purchase of a new building.

Amongst ourselves our fellowship was nurtured by walks up and down Quaker Lane. On one walk we saw a "moon-bow" (like a rainbow, except at night) and on another we made a cuddle puddle at the Friends cemetery.

At our Saturday business Meeting we approved Stephen Kuhn as co-clerk of the Adult Young Friends (AYF) and approved Christopher Earp continuing as co-clerk. We also approved Alethea Tschetterwood as recording clerk.

As we reflected on the growth of our group, we were reminded how four years ago many AYF simply sat on the Meeting House porch together and we are now much more involved with the rest of ILYM. We intend to work on further integrating ourselves with ILYM.

We look forward to our August and January tsunamis. We also would enjoy hearing from you.

In the Light,

ILYM AYF



# Epistle of the High School Friends

Dear Friends,

To begin our Quaker adventure, we gathered on Wednesday with hugs and happiness. We met for a brief rules meeting on the lawn where we were told that we have to abstain from sex and drugs, but rock and roll is a-okay.

On Thursday, though we woke up late for breakfast due to an unfortunate miscommunication, we participated in a clerking workshop led by Javaughn Fernanders where we learned of the intricacies and subtleties of clerking. That afternoon, we inadvertently missed our afternoon business meeting because we all fell asleep for a wonderful two and a half hour nap after we had facials that were an attempt to raise money to send five of us to FGC. We awoke for dinner. As a group, we volunteered our services to the kitchen and dining room, and spent many hours washing dishes. After the chores were done, we conducted a business meeting where we discussed the fall quake that will take place in St. Louis, a public display of affection minute, and discerned that Liz Anderson will be the new senior clerk, Marguerite Daw will be the recording clerk, and Claire Goode will be the treasurer.

The next day, we had a query workshop led by Javaughn where we each wrote a query based on the testimonies and we responded during worship sharing. A wonderful sheep metaphor was brought up and applied itself for many jokes later. In the afternoon, we joined older Friends in the enjoyment of a workshop on a discussion of racism led by Vanessa Julye. That night, we put our dancing shoes on, and promptly took them off, to square dance with everyone and enjoy watermelon on the lawn.

Early on Saturday, we stumbled out of bed to make it to breakfast on time and be ready to leave on our out-trip. We went to Camp Menno Haven where we participated in team-building activities in which we had to work on communication, teamwork, growth, and safety. We also completed the high ropes course which involved a zip line, tight ropes, and a telephone pole called the Leap of Faith. We climbed the pole, stood and turned around, and then ultimately jumped for a rope with a bell. Facing fears, personal growth, and swatting bugs were common activities throughout the day. We came back exhausted and devoured by insects, but satisfied with ourselves and our positive group dynamic. Late night on Saturday, we went for a walk, ate pizza, played Wink, and wrote this epistle.

This year we say good-bye to Mason George, Sara Raffensperger, and Emily Wills as they move on to another chapter of their lives and prepare themselves for the adventure of college.



## Epistle of the Middle School Friends

To Friends Everywhere,

The theme of Illinois Yearly Meeting for 2011 was "As Way Opens: Discerning Our Path Forward in the Light." We worked together to build a labyrinth that looked like a simple design. We learned how complex the labyrinth was and how much work it took for the outside to look simpler.

We had heard the story of Theseus and Ariadne, and we liked how Ariadne was a hero. We noticed that spiders were in our labyrinth and that the labyrinth took on a spider-web shape. It was interesting how the labyrinth seemed to choose its own shape, even though we were working from a traditional design. Maybe God shapes our pathways for us, too.

We invited the younger kids to walk the labyrinth. Many of them did not fully appreciate the labyrinth, but two of the youngest kids especially seemed to enjoy the center. From the outside, it looked like a spiral and you would never change direction. But on the inside, it veered in twists and turns, and just when you were near the center, your path would take you toward the outside again.

We weren't really sure it would lead us to the middle. It was like doing a Trust Walk with our labyrinth. When you did get to the center, you could feel a sense of peace and accomplishment, being closer to God. It was like you could feel the Light shining within you.

## Epistle of the 8-9 Year Old Friends

Dear Young Friends,

We hope you are having a good meeting.

We are eight young Friends, age eight to eleven, and four grown-ups. Some of us have been friends for years. We love dynamite, video games, action, bowling, giving people nicknames, dance, playing in the sandbox, the Cubs and Bears, going barefoot, being dirty, acting like a monkey, and going down slides.

Our theme was Finding Our Path and Walking It.

We made guidelines about being responsible, being caring, being respectful, helping each other when we have problems, and not making people feel bad.

We found that some of us don't like to stick together; we had a treasure hunt – following clues – and some of us wanted to run ahead.

We learned that we can find our path by listening to our hearts.

We traced our bodies on paper.

We played the Blob Game, to get unity. We played Red Light, Green Light.

We heard from Bill, Alice and Zoe.



## Epistle of the 6-7 Year Old Friends

Greetings from the ILYM 6-7 year olds.

Each day we met with all the F.U.N. (Friends Under Nineteen) kids for songs near the playground. Then our group went to our tent and played games and read stories.

Our theme "As Way Opens: Our Path Forward in the Light" appeared in all nine books we read. Our favorite books include *Let's Go Camping With Mr. Sillypants*, *Heckedy Peg, Cinderella's Rat*, and *Little Red Riding Hood*.

Our first day, we discussed being oneself and different ways we get help making decisions. We learned how to made paper fortune-tellers and started a collaborative drawing of what we do when we have difficult choices.

Our second day concentrated on choosing to do "the next right thing" and our path forward. We read more stories and walked the labyrinth the middle school Young Friends constructed from rope. We also made fans to blow away the pesky gnats and worked on our collaborative drawing.

Our third day we discussed what is meant by "in the Light." We gathered with all the F.U.N. kids to be captivated by a story-teller and musician duo who told wonderful stories that shed light on our inner Light. At our tent we read more stories and played more tag. We discovered that Little Red Riding Hood could have followed her inner Light rather than obeying either her mother or the wolf, that sometimes we just need to make our own decisions regardless of pressures from those around us.

# The Motion of Love at Dusk

Adrian Fisher, Oak Park Monthly Meeting



On Friday evening I was sitting on the porch steps of the Meeting House watching the square dancing. Dusk was descending, the lightning bugs and stars were coming out, and the porch lights had been turned on, if nothing else so the musicians could see. The dances made moving shapes, and dancers of all ages wheeled around the circles, or pairs came up through a double line, turned and went back down the outside. As the dance went on, each dancer briefly appeared in front of me in the light: some I knew, some not so well, some not at all. Each one appeared, with an expression happy, serious, intent, or thoughtful—the dances required concentration—and then they would move back around the circle or back down the line, back into the dusk.

And as each appeared, each with his or her own distinctive way of moving—fast, slow, graceful, or humorous—I felt the "motion of love" that I once read about in some Quaker literature, I forget where, but there it was, as though the dance—the dance's motion and the music—was creating that motion of love and holding us all within it, and I felt love for each dancer as an individual and also for all of us, everyone who was there, and that feeling expanded outward in the dusk to include all the people who were not there, living and dead, whom I knew or others knew or knew about or whose words we had heard or read, as though it was not really me feeling it, it was just there, called into being by the dance, as the shapes of the dances wheeled like the stars wheel above our heads, as the music circled around on itself, and as time itself wheeled on in its eternal motion.



# We are a Mirror Moving over the Face of Eternity

Adrian Nelson, Upper Fox Valley Upper

I do not lay claim to this metaphor; I learned it from a friend. But this metaphor rang through my being when I first heard it and continues to echo there. This comes as a possible answer to a question that I have been struggling with for a long time: the question of the great diversity of spiritual and religious beliefs among the Religious Society of Friends, and if there is, in fact, some one great way that we should all adhere to. How are we all Friends and yet believe so differently? Should there be a unity?

To think of the human race's understanding of the world as a mirror moving over the face of eternity gives me a way to view such diversity. Not just among the Society of Friends, but among human beings as a whole. It answers the question: How is it that we can all feel that we have Truth, with a capital T (the ultimate truth, the only truth), with the same conviction—and yet such Truths are different, among people, places, time?

We collectively are the mirror as well as individually. The face of eternity is whatever you would like to call that unknown which comes to us in brief but overwhelming flashes of insight, passion, rapture: the face of god, the soul of the universe, the laws of physics, the numenon, the force, the truth. But because we are but a mirror floating over this eternal face, we can only see and reflect a part of it within our being. This, for me, is perfectly embodied in the various religions and ideas of order (secular or no) which abound in human society, in history and culture.

This is why our conceptions of the world and truth change over time—what we reflect is merely a part of eternity, and we are constantly moving. We feel the truth in our beings but it continues to change over time. If we realize that the mirror is moving, we may find that such numinous experiences are true though they may be contradictory; the eternal contains everything.

It is when we do not realize that the mirror is bounded, that it is constantly moving, that we get intolerance, wars, massive struggles for a Truth. But we may all find that truth though it is fundamentally different. Because we are partial and because we are human, we can never reflect such Truth, not the entirety of eternity. Our mirrors are bounded, we are moving. It is all part of eternity. Struggles over a piece of it break the mirror apart.

As a Quaker, I feel the acknowledgement of the mirror's motion from the Friends and friends that I know. George Fox recognized that the eternal appears to us in different ways. Margaret Fell is his witness: George Fox said, "'The scriptures were the prophets' words, and Christ's and the apostles' words, and what, as they spoke, they enjoyed and possessed, and had it from the Lord': and said, 'Then what had any to do with the scriptures, but as they came to the Spirit that gave them forth? You will say, "Christ saith this, and the apostles say this;" but what canst thou say? Art thou a child of the Light, and hast thou walked in the Light, and what thou speakest, is it inwardly from God?'"

We put the eternal into our own words. Perhaps I say this and you see that. We behold eternity. And even through us, the eternal can know itself.

Love and truth, human love and human truth, contained in the eternal; we see only a part as we move over its surface, we reflect what we can. I want to see the eternal in you; I want us to reflect each other.

# Clerk's Corner

David Finke, ILYM Presiding Clerk



Recently I heard of scientists in northern Illinois (FermiLab) discovering what might be a new fundamental particle (like quarks) or force (like gravity or electromagnetism). It will take some time for their international community to confirm and account for what they found, which I will follow eagerly. But the fact is that it is something truly different and, to us humans, really new—though of course "It" has been around since the early life of this universe.

I am writing this note around Easter. This is the spring season when we become aware of new life emerging from the shell and debris of the old, to our delight and surprise—although we know that these life-forces have been on our planet a very long time. And as we marvel at this refreshment from Nature, we also have opportunity in our faith tradition to marvel at how God gives refreshment and renewal in the life of the Spirit.

In the broad spectrum of Quakerism, we find many ways to try to express this Miracle. Some, with the wisdom of the Mystical tradition, are leery of words at all. When my cat (who lacks human speech) settles into trusted contentedness in my lap, it reminds me that we also can rest in God's arms as it were, in confidence that "All things work together for good," without efforts at logical explanation.

Not that life is without struggle, obfuscation, frustration, and seeming near-term failures. The negativities are part of reality, though not Ultimate Reality. And this, in a word, is for me the Easter message, which Quakers know has validity throughout every day and year. The brutal reality of crucifixion—of the Good Teacher from Nazareth, and of those today throughout the world who are oppressed—says that Caesar claims to have the upper hand. But the Power of God, which Fox continually testified is "over all," somehow breaks through the defeat, and in countless ways gives forth Resurrection. I affirm that God's Will is for Renewal, for New Life, ever showing New Possibility to our narrow and doubting minds, ever extending our sense of the Beloved Community.

I just now have completed a term of service you have entrusted to me in the clerking role. Two years ago we suddenly had the opportunity to do something strikingly new, in acquiring and restoring the Mills property. Responding to the prompting and encouragement that swept through and inspired us, we stepped out in faith, taking the opportunity that we only partially understood. When Israel saw the Angel of Death passed over them and God led them forth to leave bondage behind, they did not know what was yet to come. Their pilgrimage took 40 years, and every day had to be lived with utter dependence on Divine leadership and Providence, there in the desert.

Similarly, we have been discovering the grace and riches which are at hand, as God leads us forth into transformation as a People. This is, of course, about more than property and money, though we have engaged those realities responsibly. God has more treasures for us than "the same old same-old."

It may be that we are rediscovering truths that have been with us since our origins: we are both rural and urban, simple and highly educated, prosperous and modest, containing the theologically articulate and also the reserved. We have about a century-and-a-third's experience with both a monthly and a yearly meeting jointly holding and using land and buildings, working hard at trusting each other's unique contributions. Our Whole is greater than our parts. We have shown both singleness of purpose and broadness of vision.

And in recent months, I have seen emergence of new leadership, both youthful and more experienced. I have sensed renewal of hope and energy among some Elders, and determination to share gifts without counting the cost. We are extending ourselves, from a stance of Trust: “The Lord shall provide,” and we may respond in Faithfulness. Gospel Ministry is taking root among us, with “gospel” in the literal sense of “good news”—an assurance that we will "try then what Love can do." These are part of the discovery of Rejuvenation in which I invite you to join me in seeing the signs and tokens of emergence.

I affirm this proclamation: “Old things are passed away; behold, I make all things new.” That is the inward Grace that ever seeks to be felt in our hearts and expressed in our fellowship.



## The Book of Hope and Comfort

Janet Means Underhill of Lake Forest Friends Meeting had a leading, more than a decade ago, to collect a few prayers and bits of Scripture into a booklet she calls *The Book of Hope and Comfort*. Based on her experiences working with the dying, it is designed to inspire courage and resilience in those who face difficult transitions. This booklet is small enough to be slipped into the pocket of a robe—or the pocket of one's jeans.

While many of the quotations and prayers are scriptural in origin, they are non-doctrinal, and will be a wonderful resource for meetings, individual Friends, hospital or hospice chaplains, and others to offer to someone facing hard times. Some of the prayers Janet wrote herself. Further information concerning publication of this helpful booklet will be done via the ILYM e-mail announcements list.

# Remarks on Teaching Non-Violence

Sophie de la Mar, Member, Board of Directors, Chicago Friends School

First of all, I would like to remind everyone that I am not an educator. These remarks come from my understanding of our approach to teaching non-violence at the Chicago Friends School (CFS). I am present at the school each Monday morning for our community meeting and for lunch and recess one day per week. These remarks are from my observations and my conversations with the teachers and the curriculum committee.

Bullying and its tragic consequences have been in the news in recent months/years and our society has been struggling with how to address the problem. We now recognize that bullying has negative effects on the bullier, the bullied, and the society in which bullying takes place. The first anti-bullying law in Illinois was passed in 2001, was expanded to include cyberbullying in 2008, and was further expanded and re-written in 2010 so that bullying prevention and active intervention are now expected of all schools. Every school in Illinois is required to have an anti-bullying policy. Our policy at the Chicago Friends School is titled "Behavior Policy".

Our approach to teaching non-violence at the Chicago Friends School, though, goes far beyond having an anti-bullying policy. If you look at our mission and philosophy statements, you can see that our school is founded on Quaker values and the culture and curriculum of the school reflect these values. These are values held not only by Quakers but are values held in common with many religious and service organizations. The difference might be in the effort made to integrate these values into everything we do. They are not just words posted on a wall (although they are posted there), they are values that are lived every day. How is this done?

**Community meeting**

Each week at the Chicago Friends School starts with a community meeting. Teachers, staff, students, parents, visiting family, and board or committee members who are available at that time gather together for this meeting. Marie White, a member of the curriculum committee who is also the parent of a child at the school, presents one of the testimonies, along with a simple explanation of what it means, checking to make sure that the words and concept are clear to the students, then presents a set of simple queries (questions) about that testimony and how it might play out in our lives. Then we go into stillness together to think about the queries. People, including the children, speak out of the silence about their feelings and experiences relating to those queries. When everyone who wants to speak has had a chance to do so, we close the meeting by singing a song or two related to the testimony.

Here is an example of a recent community meeting on the peace testimony:

> When people disagree, each person involved sees the situation in a different way. To solve our disagreements, we all need to try to look at the situation in a new way, to try to understand how others see it. In peacemaking we try to imagine how other people see the problem.
>
> Think of when you've been in a disagreement. How did you feel? Did you try to listen to the other person's point of view?
>
> How does it feel when someone really listens to you? What helps you to be a good listener?
>
> What do we mean when we say "to stand in someone else's shoes"?

**Songs:**

*Love Grows One By One*

Love grows one by one,
Two by two and four by four.
Love grows ‘round like a circle
And comes back knocking at your front door.

*A Place in the Choir*

Refrain: All God’s children got a place in the choir
Some sing low, some sing higher,
Some sing out loud on the telephone wire
And some just clap their hands, or paws, or anything they got now…

Listen to the bass, it’s the one on the bottom,
Where the bullfrog croaks and the hippotamus
Moans and groans with a big t’do,
And the old cow just goes ‘moo’. (refrain)

Dogs and the cats, they take up the middle,
Where the honey bee hums and the crickets fiddle,
The donkey brays and the pony neighs,
The old coyote howls. (refrain)

These values are modeled and practiced and reinforced throughout our daily activities by staying alert to opportunities to point out words and actions that show one or more of the values and also by pointing out when a word or action might be the opposite of a certain value. These values are also encapsulated in the classroom rules.

**Classroom rules**

*Take care of yourself*: CFS members respect themselves. Teachers and staff will work with members to identify where they are socially, emotionally, and as a learner. Children will learn to ask questions to help them learn, use words to describe their feelings and to connect with other community members.

*Take care of each other*: Each member is an important part of CFS. The school expects that all members treat each other with kindness and respect, celebrating diversity while building community. Disrespect toward teachers, staff, or other children; inappropriate physical or verbal interaction; or disruptive behavior is not acceptable.

*Take care of the classroom environment*: Members respect the classroom environment, building facilities, and resources of the school. The school environment is an important part of the learning done at the school. Teachers model to students through guided discovery how to use and treat materials, books and equipment in that classroom.

**Classroom environment**

The classroom is envisaged as a container for the children. How does it look? Feel? We want the children to feel safe there. Are things predictable and consistent? Does the child feel free to explore yet protected? Do the children feel inner peace, that necessary prerequisite to learning?

The colors chosen for our school are beautiful, soothing, calm. The furniture arrangement creates areas suggestive of certain activities, like comfortable places to read and a lovely open space with a flat rug which is good (and quiet) for building.

We have sound baffles on the wall and both a white noise machine and the ability to play music.

We have a chill-out couch which a child may go to when he/she feels a need to re-group or calm down or just rest a minute. We have a beanbag chair for those feeling restlessness in the body.

We have 1 hour outdoor recess every day, weather permitting.

We go into stillness together before lunch. The children have built up from 30 seconds to 2 minutes and will continue to expand this time. The children are learning how to find their inner peace.

In order to really structure the classroom to meet children's needs, one needs to know the children. This happens over time. If there is a child in the classroom with undiagnosed ADHD, sensory deficits, or learning disabilities, these will often manifest themselves as inappropriate behaviors. This happened for us this year. We have a severely hearing impaired child who moved here from another state. We were unaware at the beginning of the school year that we should expect some behavioral issues with this child as the hearing deficit had been addressed with cochlear implants and hearing aids. As it turns out, this child had a set of problems related to delayed socio-emotional development. In our school, we have 2 volunteer school psychologists available to observe, to make recommendations for classroom and teacher interventions specific to the child's issues, and to work with the parents to find resources for testing and treatment. The child and the other children in the classroom accept that this child has issues, that he is working on his issues, and that we all need to work together to help him reach his learning goals for these specific issues. It has been beautiful to watch the progress of the child and the adaptability of the community in dealing with the problem behaviors.

Just as an aside, because we are an alternative elementary school, we are expecting to have more than our share of children with special needs. Our experience is, and we have been told, that parents of children with special needs will look to us as a possible choice of school. One of the issues we are dealing with is where on the continuum we should draw the line in terms of admitting a child to our school. Our small class sizes, multiage classrooms, and individualized educational approach make it easier to deal with some problems but we must be careful to look at the overall mix of abilities and deficits in the classroom so that we maintain an optimal learning environment for all.

Finally, just a little about a specific curriculum for teaching violence prevention. The curriculum is called *Second Step: A Violence Prevention Curriculum*. We have the set for preschool/kindergarten. Since we know that young children who show behavior problems, such as frequent aggression, have about a 50% chance of developing more serious problems in later childhood, it is really important to intervene early. Skills such as empathy, emotion management (impulse control, regulation, anger management), and social problem solving can be taught and are important to learning, success in school, and later success in the workplace. There are curricula for grades 1-3, 4-5, and middle school as well. The material is taught to everyone, that is, there is not a group singled out as needing this learning but it is assumed that everyone can benefit from this curriculum.

The children at Chicago Friends School are currently learning empathy. I have seen them practicing how to use the facial expressions of another as a key to how he/she is feeling. They are also learning words that help them to tell the other children how they are feeling. It feels good when you can explain how you are feeling and others understand. I witnessed an episode this past week that amazed me. Our youngest student is very sensitive to noise and is distressed when it gets too noisy. I saw him put his hands over his ears and say in his loudest voice (which is a normal level for anyone else)"too loud" and then I saw the other children hear him and quiet down—all without any teacher intervention. This child has made enormous progress in communicating how he is feeling and what he needs and the other children have grown in their ability to hear and respond to his expressed need. I should explain that when I first came to the school in December, this child would curl up, avoid eye contact, and refuse to talk when things were disturbing him. What a difference!

This curriculum is taught as a stand-alone lesson 20 minutes per week. Needless to say, it is the constant living of the lesson that is helping all of the children with their social-emotional development. Our teachers have shown wonderful abilities in teaching in this area as well as the more traditional educational areas such as math and reading.

Great things are going on at the Chicago Friends School and we are all learning all the time. If you would like to be a part of our school by volunteering your time and skills, even if you are limited to lunch and recess like this writer, let us know. You can leave a message at 773-442-2371 or write to sophie ☺ chicagofriendsschool.org.



# Speaking Truth to Power Award

Lillian Moats, Downer Grove Friends Meeting

*On June 30, Lillian Moats, member of Downers Grove Friends Meeting received the American Friends Service Committee's (AFSC) Speaking Truth to Power Award for her activism in art and writing. Lillian created two murals for the Windows and Mirrors exhibit. One of the murals, "Foreshadowing," is reproduced below. Following are excerpts from her acceptance speech:*

My relationship with AFSC began just days after 9-11. Like a lot of others, I dreaded where the U.S. response to 9-11 would lead. I phoned AFSC to offer whatever services I could, but wasn't sure what they would be unless graphic arts were needed…. I was stunned to find myself volunteering not just to do graphics work, but to join committees planning demonstrations. Later, I was involved in the Campaign of Conscience, Winter Conference of 2002, Peace Pledge, and so forth—all before the Iraq war started. I could only become engaged in these initiatives because I was made to feel, like every other volunteer, needed and valued.



As an artist AND a writer during this last decade of activism, I've given a lot of thought to which medium wields more power. Of course, there's no real answer. Words and images are so intimately linked in our brains. Vivid writing can create pictures in the reader's imagination, and iconic images often prompt the viewer to put a seemingly inexpressible issue into words of her own, at last.

Yet, I think most of us are feeling more awash in words these days than pictures…. Leave it to AFSC to create a verbal hush in which images can speak directly to our emotions, and our emotions, in turn, cry out for reason.

"Windows and Mirrors" is a brave move during these times when many worthy humanitarian organizations have turned exclusively to photography out of fear that the individual spin any artist may put on an image might offend some potential supporters.

But then, it's all so fitting for an AFSC undertaking. The individual perspective matters here at AFSC. I think this is grounded in the Quaker shunning of dogma, and their belief that no one individual has a corner on the truth.

I thank AFSC on behalf of all the artists who've contributed to "Windows and Mirrors," for the freedom and support you've afforded us. We've been urged to imaginatively project our empathy into the lives of Afghan civilians in this abominable war. I know the resulting images will spur many more to speak truth to power.

Thank you, Mary Zerkel and Karen Light for managing this daunting undertaking and for staying in such close touch with the artists.

I'd like to end by bringing this back to Michael McConnell—who is a muse to so many artists, writers and activists! He's an idea man of the first order, incorruptible, a gentle and powerful leader who always helps us bring complex issues back to AFSC's fundamental touchstone: The inherent worth in every human being. Thanks, from all of us, for being you and for being here.

# Quaker Volunteer Service

Zachary Johnson, Downers Grove Meeting

I am toward the end of my time in the Quaker Volunteer Service (QVS), and it is hard to believe that time has gone by so quickly. It seems that just yesterday it was September, and I was starting out with QVS, but already the year is almost over.

Since the fall I have spent my time volunteering at a non-profit art center called Marwen. Now in its 24th year, Marwen has a long track record of educating and inspiring under-served young people through the visual arts. Having never heard of Marwen before last spring, I am constantly stunned at the sheer number of young lives it manages to touch. Each year Marwen offers around ninety free after school art courses to roughly 1,200 middle and high school students from all over Chicago. The students come from nearly every zip code in the city (54 of 57) and eighty percent live below the poverty line. Through these courses, as well as college and career prep classes, 95% of seniors who graduate from Marwen go on to college. That number amazes me because normally only 50% of graduating seniors who attend Chicago Public Schools go to a university.

Needless to say, I am very grateful to be able to do my part here full time through the Quaker Volunteer Service. I work mostly in development, helping to raise money to keep the organization going. Due to the recession, the five of us in the department have to be as resourceful and hard working as we can in order to make the annual budget a reality. I am glad that I can be here to add a bit more manpower to everyone's efforts.

In total, Marwen has about twenty-four employees, and it seems like everyone has a double life. The co-workers in my department spend their off-time playing in rock bands, directing theater, writing country music, and acting in plays. Nearly everyone else on our staff of twenty-four creates art, dances, makes films, or something along those lines. As an artist myself, and a student of art history during college, I feel right at home.

I am extremely grateful for the opportunity that QVS has provided me. In this tough economy, I am one of the very few among my friends to have a job related to their field. The rest of them get by with jobs at cafés, pizza places, salons, and restaurants, struggling to find worthwhile employment. So, it is through QVS and Marwen that I not only get to take part in the Quaker value of social justice, but also I have the opportunity to build my career and have a sense that I am making a difference in the world. At this point in my life, I could not ask for any more.

The Quaker Volunteer Service Committee, organized with support from 57th Street Meeting of Friends, includes members from across Illinois Yearly Meeting. Quaker Volunteers serve for at least one year with community-based organizations or other service arrangements as Volunteers are individually led, doing full-time peace and justice work in the Greater Chicago Area. Quaker Volunteer service is grounded in Friends' spirituality, and emphasizes being and working in the Light with the poor, the oppressed, and those most at risk. Volunteers live in community at Quaker House in Chicago, and receive a small stipend and other necessary supports. QVS appreciates support from monthly meetings and individual Friends, including service as liaisons from monthly meetings, financial support, assistance in Volunteer recruitment, and encouragement.

Email: QVSC@QuakerVolunteers.org;
Website: www.QuakerVolunteers.org.

# Fun Facts about the Peace Resources Committee Blog

Breeze Richardson, Clerk, Peace Resources Committee

Curious about whether Friends were coming to the Peace Resources Committee (PCR) blog, I recently logged in to check the stats on how many views and comments had been made to the website. I thought it might be fun (and encouraging) to learn about who is coming over for our online potluck dinner. I say "potluck dinner" because as there are various diverse and relevant conversations going on at any given time during a typical meal at your meetinghouse, so too are there on the PRC blog, How Do You See Peace? If the blog is considered a virtual version of a potluck dinner, then you can think of each view of the blog as someone tuning into the conversation at hand (perhaps while assisting a younger Friend with preparing a plate or standing at the sink washing a dish or as they take a seat at your table, smiling as they sit down). One person may read a blog entry just once. Another may come back a few times to read a bit more or read again (or share with someone else). I think of someone reading a blog entry to be like a person joining the potluck, perhaps just to sit silently but attending and present and listening and part of those gathered all the same. The statistics of views and comments help the committee to see how many people are listening and how many people are joining the conversation. Peace Resources Committee is so excited to see that we have people tuning in. Here are some fun facts:




*Fun Fact #1*: There is a blog called Quaker Blogs produced by Susie from Umpqua Valley Worship Group at quaker.zebby.org where links have been made to each of the blog's recent postings. In the past 30 days, 23 views have come from that site to read the PRC blog. Susie is a Friend who is liking what she reads, so she is sharing these posts with others. Just like bringing up something you heard from a friend in a separate conversation. Since the PRC blog has started, there have been 167 referrals come from Quaker Blogs, 58 come from Facebook, 33 come from ilym.org, and 17 come from QuakerQuaker.org. Not only did these people enjoy what they read, they recommended others read these writings, too. We fed many people.

*Fun Fact #2*: There were 122 views on the busiest day (September 16, 2010). There have been 5,446 views since launched, and 133 views in the last week of July 2011. Can you imagine the conversations you would have with these people if everone gathered in person for a potluck today? There were 69 visitors at the blog on Monday, July 26, 2011. What if all of them were were actually gathered together to share recent thoughts and ask questions of guidance from others whose ideas might spark something new? To date, the blog has had 121 comments made on 43 posts. So for every statement made, there have been on average 2.8 replies. And when you put this all together, that means roughly that for every 45 visits (visitors) one perosn leaves a comment (joins the conversation) which is really great and a number we can watch over time to see if more people coming means more people joining the conversation or if we should say more to encourage everyone to share their thoughts.

*Fun Fact #3*. During July 2011, people have been exploring these topics:

> Does standing on the corner holding a sign matter? - 113 views
> What does patriotism mean to you? - 65 views
> Finding my way: reading historical texts for present day meaning - 53 views
> An Ecumenical Call to Just Peace - 23 views

Friends are gathering for conversations. This is wonderful. Thank you to everyone in Illinois Yearly Meeting (and beyond) for your willingness to experiment with building community this way. Let's keep practicing. Please consider commenting on another Friends' writings. If members of the Peace Resources Committee were really coming to your meeting for a potluck, I might bring some olive bread (from Medici Bakery over on 57th Street). What might you bring? What story or idea would you share after hearing David speak of patriotism, or hear Michael's examples on faith and practice, or learn of Howard Brinton's writings on the nature of Quakerism?

I hope each of you are having a wonderful summer—and enjoyed these fun facts (as an analytical presentation) from me, presiding clerk of Illinois Yearly Meeting Peace Resources Committee. Come visit the blog at http://peaceresources.wordpress.com/.

## Meeting Reports

**Evanston Monthly Meeting of Friends**
by Nancy Halliday

EMM has decided to host a Quaker Quest. In preparation, we are reviewing our traditions and testimonies in order to explain them better to others (and even to ourselves).

We responded to the request from ILYM Site Envisioning committee for thoughtful answers to various questions regarding the future of the newly acquired Mills property. To avoid conflict with the new dates for ILYM in June, our Meeting for Business was moved from the third to the fourth Sunday in that month. Our meeting received a special visit from Elias Hicks (a.k.a. Paul Buckley) on April 10.

We hosted the Metropolitan General Meeting on February 5, during which dinosaur expert Rob Sula revealed his insight into Deep Time and its spiritual significance to him, complete with a hands-on fossil display. Thanks to financial help from ILYM, Tom Simpson traveled to Washington, D.C., in November for the annual FCNL meeting. Nancy Halliday attended the steering committee meeting of Quaker Environmental Witness in Chicago on April 7-10.

Our annual peace prize was awarded to Rabbi Brant Rosen of the Jewish Reconstruction Congregation of Evanston. Rabbi Rosen spoke to us movingly about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in January, after his return from the Holy Land. Joey Rodger was endorsed as a representative to

the Evanston Interfaith clergy Association, and Margaret Nelson was chosen as a Vision Keeper to attend the annual dinner at the Interfaith Action Network of Evanston. Our Peace, Social Justice and Earth Care Committee has initiated a new outreach we have named Friends With the Homeless. We are preparing and distributing food to homeless youth in the north Chicago area with the Night Ministry.

We are considering the six queries from FWCC's Global Change Initiative; answers are being garnered from Friends around the world to be reported to the Sixth World Conference of Friends in Kenya in 2012.

The First Day School Committee has begun using the Godly Play/Faith and Play curriculum for our children, and Joan Pine is again offering the yearly adult Inquirer's Group discussions in her home.

We have been blessed with the birth of so many babies this year that yet another celebration was held on April 3 to welcome the newest additions. New parents shared a potluck dinner the following evening.

We welcomed Naomi Bell and Rex Nyquist into membership. Our long time attender, Martha Turner, has transferred her membership from South Bend Meeting. Karen Carney and Jeff Carpenter have been found free to marry; the ceremony will take place on July 23. Many Friends were touched by knowing Carrie Morrison, her husband and two sons, who came to Evanston from Eugene, Oregon, for cancer treatments. We were heartbroken when we learned that she died at her home in February. We were also saddened by the sudden death of our member, Sheila Cassella, on March 9.

**Lake Forest Friends Meeting**
Pam Kuhn

The big news at Lake Forest Meeting is that we are getting new windows for our meetinghouse. After noticing rotting window frames about ten years ago and duly moving slowly and carefully in the Spirit, we were at last able to see way forward and to identify new windows appropriate for our meetinghouse. After that, raising money happened quickly and easily. It was good to know of the care many Friends have for our building and grounds.

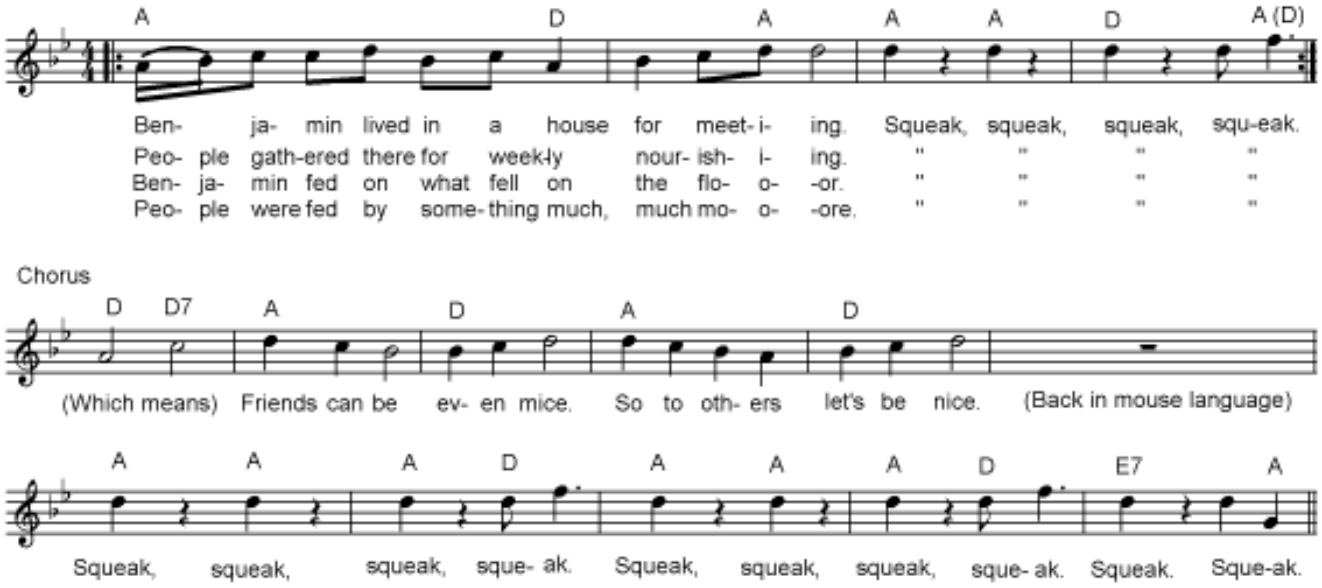
Looking outward and not just through windows, we have had several peace-related forums this year from Quaker and other groups including Friends World Committee for Consultation, Right Sharing of World Resources, and Friends Committee on National Legislation as well as Hands of Peace and Non-Violent Communication. The theme for our children's religious education this year has been "Turning Belief into Action" including care of ourselves and care of the meeting. We also had another successful year serving one meal each month for a nearby homeless shelter.

We have done some introspective work in our adult religious education class by reading several weighty Pendle Hill Pamphlets. Our Pastoral Care Committee held a forum concerning how we would like to be caring for each other and hopefully gave the committee some direction for the future. Our Environmental Committee is exploring ways of controlling buckthorn on our property.

# Squeak

(A Retelling of *Benjamin the Meetinghouse Mouse*)

Wil Brant




(Who was Benjamin?)

A D A A A D A (D)
Ben- -- ja- min lived in a house for meet- i- ing. Squeak, squeak, squeak, sque-eak.
Peo- ple gath- ered there for their nour- ish- i- i- ing. Squeak, squeak, squeak, sque-eak.
Ben- ja- min fed on what fell on the flo- o- or. Squeak, squeak, squeak, sque-eak.
Peo- ple were fed by some- thing much, much mo- o- ore. Squeak, squeak, squeak, sque-eak.

Chorus:

D D7 A D A D
(Which means) Friends can be ev- en mice. So to oth- ers, let's be nice. (Back to mouse language)

A A A D A A A D E7 A
Squeak, squeak, squeak, sque-eak. Squeak, squeak, squeak, sque-eak. Squeak, sque-eak.

(Was Benjamin a problem?)

A D A A A D A (D)
Some were both- er'd when the mouse was a- rou- ou- und. Squeak, squeak, squeak, sque-eak.
They did not want to hear Ben- ja- min's sou- ou- und. Squeak, squeak, squeak, sque-eak.
One said "Let's find for him a chair to le- e- end. Squeak, squeak, squeak, sque-eak.
Why -- can- not mice wor- ship a- mong Fri- e- ends?" Squeak, squeak, squeak, sque-eak.

(What about questions?)

A D A A A D A (D)
You know that quest -ions can come in all ki- i- inds. Squeak, squeak, squeak, sque -eak.
Some -- can be diff- i- cult for our mi- i- inds. Squeak, squeak, squeak, sque- eak.
Quer- -- ies don't have an- swers that are ri- i- ght. Squeak, squeak, squeak, sque -eak.
Think a- bout them, and hold them in the li- i- ight. Squeak, squeak, squeak, sque -eak.

(Thoughts about Meeting?)
A D A A A D A (D)
Child- ren in Meet- ing bring us in- ner smi- i- les. Squeak, squeak, squeak, sque -eak.
Friends -- sit in si- lence for quite a- whi- i- ile. Squeak, squeak, squeak, sque -eak.
Si- lence doesn't mean noth- ing is hap- pen- i- i- ing. Squeak, squeak, squeak, sque -eak.
Qu- -- iet- ly list- en for what is speak- i- ing. Squeak, squeak, squeak, sque -eak.

(What about helping?)
A D A A A D A (D)
Those -- in need will acc- ept help- ing pa- aw- ws. Squeak, squeak, squeak, sque -eak.
When -- we reach out from a Friend- ly ca- au- ause. Squeak, squeak, squeak, sque -eak.
Wall -- to wall mice should not be a wor- ry- y. Squeak, squeak, squeak, sque -eak.
Since “Is to- mor- row Sun- day?” a good quer- ry- y. Squeak, squeak, squeak, sque -eak.

(How should we live?)
A D A A A D A (D)
Do our lives speak for what we be li- ie- ve? Squeak, squeak, squeak, sque -eak.
Speak- ing lives is more than just squea- eak- i- ing. Squeak, squeak, squeak, sque -eak.
What we do, does re- flect what we cher- i- ish. Squeak, squeak, squeak, sque -eak.
Let our lives speak for the world we wi- i- ish. Squeak, squeak, squeak, s que -eak.

(What should we do?)
A D A A A D A (D)
Should -- we tell oth- ers all a- bout mi- i- ice? Squeak, squeak, squeak, sque -eak.
Hav- ing them a- round Meet- ing can be ni- i- ice. Squeak, squeak, squeak, sque -eak.
Seek- ing clear- ness a- bout where we may go- o- o. Squeak, squeak, squeak, sque -eak.
The Meet- ing that feeds us, guides us to kno- o- ow. Squeak, squeak, squeak, sque -eak.

(What about when we go?)
A D A A A D A (D)
In life's jour- ney will be forks in the ro- o- ad. Squeak, squeak, squeak, sque -eak.
Signs of where you come from 'n where you may go- o- o. Squeak, squeak, squeak, sque -eak.
We -- will miss those who re- main be- hi- i- nd. Squeak, squeak, squeak, sque -eak.
As -- we an- swer to the in- ner li- i- ght. Squeak, squeak, squeak, sque -eak.















