

*Simplicity * Peace * Integrity * Community * Equality * Stewardship*

OAK PARK FRIENDS
NEWS
May 2014



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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Third Sunday Sing-alongs - Join Friends every third Sunday of the month at OPAL at 9:40 am for fellowship through song

The Ministry and Care Committee want you to be aware that there is a suffering fund for those that need. Contact a committee member for details.

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.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

Sunday, May 4th, 2pm, Crop Walk, Pilgrim Church 460 Lake St. Oak Park. For further information, contact Valarie Lester

Sunday, May 4th, Following Worship, Labyrinth Walk at Garfield Park Conservatory and Lunch at Inspiration Kitchen, 3504 W. Lake St.

Sunday, May 18th, Following Business Meeting, **Celebration for Sarah Shirk's Membership** – Lunch at Penny's Noodles, 1130 Chicago Ave, Oak Park

May 23-25, Quake for High School Teens and Tremor for Junior High – Urbana Champaign Meeting

June 14-18 – Site Preparation for Illinois Yearly Meeting, McNabb, IL

June 18-22 – Illinois Yearly Meeting, McNabb, IL

Sarah Shirk Becomes OPFM Member



Sarah rests during a bike ride in Lancaster, PA near the family farm of her Pennsylvania ancestors.

Oak Park Friends Meeting is pleased to welcome Sarah Shirk into membership. A long-time, active and valued attender, Sarah is the Meeting's Co-Clerk, and has filled many other roles including being active in the First Day School program and Chicago Friends School. Sarah recently made the decision to apply for membership, and after meeting with her clearness committee her request was joyfully approved at the April meeting for business with a concern for worship.

Sarah is warm and friendly woman of many facets and talents. She was born in Cleveland, Ohio and grew up in Chagrin Falls, Ohio. She has one older brother Gregory and father James who still live in the Cleveland/Akron area. Her mother Sue, an artist, died in 1988 and instilled in Sarah a love of the spiritual aspects of artistic creativity. Her maternal grandfather was president of B.F. Goodrich and her paternal ancestors founded Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company. Both her grandmothers gave her a strong sense of what feminism meant for women in the early 1900's and showed her how spirituality can be displayed in many forms. One grandmother smoked her entire life, drank martinis and lived a life full of love and laughter to 98 years old.

Sarah's spiritual journey is a long and winding one. She grew up attending the Methodist Church, singing in the youth choir, attending retreats, and studying the Protestant faith. She first encountered Quakerism when she attended Swarthmore College in the 80's. The school's Quaker heritage exposed her to the Quaker testimonies and other Protestant religious paths. While at Swarthmore, Sarah dabbled in going to Meetings for Worship and found that it appealed to her because of its roots in Christianity and lack of hierarchy and dogma. She found it difficult to return to a style of worship service where one clergyperson gave a sermon while the others listened passively. She also felt an inclination toward a peace church after studying the history of the Crusades and thinking more deeply about the way one war sows the seeds of future wars.

Sarah majored in art history where she delved into architecture history and her senior paper was on Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater home. She was also captain of the field hockey and track & field teams, and set several school records. Her knees have paid the price of many years of running, and today she is pleased to be able to still "race" on her bike to meeting for worship, just a few blocks from her home.

After graduation, Sarah went to work for the Philadelphia Orchestra in customer service for four years, working during Maestro Muti's years as conductor. It was while living in Philadelphia that she met her husband-to-be, Matthew Girson. Matt was working at Appel Farm, an organic farm with an arts camp, and Sarah was volunteering there. Eventually, in the early 1990s, they both moved to Chicago, Matt to launch his career as a painter and Sarah to launch hers in public health and outcomes measurement. Sarah went to UIC for a Master's in Public Health and worked for a health outcomes company that went from start-up to public in less than 5 years. Following that, she began a grant-writing career at UIC where she stayed until 2012. The first grants she worked on were for health outcomes accountability; later she worked on obtaining grants for gender equity and youth mentoring.

Sarah and Matt were married in 1995 on the Swarthmore campus in a Quaker ceremony, with the traditional signing of the wedding certificate by everyone present. Their first home in Chicago was an apartment in Humboldt Park. Later they bought a two-flat in Oak Park, and then in the early 2000s moved into their current home in Oak Park. In 1998, their son, Gabriel, was born. He is now a sophomore in high school and active in the music and theatre communities at OPRFHS. Sarah and Matt find attending his performances one of life's most generous blessings. Gabe was one of the reasons that Sarah started coming to OPFM. She first attended OPFM on the day of an open house that the Meeting had, when Gabe was just three years old. Sarah and Matt felt that Gabe should be exposed to both their religious heritages – Quaker and Jewish.

In 2012, Sarah and her family travelled to Rome and stayed for several months while Matt taught an art class there. Sarah used this time overseas to reflect on life priorities, and decided a fork in the road was ahead and the journey was about to change upon her return to Chicago. She started her own business in e-commerce sales, harnessing technology so that her traditional work-day could shrink and her service opportunities could expand. She joined the board of the Chicago Friends School, where she is the Curriculum Clerk. This was not her first experience being a board member – she has also been on the board of the Young Women's Leadership Charter School in Chicago for a number of years. Prior to being on the board there, she was involved in bringing an after-school program to the school as part of a "Women in Science and Engineering" grant.

Sarah is grateful about how accepting OPFM has been of her long path of spiritual discovery, and appreciates the kind of spiritual support that allows those with different viewpoints to feel welcome. She wishes to worship in community with a group of people, and feels that becoming a member is a public sign of her spiritual leadings.

A Letter From Laure Goode

In December of 2013 I was accepted as one of nine teens from the Americas to go on the FWCC “Cradles of Andean Quakerism” Quaker Youth Pilgrimage to Peru and Bolivia. It takes place from July 20 – August 21, 2014. There are 28 other Quakers (ages 16-18) from Peru, Bolivia, Cuba, Germany, Ireland, Guatemala, the UK, and the USA. This is a great opportunity for me to experience Quakerism in a unique and new environment. I am looking forward to participating in the first QYP to South America! But it costs \$3600 unfortunately; and I am working to raise some of the money by myself, but I would like to ask the Friends of Oak Park Meeting to consider making a contribution towards the pilgrimage cost. I will make a presentation of the trip and plan to make at least three presentations at locations within Illinois Yearly Meeting upon my return.

Thank You!

Laure Goode

MESSAGE FROM NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee is currently meeting to identify owners for the various jobs of the meeting. If you feel led to participate, there are plenty of opportunities small and large. Please contact a Nominating Committee member, Sue Beckman, Mandy Gawf, or Bob Southworth

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:

5. 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?

Closing Thought

Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see.

-Mark Twain

