

Community * Equality * Harmony * Integrity * Simplicity

OAK PARK FRIENDS
NEWS
May 2012



Longwood Gardens, Kennett Square, PA

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

INSIDE...

Announcements – p. 2

Upcoming Events – p. 2

The Future of our Meeting Space - p.3

A Day in Our Village - p.5

Business Meeting Highlights - p.5

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Paz is available for hire for jobs such as stenciling, signwork, yardwork, tuck pointing, 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.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

Saturday, 5/5, MCGM Meeting, Chicago Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, 5/15, International Conscientious Day

Friday, 5/18 - Saturday, 5/19, Counter Summit for Peace and Economic Justice, Chicago, IL - more info at <http://www.natofreefuture.org/>

Saturday, 5/26 - Monday, 5/28, Annual ILYM Memorial Day Work Weekend, McNabb, IL

Sunday, 6/3, 9:00 am - 6:00 pm, Day in the Village, Scoville Park, Oak Park - Volunteers needed, see additional info below

Saturday, 6/16 - Wednesday, 6/20 (any part of this time period), ILYM Site Prep

Wednesday, 6/20 - Sunday, 6/24, Annual Sessions of Illinois Yearly Meeting, McNabb, IL - This year's theme is compassion

The Meeting's Future with the Art League in Jeopardy

With a surprise announcement, the Meeting has learned that we may no longer be able to use the space at the Oak Park Art League for worship. For more details please read the letter below.

Dear Friends,

The Art League has made a difficult decision. It will no longer be able to rent space to anyone -- including Oak Park Friends Meeting. Here is what we know about the situation right now.

A neighbor has lived with a persistent problem caused by various users of the Art League. The problem is with people parking in his driveway. They could be members or people who rent the building for private parties of short-term duration. The Art League has tried to resolve this conflict in various ways, but without success.

A complaint was filed with the Village of Oak Park. Subsequently, the Village decided that the Art League can no longer rent its space. This is not what the Art League wants; rental income (including ours) is a significant part of its budget.

There is a 45-day period to appeal the decision of the Village. The Art League has decided not to appeal. Oak Park Friends Meeting has been given a 30-day termination notice, which falls within this 45-day period.

This will be a challenge for us. But we are reminded that George Fox was evicted many times and also imprisoned many times. He survived and we will, too. Like George Fox, we will trust in the Spirit to carry us through this troubling time.

Here are a few questions and the answers we have at this time.

What does this "30-day notice" mean? 30 days takes us to Memorial Day Weekend. According to the President of the Art League, they will not evict us as long as we are actively looking for another space, unless and until the neighbor or the Village forces them to act otherwise. The sign with our name on it will come down.

Is there any evidence that an attendee of our Meeting was an illegal parker?

No. It is believed that it is generally caused by people renting for short-term functions who do not understand the need to respect the neighbor's property at all times. The police have been called more than once over the past year. The Art League has been trying to educate their members and visitors, but cannot guarantee 100% compliance to the neighbor.

Have we received a legal order to leave? No, but we have received a clear message from the Art League to find a new home as soon as we can.

Who made the decision at the Village? We don't know.

Does the Art League want us to leave? No, the Board feels badly and they do not want to end a mutually beneficial relationship. They are also wary of incurring legal costs to oppose a decision that could be upheld, or result in worse relationships with the neighbor and the Village. There are regulations about churches and parking that the Art League cannot comply with.

Who in the Meeting is leading the response? We will need to work together, drawing on our best Quaker processes and using our resources as well as we can. There may be a special "called meeting" to discuss it; please watch for any announcements from our Co-Clerks, Helen Dickinson and Sarah Shirk.

Who can be contacted for more information? Valerie Lester has volunteered to stay in contact with the Art League. Please direct all questions to her that are related to the Art League. Her email address is val_geof@yahoo.com.

We are also grateful that Ann Chase has offered a listening ministry to our members and attenders who may need help processing this situation during the next few days (until she goes to Michigan for the summer).

If you have ideas about what to do, where to go, or possibilities for new space, you may send email messages to Judy, who will collect and bring them to whatever venue is appropriate for considering them. My email address is jemessage1@yahoo.com.

I also encourage all of you to discuss your thoughts and feelings with each other, as Way opens. Please hold each other and our Meeting in the Light as we struggle to meet this new challenge. Let's try to consider it an opportunity for growth, both spiritual and spatial.

In Friendship,
Helen Dickinson, Judy Erickson & Valerie Lester

Update:

The worship sharing was held as scheduled on Sunday, 4/29. Many good thoughts were shared at that time. No decisions have been made about this, and input is still greatly appreciated. A Search Committee is being created to look at possible solutions. Please contact any of the members listed above for more information.

Day in the Village

This year the Day In the Village is Sunday June 3. The Meeting is planning a booth. Jim Holmes will be assisting. The Peace and Justice Committee will present some ideas on more resources for prevention of war and less funding for war and the Children's Religious Education committee is planning some attractive activities for kids.

Volunteers to assist will be needed from as early as 9 AM or as late as 6 PM. Signup sheets will be distributed after meeting in the next few weeks.

BUSINESS MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

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

April, 2012

A Clearness Committee was recently held in regard to the transfer of Ann Chase's membership to OPFM from Orono Monthly Meeting of Friends and New England Yearly Meeting. The committee "enthusiastically" endorsed the transfer. A potluck celebration will be planned before Summer.

The Meeting's website has recently been updated - the Committee reports have been moved to a hidden section. The ongoing Peace & Justice minutes can be found in the existing P&J area in the 'About Us' section. P&J minutes more than a year old are not password protected and are available under 'Archived P&J Minutes' in the P&J area as well. Some beautiful Spring photos have also been added.

Respectfully submitted by Judy Erickson, Recording Clerk

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...

Quaker Meeting

God turns the knob,
Opens the door,
Steps inside.

God flips a switch,
Lights the room,
Casts a shadow.

God arranges chairs,
Sits down,
Settles in.

God lowers her eyelids,
Clears his throat,
Crosses legs.

God streams through the window,
Lies on the floor,
Circles the room.

God sits in silence,
Waits,
Sometimes,
speaks.

God straightens up,
Reaches out,
Clasps hands,
And greets each other.

~ Angela McElwain