

* community * equality * harmony * integrity * simplicity *

OAK PARK FRIENDS
NEWS
June 2011



Oak Park Friends Meeting – Religious Society of Friends
720 Chicago Avenue, Oak Park, Illinois 60303
708-445-8201

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT www.oakparkfriends.org

Meeting for Worship each Sunday at 10:00 a.m.

Clerk – Helen Dickinson * Recording Clerk – Judy Erickson * Treasurer – Valerie Lester

Newsletter Editors – Pamela Timme and Bob Southworth
(<mailto:ptimme@hotmail.com>)

Submission deadline – 25th day of the month

(Picture above taken by Donna Cech at the Trailside Museum, River Forest)

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IN MEMORY OF GEORGE MCCOY

George McCoy, who had attended Oak Park Meeting in recent years, passed away in May. A memorial meeting was held at 57th Street, George's meeting of many years.



Memorial Minute for George McCoy

George McCoy, a longtime member of 57th Street Meeting of Friends, died peacefully May 6, 2011, at the Renaissance Nursing Home in Hillside, Illinois. George was born May 3, 1923 in Chicago, to George Katzmann and Estelle McCoy Katzmann. He grew up in the context of a segregated Chicago and among relatives with ethnic intolerances who suggested he would benefit from moving to Germany and joining Hitler's Youth Movement. The wrongness of this thinking led him to be determined to live a life of equality, resource-sharing and speaking out. George met Judith Davis when they were both attending Morgan Park High School. They married in 1944. Soon after being married, George took on his mother's maiden name, McCoy, so to distance himself from the views of his father's relatives.

While he was in the Army Air Corps during World War II, he was sent to Haverford College for meteorology training. There he met Rufus Jones, who "lit my candle," as George said. George often spoke of conversing with Rufus while they would walk together across the campus of Haverford. It was at Haverford that George became a convinced Friend, as did Judy. After training at Haverford, George was sent to Guam to serve as a weatherman, a non-combatant position.

Following George's discharge from the Army Air Corps, George returned to Chicago and Judy. They joined Chicago Monthly Meeting, and George became very active in Friends' organizations. He worked as a financial consultant, but estimated that 60% of his time was spent in Quaker work. George once stated that he worked on every controversial issue that AFSC has covered, especially Middle East issues. This would be no surprise to Friends who knew his enthusiasm and deep concern for justice. George believed that intelligent, sustained citizen involvement and pressure could

make a difference in the public order. He lived out a Quaker approach to social justice based on engaging public officials and speaking our sense of Truth to their responsibility for Power. George was an enthusiastic supporter of FCNL, going to Washington in the 1950s to lobby against Universal Military Training. George, Chester Graham, and George Watson created the local group Illinois-Wisconsin Friends on Legislation. He and Judy both worked on social issues with the AFSC. In relation to his zeal toward working on social justice issues, Judy was fond of reminding him, "Don't push the river."

When George and Judy moved to Hyde Park in 1982, George transferred his membership in the Religious Society of Friends to 57th Street Meeting of Friends. There, he worked on, variously, the Ministry & Counsel Committee, Stewardship Committee, and always on the Peace & Social Concerns Committee. He also served as meeting representative to Western Yearly Meeting and served for many years on their Board of Peace and Christian Social Concerns.

George is remembered for his passionate, and sometimes lengthy, vocal ministry. His messages were often related to peace or social justice, but never completely detached from a sense of spiritual mandate and guidance. George's messages, which replicated a pattern of his mentor Rufus Jones, brought together a reflection on personal experience, a reference to the Biblical tradition, a contextualization within Quaker faith and practice, and then a call for action, change or further reflection. George would get discouraged by the apathy he saw and the willingness we have to see ourselves standing in a white hat instead of as the oppressors the rest of the world sees. Yet he had absolute faith in the power of God to heal us.

George was active, also, in other groups that worked on peace and social justice issues. He was a founding member of Business and Professional People in the Public Interest (BPI) in Chicago, and served for many years on its board of directors. He was also served on the board of the Chicago ACLU.

George and Judy had three children: Peter, Robert, and Marion. George was shattered by the death of his son, Peter, in a sailing accident in 1980. He was additionally grief-stricken when his beloved wife Judy died in 1991 of leukemia. He spoke often of these two sad events. He spoke often, also, of his great joy in his children Robert and Marion (Taffy), and of his granddaughter, Peter's daughter Lara.

George was fond of calling himself "the most enthusiastic Quaker in America." Those who knew him, and his great commitment to Quakers and Quaker institutions, know that he was probably not far off in his estimation.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Emma Kearney, Judy Erickson's daughter, graduated from Columbia College with a major in marketing communications and a concentration in public relations. Congratulations, Emma!

And congratulations are also due to Elisabeth Muhlenberg, who has just earned her Ph.D. in political science from the University of Illinois, Chicago.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Please see the meeting website at www.oakparkfriends.org for further information.

Beginning today, calendar events should be sent to Sarah Shirk, SarahShirk@hotmail.com

June 29 – July 23 - Windows and Mirrors Exhibit, AFSC sponsored art exhibit on Afghanistan, <http://www.afsc.org/project/windows-and-mirrors>

June 5, 11AM - 6PM - A Day in Our Village at Scoville Park. OPFM and Ten Thousand Villages will share a booth.

June 11–15 - Site Prep for Illinois Yearly Meeting (Chicago South Planning Group). Visit ILYM website, www.ilym.org for more information, or see Judy Erickson

June 15-19 - Illinois Yearly Meeting, for further information or to register online visit www.ilym.org

Tuesday, June 28, 7PM – a Power Point presentation by the new National General Secretary of AFSC, Shan Cretin, at Oak Park Main Library, 2ND floor small meeting room. There will be light refreshments.

July 3-9 - Friends General Conference, Grinnell, Iowa, www.fgcquaker.org.

July 11 – August 8 - Friends Music Camp, at Olney Friends School, Barnesville, Ohio, ages 10-18, two or four week sessions www.friendsmusiccamp.org

Camp Woodbrooke, Richland, Wisconsin, ages 7-15, two or four week sessions, www.campwoodbrooke.org

October 14-16 - Silent Retreat in association with Evanston Meeting at Menno Haven.

STATE OF SOCIETY REPORT

State of Society Report, May 2011

Oak Park Monthly Meeting of Friends

Our year can be characterized by exhilaration, frustration, and leveling off of attendance losses over the last four years. Though our Meeting is smaller than it has been, and

there were times when it seemed in danger of dwindling too far, we seem to have turned a corner, and way has opened for us to come together and renew our spiritual community.

We were happy to host an all day workshop on spiritual development by Paul Buckley. During this workshop, our Meeting discovered that we are very good at “out-reach” and working as Friends in many worthy causes in the wider community. However, Meeting members and attenders would like to see our Meeting more focused on “in-reach,” or tending to members and attenders’ spiritual needs and to strengthening the Meeting itself. As a result, our Nominating Committee has been working to modify and streamline the committee structure so as to facilitate this “in-reach,” and so that individual members and attenders do not feel overburdened by committee work. Our adult education program already has been focused on Quaker spirituality and values, and we had a pancake breakfast and monthly potlucks that have been strengthening our social bonds. We have been blessed by the careful assistance Joan Pine (ILYM Ministry and Advancement) has been providing us.

We took active steps to place more importance on linking, as a Meeting, with the wider Oak Park area community and to develop programs for children and youth. We have not had a new member in over four years, but this year we have seen many new visitors, some of whom are indicating their intention to continue their association with us. We also hope that we can find the way to encourage attendees to consider membership, as they are led. This may open for us as we continue our “in-reach.” We had also gone through a period in which no families with children attended Meeting, and our First Day School program had ceased. After a long discussion, we agreed to contract with a young woman to lead our First Day School. We promoted this in the community, and two children now attend regularly. We are looking forward to attracting more children, along

with their parents, during the second year of this program. The presence of these children and their parents—and our First Day teacher—has had a rejuvenating effect on the Meeting as a whole, and we are graced by their presence.

This year has also been marked by losses. We had one member leave the Society and three more move away. Geoffrey Plank and Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska have relocated to England and Rosalind Larsen has moved to Fort Collins, Colorado, to be near her family. We miss them and pray for their continued spiritual development. We were saddened by the deaths of Elinor Fallert, who while not a formal member was a truly weighty Friend for over 40 years, and of George McCoy, who sojourned with us during the last years of his life.

In other news, our website is attracting visitors, and we are considering how to use other social media. Our Peace and Justice Committee continues to be active and dynamic; strong social witness can be considered a hallmark of our Meeting. We focused on ending the death penalty in Illinois, nuclear disarmament, peaceful prevention of war and the environment.

In closing, we hope that our Meeting will continue on the path towards new strength and spiritual development. May God give us strength to understand and live out our leadings, as individuals and as a Meeting, and the grace to live in the Light and to share it with others.

[TRAILSIDE GARDEN](#)

Submitted by Donna Cech



The Trailside Museum garden, planted by the OPFM last spring is in bloom, and the Forest Preserve District of Cook County has installed the sign announcing our stewardship (see the picture on page one of the newsletter). Please stop by and see the garden. We hope to be scheduling a workday soon to do some clean-up and plant some new plants.

[ECOLOGICAL GARDENING](#)

Speaking of gardening, be sure and visit Adrian Fisher's www.ecologicalgardening.net blog. Right now you can read about "Matteo and his fig tree", backyard adventures, and native shrubs, among other things.

[TRANSITION OF CLERKS](#)

Starting in June, Wil Rutt will be ending his two-year term as clerk of OPFM, and Helen Dickinson will be our new clerk. Sarah Shirk will be the assistant clerk. Further information about other changes of positions and committee membership are listed below in the Business Meeting Highlights, as well as a letter of appreciation to Wil for his service as clerk for the last two years..

[BUSINESS MEETING HIGHLIGHTS](#)

Please see the meeting website at www.oakparkfriends.org for further information, including reports from individual committees.

May 2011

1. Nominating Committee Recommendations (as amended at this Meeting)

Clerk	Helen Dickinson
Asst Clerk	Sarah Shirk
Recording Clerk	Judy Erickson
Treasurer	Valerie Lester
Ministry & Care Clerk	Ann Chase (Nov - May)
Ministry & Care Committee & Substitute Clerk in June through Oct	Pam Timme
Ministry & Care Committee	Burke Shipley
Ministry & Care Committee	Helen Dickinson
Peace & Justice Clerk	Kelly Maynard
Peace & Justice Committee	Judy Erickson
Peace & Justice Committee	Amanda Sneed
Peace & Justice Committee	
Trailside Garden	Donna Cech
Green Network Rep	Adrian Fisher
Children's/Teen Religious Ed Clerk	will work without
Children's/Teen Religious Ed Committee	Sue Beckman
Children's/Teen Religious Ed Committee	Pam Timme
Adult Religious Ed Facilitator	Kelly Maynard
Adult Religious Ed Committee	open to those who are led to share
Queries	Helen Dickinson
Finance Clerk	Valerie Lester
Finance	Judy Erickson
Finance	Phil Wagreich
Audit	Lois Platt
Naming Committee	to be named by business meeting
Naming Committee	to be named by business meeting
Nominating Committee	John Muhlenberg
Nominating Committee	Adrian Fisher
Nominating Committee	Valerie Lester
ILYM rep	Judy Erickson
ILYM - ecc/site	Adrian Fisher
Among Friends Writer	
IL YM membership recorder	Pam Timme
MCGM	Helen Dickinson
Archivist	Pam Timme
Newsletter	Bob Southworth
Newsletter	Pam Timme
Contact list	Helen until another can be found
website	Judy Erickson
website	Bob Southworth
website	Denise Jacob

Calendar/e-mails	Sarah Shirk
Answering Machine answering	Laura Maddox
PO Box	Sarah Shirk
Librarian	Wil Rutt
Holiday F&G Basket Liaison	Sue Beckman
Holiday F&G Basket Liaison	Donna Cech
Food Pantry Liaison	Sue Beckman
Pads Coordinator	Valerie Lester
Crop Walk Coordinator	
Community of Congregations	Valerie Lester
OPAL Liaison	Amanda Sneed
greeter coordinator	Valerie until another can be found
Open	Sarah Shirk

The Nom Com will continue to look for more members to serve on M&C com..

The above names were approved.

The Minute of Appreciation for Wil's Clerkship was read.

The Ministry and Care Committee would like to extend our loving appreciation to Wilmer Rutt for his two years of shared vision and hard work as clerk of Oak Park Friends Meeting.

Wil has been a member of our Meeting for many years, during which time he has made contributions of lasting significance to our worship community. He encouraged the Meeting to promote the growth of the children's program by guiding us through months of discussion and efforts at discernment that resulted in the hiring of a First Day School coordinator. He has kept members and attenders of the Meeting informed and connected by his many and routine communications through email, phone calls, and regular mail, and advisements in person. He has paid careful attention to those in the Meeting who were elderly, ill, or housebound, visiting them, coordinating with their families, and driving them to Meeting when they needed assistance with transportation. He has "taken up the slack" when needed, setting up the Meeting space before Meeting, becoming interim Children's Education coordinator, and in so many other ways nurtured the life of Oak Park Friends Meeting. His ministry has enlivened and informed our hours of worship together.

Thank you, Wil, for being our friend and companion in our search for truth.

With loving respect,
Ann Chase, Pamela Timme, Burke Shipley

The Meeting unites with this minute of appreciation for outgoing clerk Wil Rutt.

[QUERY QUOTATIONS](#)

Rooted in the history of Friends, queries reflect the Quaker way of life, reminding Friends of the ideals we seek to attain. We approach queries as a guide, using them not as an outward set of rules, but as a framework within which we assess our convictions and examine prayerfully the direction of our lives and the life of the community. Here are a few selections from Faith and Practice, published in 1997 by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends:

Equality

- How does our Meeting help to create and maintain a society whose institutions recognize and do away with the inequities rooted in patterns of prejudice and economic convenience?
- Is our Meeting open to all regardless of race, ability, sexual orientation, or class?
- Do I examine myself for aspects of prejudice that may be buried, including beliefs that seem to justify biases based on race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, class, and feelings of inferiority or superiority?
- What am I doing to help overcome the contemporary effects of past and present oppression?
- Am I teaching my children, and do I show through my way of living, that love of God includes affirming the equality of people, treating others with dignity and respect, and seeking to recognize and address that of God within every person?

AND IN CONCLUSION...

George McCoy often spoke of the deep impression made on him by Rufus Jones at Haverford College. I am sure he would be pleased to see Jones' messages spread to others. Below are some quotes from Rufus Jones:

"...mysticism ought to be thought of simply as the experience of direct communion with the soul of God."

"Fortunately we do not need to understand vital processes and energies of life before we utilize them and start living by them."

"As the sap flows through the branches of the vine and vitalizes the whole organism so that it burst into the beauty and glory of foliage and blossom and finally into fruit, so through the lives of men and women, inwardly receptive, the life of God flows, carrying vitality, awakening love, creating passion for goodness, kindling the fervor of consecration and producing that living body, that organism of the Spirit, that 'blessed community' which continues through the centuries the revelation of God as love and tenderness and eternal goodness..."

"If we are to prove that Fox really struck a jet of living water, we ourselves must tap that same fountain."

"We have won an enviable place in the eyes of the world as the purveyors of relief. We have learned to meet and to take up the sufferings of the world...Now we need to give as serious and as creative thought and consideration to the renewal of the spiritual life and power of our Meetings and of our membership as we have given to the constructive tasks of the world."

"No one, I am sure, will suppose that I think that a religious experience is a substitute for a sound economic, or social, or financial, or political solution of the world's troubles. I only mean that we must deepen the quality of life and enlarge our faith in the scope of human destinies before any of the fine schemes on hand will work."