

community * equality * harmony * integrity * simplicity

OAK PARK FRIENDS

NEWS

February 2012



*Friendly eagle watchers at Illinois Waterways Visitor Center
across the Illinois River from Starved Rock State Park*

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

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Paz is available for hire for jobs such as stenciling, signwork, yardwork, tuckpointing, brickwork, stonework, interior and exterior painting, and other odd jobs. Please contact him at 773-844-2977 for more information.

Christina Timme is available for babysitting, cleaning projects, etc. If interested, please contact her at 630-442-8655.

Angela McElwain has a new website devoted to her artwork - check out her drawing, painting and construct galleries and poetry at <http://www.writeplanet.net/>

OPFM welcomes donations for the needs of the meeting which include the meeting space, activities and charitable giving. Donations can be mailed to Oak Park Friends Meeting, PO Box 3245, Oak Park, IL 60303.

The World Conference of Friends (FWCC) will be taking place in Nakuru, Kenya 4/17-4/25. IYLM representatives and international representatives are raising funds. To help a fellow IYLM Friend attend the conference checks can be sent to IYLM care of Valerie Lester with "World Conference Travel" in the memo line. Any extra donations will be put into the travel fund for International Friends. To help International Friends send your contributions to: Friends World Committee, 1506 Race Street, Philadelphia PA 19102 with "World Conference Travel Fund" in the memo line.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

Sat, 2/4 – Metropolitan Chicago General Meeting. For more information go to <http://www.mcgmquakers.org/index.php/home/>

Sun, 2/5, 11:30, Adult Religious Education Program: What happens during the silence? Adrian & Helen will lead a discussion on silent worship. Newbies are especially invited to attend!

Fri, 2/17-Mon, 2/20 - Friends for LGBTQ Concerns Mid-Winter Meeting in Milwaukee. Register here: <http://flgbtqc.quaker.org/>

Wed, 2/29-Sun, 3/4 – Clear Creek Friends Meeting and AFSC are sponsoring a peace vigil, an “Eyes Wide Open” exhibit (showing the boots of Americans and civilians killed in the Iraq war) and a speaker, Camilo Mejia, who was a conscientious objector in the Iraq war. It will be held at **Bradley University in Peoria**.

2/29 – Exhibit opens at noon. Candlelight vigil at 7pm

3/3 – Camilo Mejia speaks – 2-4 pm

3/4 – Exhibit closes

Clear Creek Friends would welcome participation by other F/friends. They would like help with setting up, packing up, and/or just viewing the exhibit and listening to the speaker. For further information, contact Lori Patton at mabel059@yahoo.com or 309-692-7859.

Sat, 3/3, ILYM Continuing Committee meeting, Lake Forest Friends Meeting.

Sun, 3/4 - Adult Religious Education will feature a one hour session about Peace Testimony. This session is part of a larger 7-hour workshop from the Peace Resources Committee that would require 320 pages of reading by participants. After the March 4th session, we will evaluate if we want to attempt the entire program. The list of advance readings for the entire program is available here, many can be downloaded from the site: http://www.ilym.org/tiki-read_article.php?articleId=28

Sat, 3/10, Lobby Training Workshop, Oak Park Main Library Small Meeting Room, 9:30 am - 12:30 pm. This is a unique interfaith opportunity that we are sponsoring. (Please note that the Library is not a sponsor of this event.) This workshop is designed to help persons of faith develop good relations with their elected officials. The leader of the session will be Jim Cason, the Associate Executive Secretary of Friends Committee on National Legislation in Washington DC . FCNL is the largest peace lobby group in the USA , and Jim has had many years of leadership experience in this area. 834 Lake Street in Oak Park; garage parking is available. The training workshop is free and open to the public. There will be light refreshments during the session and an optional luncheon following at a local Thai Restaurant.

Oak Park River Forest Area Walk-In Ministry

The Oak Park River Forest Walk-In Ministry is a non-profit organization which helps its clients gain access to services relating to food, housing, transportation, employment and other resources necessary to restore them to independent living, self-sufficiency and stabilization. OPFM donates yearly to this organization. Recently, we received a letter of thanks from the WIM, stating that 560 individuals or families were helped in 2011 with needs including avoiding eviction or utility shutoff, transportation to medical appointments or job interviews, and obtaining the identification necessary to receive employment or benefits.

Report from Paz

Last Tuesday, January 24th, I went to St Louis and we did a 'public educational event' ... other people might refer to it as a protest. We stood in front of Monsanto headquarters and had one person inside who was a stockholder representing different companies, who made a presentation.

Senator Kirk Response

Senator Mark Kirk wrote the following letter on 10/14/2011 to Kelly Maynard as a response to her phone call to his office on the tenth anniversary of the war in Afghanistan, asking him to encourage the Senate to end it.

Dear Kelly:

Thank you for contacting me regarding the war in Afghanistan. I appreciate hearing from you on this important issue. As a Naval Reserve Intelligence Commander, I completed my third two-week assignment in Afghanistan during August 2011. My time there provided an in-depth view of the relationship between the United States, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.

America learned a painful lesson when we ignored Afghanistan in 1992. Without oil or a coastline, our government paid no attention to the rise of the Taliban and Al Qaeda. We paid an awful price for that policy on September 11, 2001 when nearly 3,000 of our fellow citizens were murdered. The 9/11 Commission made it clear that the United States' national security is directly impacted by the stability of Afghanistan and terrorist organizations' ability to operate freely there. That is why I agreed with President Obama's decision to surge to Afghanistan in 2009 and was in the audience to show my support when he delivered his historic address at West Point.

In Iraq, General David Petraeus used extra U.S. troops to sustain military momentum against the enemy until well-trained local army units were trained and ready. General Petraeus outlined the time he needed to train a 500,000-man local army that then won the Iraq war.

This also became the model for Afghanistan. While Iraq and Afghanistan differ, the military challenge was the same: train and deploy a local army that could sustain a light until victory. Starting with nothing, the U.S. and our NATO allies set a goal of building an Afghan army and police force to eventually number 400,000 by 2014. By reaching this goal, the combat mission of U.S. and other NATO forces would diminish. We would remain helpful with supplies, repair and intelligence, but not front-line combat.

Unfortunately, the President changed course from establishing a sufficient Afghan security force before scaling down our military presence. Instead, he rejected General Petraeus' recommendations and decided to leave early - withdrawing one U.S. Brigade Combat Team right away.

As of September 2011, there were only 305,000 in the Afghan Army and National Police – nearly 100,000 short of the 2014 goal. The Afghan units still face significant retention challenges, 32% and 23% attrition rates in the Army and National Police, respectively. The security forces also do not adequately represent the ethnic composition of Afghan society, in particular the Pashtun elements where we are facing the fiercest fighting.

President Obama's decision to withdraw two years too early will severely strain the Afghan police and military and jeopardize the significant gains our troops achieved over the past year. Both General Petraeus and Admiral Mullen, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, testified before Congress that the new plan injects risk. It may also provide some hope to the Taliban that it may rest and relit of its operations to find a much weaker enemy in 2013.

Despite significant victories against the Taliban and Al Qaeda, the United States also faces a serious threat from the Haqqani network - a terrorist organization backed by the Pakistani government. The Haqqani network has become the most dangerous, lethal and cancerous force in Afghanistan. As much as the Pakistani officials claim otherwise, the Haqqanis are backed and protected by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence. The Pakistani government must end its persistent support of the Haqqani network should it wish to remain a US partner in Afghanistan.

In the end, we cannot fail in Afghanistan. We ignored Afghanistan in the 1990s and paid an awful price on 9/11. The President made the right decision to back the Petraeus plan in 2009 and should not change course prematurely. The lesson of 9/11 should move us to realize this plan, rather than quit beforehand.

Thank you for taking the time to contact me on this issue. Please feel free to contact me at (312) 886 3506 or online at <http://kirk.senate.gov> if you have any questions or concerns before Congress or the federal government. It is an honor to serve you in the Senate.

Very truly yours,

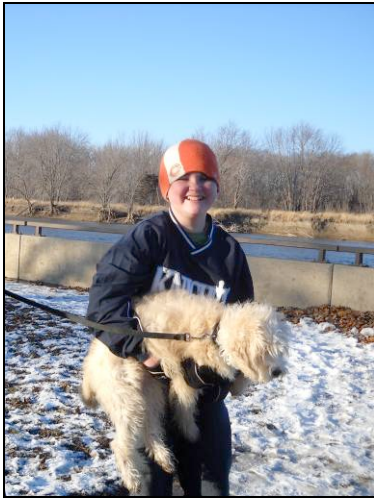
Mark Kirk U.S. Senate

Eagle Watch Trip



Twelve OPFM Friends and their friends, and one dog, travelled to the Illinois Waterways Visitor Center and Starved Rock State Park near Ottawa, Illinois on Saturday, January 28th to watch the bald eagles that congregate there during the cold weather to fish in the non-frozen waters of the Illinois River. Unfortunately, many of the eagles had decided to remain up north, since this winter has not been cold enough to send them south. However, the group had several good sightings, including an eagle flying over the river with its head gleaming white in the bright sunlight, and another one at the top of a tree, seen clearly through a telescope.





The Illinois Waterways Visitor Center also had various festivities going on for the event, including a performance of Native American dancing.

The group then headed over to the lodge at Starved Rock State Park for refreshments.



Five Friends decided to stay overnight at nearby Clear Creek House, home of Clear Creek Meeting. Clear Creek House is a renovated farm house which is located on the Illinois Yearly Meeting property near McNabb, Illinois. The five shared a potluck dinner, then played games and music. Clear Creek House is a good resource as a meeting place or place to stay – it is spacious, comfortable, and very reasonable. In the morning, the group stayed for meeting for worship and also participated in

discussing upcoming peace projects (see "Upcoming Events" above for information on the event at Bradley University.)



Meeting room at Clear Creek

The eagle watch trip was fun, different, and an opportunity to enjoy good fellowship, the countryside, and the beauty of the natural world.

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BUSINESS MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

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

January 2012

Valerie presented the Treasurer's report. This fiscal year to date we have income of \$5852 and expenses of \$6211. She thanks Friends for their generosity in balancing our expenses with corresponding income at the end of December.

On Feb 5th Adrian Fisher & Helen Dickinson will present a program on what happens during silent worship. They especially invite "new" attenders.

We have arranged for Jim Cason (who has worked for FCNL) to give a lobbying workshop at the Oak Park main library on March 10. We will extend an invitation to all area Friends who want to reach out to their elected representatives. A suggestion was made to reach out to the wider community. Judy will bring it to OPCTJ, and Kelly will write up an announcement by 2/10 for the Community of Congregations newsletter. She will also send it to the Wednesday Journal. We asked people to sign postcards today asking Pres. Obama to close the Guantanamo Bay Detention Center, where prisoners are still being detained without being charged with any wrongdoing. There is an action being planned, a public vigil, on the 10th anniversary of this Detention Center (Wed Jan 11 at 3:00 pm at the downtown federal plaza).

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:

Meeting for Business

Is our meeting for business held in the spirit of a meeting for worship in which we seek divine guidance?

Are we careful to keep in the spirit of worship each of the concerns that emerge, whether of nurture, of Spirit, of social concerns, of property, or of finance?

Are Meeting decisions directed by prayerful consideration of all aspects of an issue and are difficult problems considered carefully with patient search for truth, unhurried by the pressures of time?

How do we respond if we notice the meeting has lost an understanding of the presence of God?

Do we recognize that we speak through our inaction as well as our action?

Do I regularly attend meeting for business and in a spirit of love and unity? If unable to attend, how do I attend to my responsibility?

Do I consider prayerfully the many concerns that are lifted up on any issue, acknowledging that the search for truth in unity involves what God requires, being open to personal transformation as the community arrives at the sense of the meeting?

AND IN CONCLUSION...

Have you not known? Have you not heard?

The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.

He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless.

Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted;

but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,

they shall mount up with wings like eagles,

they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

Isaiah 40: 28-31

*The New Oxford Annotated Bible,
New Revised Standard Version*