

OAK PARK FRIENDS

NEWS

May 2011



Photo above taken at Wilder Park Conservatory, Elmhurst, IL

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 – Wil Rutt Recording Clerk – Donna Cech Treasurer – Valerie Lester
Newsletter Editors – Pamela Timme and Bob Southworth
(<mailto:ptimme@hotmail.com>)
Submission deadline – 25th day of the month

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ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CONCERNS

Denise Jacob's uncle passed away in April. Our prayers and sympathy are with her.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

MCGM meets at Downers Grove, Sat. May 7, worship at 9:00 am, program at 1:15 pm: Bonni Mckeown and Earl Smith of Chicago Friends Meeting will talk about the need for Friends to address criminal justice issues raised in civil rights lawyer Michelle Alexander in her powerful, readable book *The New Jim Crow*.

Mother's Day Garden and Craft Fair, Sunday, May 8th, 2 to 4PM, 2205 W. Belmont. FOR SALE: Tomato, cherry tomato, and green pepper seedlings for your garden grown by the school children; coffee, tea, goodies; hand made craft items; vendor tables by: Votre Vu (natural skin care products), Tivi (jewelry), and Woman Craft. FREE CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY: ORIGAMI FROM TRASH. RAFFLE for a facial and haircut at the Village Cutting Room, \$1 per ticket.

Book Collection for Three R's Project, Sunday, May 8th and Sunday May 15th, following meeting. Collection to support literacy programs at the Dwight (IL) Correctional Facility and the Illinois Youth Center. Please see additional information about this program in this newsletter.

International Conscientious Objectors' Day, Sunday, May 15th.

Freedom Riders Film Shown on WTTW, Channel 11, Monday, May 16th, 9:00 pm. This award winning film celebrates the 50th anniversary of the freedom riders to the South...a serious and non-violent action to promote desegregation.

ILYM Work Weekend, The Annual Work Weekend to help maintain the ILYM property will be Saturday, May 28, 9:00 a.m. to Tuesday, May 31, noon. People are invited to join for the weekend or just for a day. The Teens will be holding a quake Friday night through Monday morning. You are also welcome to come Friday afternoon if you want to get settled and walk around the grounds. All skill levels are welcome to engage in activities including pruning, cleaning up the grounds, cleaning the buildings, and making the Clear Creek House ready for use at ILYM. Lodging will be available for tents and in cabins. Advance registration is recommended for cabins. Child care will be available on Saturday. Meals will be provided from Saturday morning through Monday morning. Please forward which meals you will be attending and any special dietary needs or restrictions to Nancy E Duncan (nancyduncan@earthlink.net). Please contact Diane Clark Dennis (clarkdennis@comcast.net or 309-530-9769) with information about who is coming, when you will be arriving/departing, if you need child care on Saturday or if you plan to camp or need a cabin.

[INCLUDE A QUAKER EVENT IN YOUR 2011 SUMMER PLANS!](#)

Illinois Yearly Meeting, Wednesday, June 15-19 Activities for the whole family, www.ilym.org

Windows and Mirrors Exhibit, June 4-24, AFSC sponsored art exhibit on Afghanistan <http://www.afsc.org/project/windows-and-mirrors>

Friends General Conference Sunday, July 3-9 Part conference, part family camp, fantastic program for kids and teens, Grinnell College, Grinnell, Iowa www.fgcquaker.org. Registration is beginning.

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

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

[The Three R's Project: Reading Reduce Recidivism](#)

Submitted by Kelly Maynard

Our Peace and Justice Committee has recently begun participating in a books-to-prisoners program. This project was started by a Friend in Urbana-Champaign, but is something several ILYM Friends Meetings, as well as other congregations in Illinois, are working on. We are fortunate that local Unitarians have taken the initiative in this area, and have welcomed us to join them. Peace and Justice will collect books on Sunday May 8th and May 15th at our Meetinghouse for their next book drive. (Suggested Book donations can be found on our webpage). We will update you for any fall/winter drives. The following report explains the current endeavors.

Report on meeting of Oak Park/River Forest Chapter of 3R's Project, 4/16/11
by Judy Erickson

There were 6 in attendance, with a phone call to Barbara Kessel at the end of the meeting. We met at the home of Leah Shapiro in Forest Park.

Leah reviewed the activities of this chapter of the 3R's project, which supports Dwight Correctional Facility (in Dwight, IL) and Illinois Youth Center (IYC) in Chicago. There are 5 other chapters around Illinois that support different Illinois prisons. Some prisons do not have librarians and, as a result, do not accept books. There is more information at the 3R's website: www.3rsproject.org.

Dwight, located off I-55 between Joliet & Bloomington (about 75 miles from Oak Park), houses a diverse population of 1000-2000 women inmates over age 17. About 95% have reported “trauma” in their lives. All mentally ill women inmates in Illinois are housed here. There is a family visiting room that has been well stocked by this chapter with children’s books.

Dwight has a long-time librarian, Beatrice, who is very supportive of the 3R’s project and has requested help to supply reading circles (small book discussion groups) as well as supplying books. She wants at least 8 copies of each of 7 books on a list she has given Leah (listed below). This 3R’s chapter has made 4 deliveries (hundreds of books) to Dwight and plans another delivery on May 4th, including 8 copies of the first reading circle book, Three Cups of Tea. There is a continuing need for books here, including Spanish language books (see below). However, Beatrice (who goes and inspects all books for appropriateness) specifically requested NO alternative medicine books or magazines that suggest discontinuing prescribed medicines. Appropriate materials include (but are not limited to) contemporary fiction, mysteries, books on Oprah’s list, magazines, and reference books such as dictionaries and encyclopedias. Financial donations are welcome; 501-c-3 status has been applied for and is expected by the end of April.

IYC in Chicago is a “maximum security” facility near Lake & Western for male offenders ages 12-17. There are 60-70 mostly African American inmates, with a capacity of 130. They are accommodated in 2 age groups, and it is part of the public school system (having its own school district). Although it is considered maximum security, in reality typical maximum security measures are relaxed here. Some inmates consider it to be safer than their homes. There are currently no 1st degree murder inmates here; all such over age 15 are automatically tried as adults, and for 13-15 year olds there is a petition process for trying them as adults.

The Superintendent, Angela Wartowski, has a Masters in Education (Reading Specialist). The Assistant Director, Margarita Mendoza, is our contact and both are supportive of this project. The inmates generally read at a 5th-6th grade level, but do not appreciate books that are written for children younger than themselves. They also are not generally interested in books written for girls.

In addition to books and magazines, they have requested volunteer book group leaders and tutors who must be willing to be fingerprinted etc. to enter the facility. They prefer tutors who have been trained by the local literacy program. A teacher who attended this meeting volunteered to develop reading circles here, too. Tutors are needed. This chapter has delivered 2 batches of books to date to IYC, but many more books are needed.

Suggestions for the kind of books that they want donated can be found on the Oak Park friends Meeting webpage. If you have a copy of Three Cups of Tea and wish to donate it and read this in time and can get it to Judy E or Kelly M by the afternoon of Weds may 4th , great!. Otherwise move to next book of group book.

[The Clearness Committe](#)

Submitted by Wil Rut

The following excerpt from an essay by Parker J. Palmer will be reprinted in sections in this newsletter in coming months. This is the first installment:

The Clearness Committee

A Communal Approach To Discernment

by Parker J. Palmer

Many of us face a dilemma when trying to deal with a personal problem, question, or decision. On the one hand, we know that the issue is ours alone to resolve and that we have the inner resources to resolve it, but access to our own resources is often blocked by layers of inner "stuff"—confusion, habitual thinking, fear, despair. On the other hand, we know that friends might help us uncover our inner resources and find our way, but by exposing our problem to others, we run the risk of being invaded and overwhelmed by their assumptions, judgments, and advice—a common and alienating experience. As a result, we often privatize these vital questions in our lives: at the very moment when we need all the help we can get, we find ourselves cut off from both our inner resources and the support of a community.

For people who have experienced this dilemma, I want to describe a method invented by the Quakers, a method that protects individual identity and integrity while drawing on the wisdom of other people. It is called a "Clearness Committee." If that name sounds like it is from the sixties, it is—the 1660's! From their beginnings over three hundred years ago, Quakers needed a way to draw on both inner and communal resources to deal with personal problems because they had no clerical leaders to "solve" their problems for them. The Clearness Committee is testimony to the fact that there are no external authorities on life's deepest issues, not clergy or therapists or scholars; there is only the authority that lies within each of us waiting to be heard. More at www.couragerenewal.org

New Items Available in the Library

The following items have been recently added to the library:

| | | |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Who Do You Say I Am | Wilson, Lloyd Lee | devotional |
| The Messenger that Goes Before PH398 | Birkel, Michael | devotional |
| Living From the Center | Brown, Valerie PH 407 | devotional |
| Confident Quakerism | Dandelion, Ben Pink | devotional |
| Anatomy & Physiology of Spirit Plummer 2009 | Domanik, Janice | devotional |
| Members One of Another copy 2 | Gates, Thomas | meeting resources |
| God's Healing Grace mental and spiritiual illness | Gilpin, Mariellen | devotional |
| Plow Up the Fallow Ground | Harper, Lu | devotional |
| Answering the Violence Encounters with perpetarators | Lampen, John | Peace and Justice |
| Three Ravens and Two Widows | Kelly, Richard Macy | Meeting resources |
| Spirit Led Eldering | Larrabee, Margery Mears | Meeting Resources |
| Joy Like a Fountain Plummer 2008 | Mertic, Elizabeth | biography |
| Integrity, Ecology, and Community PH 403 | Ratcliffe, Jennie M. | devotional |
| Walt Whitmans Spiritual Epic | Robertson, Michael | devotional |
| Quaker Witness As Sacrament PH 397 | Snyder, Daniel O. | devotional |
| Envisioning a Moral Economy | Head, Tom | Peace and Justice |
| Finding the Taproot of Simplicity PH 400 | Taber, Frances Irene | devotional |
| Building the Life of the Meeting | Taber, Frances & William | meeting resources |

BeFriend Senator Kirk

Submitted by Kelly Maynard

Join Sen. Kirk's listserve

As part of our BeFriend Sen. Kirk campaign, we encourage Friends to join Sen. Kirk's listserve. On it he regularly sends out email 'polls' to ask for voters' opinions about matters of urgent concern, and we can use this as a way to show him there is strong support in Illinois for peace, for reducing military expenditures, and for protecting the most vulnerable people in our state.

To sign up to receive email updates from Senator Kirk go to: <http://kirk.senate.gov/>. In the far upper right corner of the page, above the photo of Kirk, there is a heading, "Get email updates" where you can enter your email address and zip code.

Peace and Justice Meeting Highlights

Other items discussed at April's Peace and Justice meeting not covered elsewhere in this newsletter:

-P&J will recommend to Business Meeting the endorsement of a statement by NRCAT that urges President Obama to sign the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT). More here: www.nrcat.org/opcat.

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The new AFSC General Secretary for the Americas will be in Chicago for the AFSC's Windows and Mirrors: Reflections on the War in Afghanistan exhibit, and is interested in meeting with area Quakers. Wil will invite her to a potluck dinner at his house the evening of Tuesday, June 28th.

-The next P&J meeting has been moved to Sunday, May 29th

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:

Education

What is our Meeting's role in the life and support of Friends' education? If supporting or maintaining a Friends school, have we developed an appropriate relationship of Meeting and school? What is our role in the spiritual life of the school and its maintenance of Friends' principles?

What does our Meeting do to support education in the wider community?

What help do we provide for the children and adults in our Meeting to pursue the education they seek, whether academic, technical, or vocational? Do we make provision for children in our Meeting to attend a Friends school?

How do I show my concern for the improvement of public education in my community and in the world?

Am I aware of what Friends schools are doing and of their plans for the future?

How do I show encouragement and support?

AND IN CONCLUSION...

Do I not destroy my enemies when I make them my friends?
~ Abraham Lincoln

Conscientious Objector

I shall die, but
that is all that I shall do for Death.
I hear him leading his horse out of the stall;
I hear the clatter on the barn-floor.
He is in haste; he has business in Cuba,
business in the Balkans, many calls to make this morning.
But I will not hold the bridle
while he clinches the girth.
And he may mount by himself:
I will not give him a leg up.

Though he flick my shoulders with his whip,
I will not tell him which way the fox ran.
With his hoof on my breast, I will not tell him where
the black boy hides in the swamp.
I shall die, but that is all that I shall do for Death;
I am not on his pay-roll.

I will not tell him the whereabouts of my friends
nor of my enemies either.
Though he promise me much,
I will not map him the route to any man's door.
Am I a spy in the land of the living,
that I should deliver men to Death?
Brother, the password and the plans of our city
are safe with me; never through me Shall you be overcome.

Edna St. Vincent Millay, 1931