

community * equality * harmony * integrity * simplicity

OAK PARK FRIENDS

NEWS

September, 2011



Sunset over the Gulf of Mexico, Treasure Island, FL

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

Sixth Annual Old-Fashioned Corn Roast and Pot Luck Picnic - September 3rd, 3 pm - dark, Alice and Bill Howenstine's Pioneer Tree Farm, 4614 Pioneer Road, McHenry, IL - Volleyball, hiking, hayrides, horseshoes, croquet, potluck supper, campfire, singing, stories. Camping overnight is okay. Breakfast can be a co-op affair – and you are welcome to join Upper Fox Valley Meeting Sunday: discussion group, 9 am; worship, 10 am (held at Crystal Lake Montessori School), followed by a simple pot-luck. Please RSVP at 815-385-8512 or abhow@oawl.net

Lecture on the Role of Interfaith Engagement in U.S. Foreign Policy - September 6 - More information at <http://www.dom.edu/siena/>

Blue River Quarterly Meeting - September 23 - 25, Dubois Center in Southern Illinois. Theme: Deepening Our Worship and Our Relationships - more information at <http://www.ilym.org/drupal/node/189>

Silent Retreat, October 14 - 16 - In association with Evanston Meeting at Menno Haven

Vegan Mania - Featuring an art exhibit by Paz, November 5, 10 am - 6 pm. Pulaski Park, 1419 W. Blackhawk, Chicago

Christina Timme is available for babysitting, cleaning projects, etc. If interested, please contact her at 630-248-7976.

Some Recent Additions to the Oak Park Friends Library

Submitted by Wil Rutt

If You Could be My Friend - A series of letters exchanged between Galit, an Israeli girl and Mervet, a Palestinian girl

Fit for Freedom, Not for Friendship - Quakers, African Americans, and the myth of Racial Justice

Stepson of the Blues - A story by Larry Hill Taylor and our very own Bonni McKewon

Dancing in the Wind - a book of poetry by Joyce W. Povolny

Godless for God's Sake - Essays by 27 Quakers on the subject of Nontheism

The Clearness Committee

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 third installment:

The Clearness Committee
A Communal Approach To Discernment
by Parker J. Palmer

The committee meets for three hours—with the understanding that there may be a need for a second and even third meeting at a later date. A clerk (facilitator) and a recording clerk (secretary) should be named, though taping the meeting is a good alternative to the latter. The clerk opens the meeting with a reminder of the rules, closes the meeting on time, and serves as a monitor all along the way, making sure that the rules are followed with care. The recording clerk gives his or her notes to the focus person when the meeting is over.

The meeting begins with the clerk calling for a time of centering silence and inviting the focus person to break the silence, when ready, with a brief summary of the issue at hand. Then the committee members may speak—but everything they say is governed by one rule, a simple rule and yet one that most people find difficult and demanding: members are forbidden to speak to the focus person in any way except to ask honest, open questions. This means absolutely no advice and no amateur psychoanalysis. It means no "Why don't you...?" It means no "That happened to me one time, and here's what I did..." It means no "There's a book/therapist/exercise/diet that would help you a lot." Nothing is allowed except real questions, honest and open questions, questions that will help the focus person remove the blocks to his or her inner truth without becoming burdened by the personal agendas of committee members. I may think I know the answer to your problem, and on rare occasions I may be right. But my answer is absolutely no value to you. The only answer that counts is one that arises from your own inner truth. The discipline of the Clearness Committee is to give you greater access to that truth—and to keep the rest of us from defiling or trying to define it.

What is an honest, open question? It is important to reflect on this, since we are so skilled at asking questions that are advice or analysis in disguise: "Have you ever thought that it might be your mother's fault?" The best single mark of an honest, open question is that the questioner could not possibly anticipate the answer to it. "Did you ever feel like this before?" There are other guidelines for good questioning. Ask questions aimed at helping the focus person rather than at satisfying your curiosity. Ask questions that are brief and to the point rather than larding them with background considerations and rationale—which make the question into a speech. Ask questions that go to the person as well as the

problem—for example, questions about feelings as well as about facts. Trust your intuition in asking questions, even if your instinct seems off the wall: "What color is your present job, and what color is the one you have been offered?"

Normally, the focus person responds to the questions as they are asked, in the presence of the group, and those responses generate more, and deeper, questions. Though the responses should be full, they should not be terribly long—resist the temptation to tell your life story in response to every question! It is important that there be time for more and more questions and responses, thus deepening the process for everyone. The more often a focus person is willing to answer aloud, the more material the person—and the committee—will have to work with. But this should never happen at the expense of the focus person's need to protect vulnerable feelings or to maintain privacy. It is vital that the focus person assume total power to set the limits of the process. So everyone must understand that the focus person at all times has the right not to answer a question. The unanswered question is not necessarily lost—indeed, it may be the question that is so important that it keeps working on the focus person long after the Clearness Committee has ended.

More at <http://www.couragere renewal.org/parker/writings/clearness-committee>

[PADS Volunteer Trainings](#)

Oak Park Friends support PADS by serving dinner to the homeless on the last Friday of the month in months with 5 Fridays. Participation at any one of the following training sessions is required of Site Captains and strongly encouraged for all volunteers:

Monday, September 12: 6:30pm – 8:30pm at Euclid United Methodist Church, 405 S. Euclid Ave, Oak Park

Tuesday, September 13: 6:30pm – 8:30pm at Oak Park Temple, 1235 N. Harlem Ave, Oak Park

Wednesday, September 21: 6:30pm – 8:30pm at Grace Episcopal Church, 924 Lake St, Oak Park

Saturday, September 24: 10:00am – 12:00pm at St. Mary of Celle Church, 1428 S. Wesley Ave, Berwyn

[Reflections on a Trip to Israel](#)

Submitted by Wil Rutt

Reflections on a trip to Israel/Palestine June 2011

I was privileged to join 24 other persons from around the USA on a two week trip to Israel and Palestine, led by Tony Bing, a professor who has been there three dozen times before. We went under the auspices of Neighbors East and West, a project led by a Quaker couple with the aim of increasing understanding of two different cultures.

As you can tell from a casual reading of the news or watching a news hour on TV, this area of the world is under constant alert and changes come almost daily. We found the level of inspections, check points, prohibited areas and the like to be extremely high. This has led to a short term decrease in violence...but what will it do for long term? I thought of and heard the word APARTHEID frequently and also was reminded of how we as immigrants to a new land treated the Native Americans!

I am attaching several references if you are interested in further exploration.

The Western Wall (the kotel) is the most Holy site for Jews for the last 2000 years. Go to www.thekotel.org for descriptions a virtual tour and live cam (best if using internet explorer)

There are two extensive summaries of our trip on the Internet, one by Jim Matlak, former Washington office leader of AFSC and Sam Neff, the founder of Neighbors East and West. www.neighborseastandwest.org

Christian Peacemaker Teams which we have supported in our Meeting have been in Palestine. Reports and startling videos give a vivid impression of life here. www.cpt.org/work/org

The Ramallah Friends School founded in 1869 is an important Quaker institution and is responsible for educating many Palestinians. www.friendspal.org

Reducing Waste at PADS Sites

Submitted by Adrian Fisher, by Mary Rinder

Greetings Fellow Green Stewards:

I worked overnight and breakfast shift for the PADS Homeless Shelter this summer. I reported at the last two Interfaith Network meetings that for the summer program we are putting much less garbage into the landfill because I have been encouraging the guests to help by recycling all possible items, and we are using washable dishes, instead of the styrofoam that is used during the regular season. Many of you represent faith institutions that host the PADS shelter or bring meals for the guests. Some of you requested that PADS continue to use washable dishes and utensils during the regular year. If not interested in that, please read the 4th paragraph for more tips to reduce the volume of waste.

If you are one of those people who would like to see that happen this year, if possible, I would encourage you to write to the PADS office, which is where those decisions are made. You could say that you heard at the Interfaith Green Network meeting that reusable kitchenware was being used during the summer program, and you wondered if the host's dishes could be used during the regular season. If you are so inclined, you may write to the Shelter Manager, Emily Aker, at shelter@westsuburbanpads.org to request that PADS use the dishes available at your host site, or if you bring in the dinner, that your group is willing to wash the dishes when you serve your meal. You do not need to mention me in the email-she will know I am the connection anyway.

If PADS hears from several congregations, they will at least know there is a desire to stop using styrofoam and plasticware daily, and need to consider other options. Even if it does not happen this year, it plants the seed. And they have been using some of those compostable cardboard dishes, but I am not sure there is a processor for those, as it takes a commercial facility to compost those, as many of our institutions who have tried these have found out. The decrease in garbage would be huge if china was used and washed, since during the year, there are probably up to 6 large garbage bags full of waste per night, and more in morning.

Many of the dinner providers bring their food in large aluminum pans, which is fine, but I find that many of those end up in the garbage bags instead of the recycling bins that all of the institutions have. Please encourage those who bring a meal from your faith community to use their own reusable pans and take them home again, or make sure they just rinse out the aluminum pans and put in recycling. If you host PADS and there are not 2 recycling bins available in the dining area for the guests, please provide them this year. As the guests have learned all the items that can be recycled, they try to recycle as much as possible, but if the only bins available are in kitchen, which is off limits, they clean up and put items in the garbage instead. We need to make it easy for the guests to take pride and feel success! Many of

them have limited opportunities to experience those feelings. Thank you for your interest and attention!

And thanks so much for your help in working towards zero waste!

Mary Rinder
Green Steward from Euclid Avenue United Methodist Church

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:

9. Ministry of Outreach

Outreach

What are we doing as a Meeting to communicate our presence and our principles to the community around us? Does our Meeting's ministry of outreach lead Friends to share their spiritual experiences with others?

What are we doing to invite persons not in membership to attend our meetings for worship and to encourage their continued attendance? How does the Meeting welcome visitors? Are we sensitive to the needs and hesitations of each visitor?

Are we tender to the needs of isolated Friends and Meetings, and to nearby Meetings seeking support?

How do I ground myself in the understandings of my faith? Am I clear about my beliefs? How do I prepare myself to share my faith and beliefs with others?

Does my manner of life as a Friend attract others to our religious society?

Do I seize opportunities to tell others about the Religious Society of Friends and invite them to worship with us?

Is my manner with visitors and attenders to our Meeting one of welcome?

Collaboration

In what ways does our Meeting respond to opportunities to join with other faiths in worship, in social action, and in spiritual dialogue?

How does our Meeting encourage its members to seek opportunities to meet and work with Friends world wide?

What opportunities have I taken to know people from different religious and cultural backgrounds, to worship with them, and to work with them on common concerns?

What opportunities have I taken to know, to work, and to worship with Friends outside of my own Meeting?

AND IN CONCLUSION...

"Faith in something greater than ourselves enables us to do what we have said we'll do, to press forward when we are tired or hurt or afraid, to keep going when the challenge seems overwhelming and the course is entirely uncertain."

~ Gordon Hinckley