

so joyfully every day to help us three women — sometimes for real, by scrubbing a lawn chair for our use or holding a tape measure, sometimes in solidarity, by concentrating so hard on learning to hammer.

Sarina is four. Her three aunts, ages 13, 15, and 18 — two still in school, the last with a baby and one on the way — had totally lost that spark. The girls helped intermittently, listlessly, except for the last evening when we were remounting the cable dish. They'd been without TV for two days! There's not much other entertainment in the beautiful, wild, desolate setting that is their home. In the end, we did make their dwelling



Before and after

Most of the money used for the building materials came from our sale of Linda's quilts among Quakers of IYM and beyond. When you buy or contribute, you can make an immediate difference, one family at a time. Even more important is the awareness that "Third World" conditions exist here in the richest nation in the world and among people with a great spiritual heritage that has enriched all of us in this country in many ways.

Bobbi Trist is a member of Urbana-Champaign Friends Meeting. Bobbi and Ellen Baranowski spent 12 days on the Pine Ridge Reservation last summer with Project Lakota co-founder Candy Boyd, repairing housing and attending Lakota ceremonies that were open to outsiders.



Four year old Sarina, helping.

more wind- and water-tight. We left some of the windows for Ed and his son Kevin to install; they seemed determined to accomplish that before winter. Both of them had helped us when they could, in spite of working full time. I choose to believe that our eight days of hard labor gave one family some hope and the belief that they are not entirely left to their own devices, after all.

Project Lakota Update

By Greg Woods

Each year we find more hopeful signs that things are changing for the better on the Pine Ridge Reservation. But each year we also see a major discouraging sign: the effect of federal budget cuts. The cuts happen to finance the enormous bill of the war on terror. Each year the federal government keeps cutting grants that used to help with housing on Pine Ridge. The local groups, like Partnership for Housing, we work with are relying on Project Lakota

and other similar groups to make up the difference, but we cannot make up the millions that the government used to give. At the same time, the cost of building supplies has been rising, so it cost a lot more to do anything.

This past summer we helped two families in particular: The Tom Casey family and the Richard Broken Nose and Linda Bull Bear family. Tom Casey's house was destroyed by fire a couple years ago. Right now his family is building a house through Self-Help Housing, a part of Partnership for Housing. Tom has been very instrumental in running KILI 90.5 FM, "The Voice of the Lakota Nation." This radio station, based in Porcupine which the American Friends Service Committee helped to start two decades ago, has won several awards including the Best Native American Radio Station. We hoped to raise \$4,000 to help with the moving costs. In actuality we raised \$3,000 for the moving cost. The organization is still working on finding money for the foundation. Over the rest of the year, we helped Self-Help Housing with three or four other houses.

The mobile home of Richard Broken Nose and Linda Bull Bear has been hit three times by big storms resulting in further damage to their home, resulting in damages to their belongings, including two quilts that were going to be mailed to Bobbi Trist and Ellen Baranowki who have been selling Linda's quilts over the past year as a fundraiser for the Broken Nose-Bull Bear's log cabin. One of the storms destroyed the mobile home they were going to live in while some repairs (fixing holes in the floors and walls) were being done to their own mobile home. This summer Candy, Bobbi, and Ellen worked on replacing the siding on the mobile home and left supplies for the family so they could continue making needed repairs.

Over the next year, we want to raise money to help finance the construction of a log cabin for the family of Richard Broken Nose and Linda Bull Bear of Oglala. This family is a part of the

tiospaye that is made up of traditional Lakota families like the One Feather family, who we helped in the past. It would be wonderful to be able to raise \$60,000 plus. But being realistic, we imagine that it will take a couple years to raise the full amount. Our goal for next summer is to raise \$14,000 to put in a foundation for the log cabin. Then in the following years, we would continue to raise more to finish the house in two or three years. But if we raise more than expected, we can speed up the building process and help this family into a more adequate housing quicker.

Once again, along with this work, Candy and I are busy trying to juggle a new job and finishing up a degree at Earlham College respectively. But we hope to start working on identifying possible grants to help Project Lakota finance more housing on the reservation, particularly with the tiospaye. Also we started slowly sending out to a mailing list of 1,200 that Gerald One Feather gave us to help with our fundraising efforts. We are excited at the possibility of growing our donor base.

Please consider about making a donation to help continuing this project. You can mail a check to Project Lakota c/o Diana Pascoe, 7429 Brunswick Ave., St. Louis MO 63119. Please make the check out to St. Louis Friends Meeting with Project Lakota in the memo.

Olney School

By Grayce Mesner

This semester the student body seems to be particularly positive, with 36 returning students and 25 who are new to Olney. Both the junior and senior classes are at full enrollment.

Olney has worked in recent years to make the academic curriculum a primary focus. They regularly review their curriculum and offerings to make sure that they are offering students what they will need to best prepare them for college as well as life. It was decided that a re-

sequencing of the science courses was warranted to better prepare students for college-level science courses and better align the science curriculum with the math curriculum and the developmental strengths of the students.

They have two new teachers on board to provide the needed upper level math courses for the 18 students in Algebra II, the 21 students in pre-calculus and nine students in Advanced Placement calculus.

For the first time they are offering freshmen a biology/life sciences course with an emphasis on the environment and significant hands-on field and lab work. This course will be taught by long-time Olney teacher, Leonard Guindon, and integrated to some extent with the freshman humanities curriculum taught by Abby Chew. Their hope is that Olney students will come away from their first year of high school with both a heightened interest in scientific inquiry and a deeper awareness and appreciation of the natural world around them.

They have a new music teacher, Aaron Harris, who has encouraged participation in a large campus choir, numbering more than 30, as well as providing individual music lessons on a wide variety of instruments.

Included in the report from Rich Sidwell, head of school: "A prepared mind, a healthy lifestyle and experience in spiritually guided community are the combination that sets a balanced pattern for approaching the future with confidence. We know that this rapidly changing world is full of uncertainty. Our graduates need to be resourceful, understanding and resilient. They also must know how to address problem solving creatively and collaboratively. If they can learn such processes here in a nurturing environment they will be better prepared to face the uncertainties with optimism."

For more information about Olney, visit their website at www.olneyfriends.org, call 740-425-

3655, email to mainoffice@olneyfriends.org or write to them at 61830 Sandy Ridge Rd., Barnesville, OH 43713.

Associated Committee of Friends on Indian Affairs

By Grayce Mesner

Since I did not get to the annual meeting in North Carolina this year and I don't think I've received an *Indian Progress* report since then, I went to www.acfiaquaker.org and pulled up the Executive Committee's report from that meeting. Selected minutes are:

1. A 4% raise was approved for the Center Directors at Kickapoo (Woods) and Mesquakie (Whites) beginning January 2007.
2. The Choctaw Savings Account would be used to pay the outstanding bills at Choctaw.
3. They approved that the executive committee would enter into dialog with Evangelical Friends Mid-America Yearly Meeting, and Iowa Yearly Meeting in regards to transfer of property and funds for Kickapoo and Mesquakie respectively.
4. They approved the amended Articles of Incorporation as written concerning assets in the event that ACFIA would dissolve.
5. They commend and spiritually support the proposed internship program of North Carolina Yearly Meeting (NCYM) at the MOWA Choctaw Center. However, until the situation there is resolved, they could not officially endorse the program which NCYM hoped would start in summer 2006.

Evidently this transition took place. I've received mailings from NCYM showing that they sponsored a Sports Camp June 24-30 and a Vacation Bible School July 15-21. From a

mailing NCYM sent in Sept.: “On August 12, 2006 NCYM Representative Body approved to accept ownership of the MOWA Choctaw Friends Center property from the ACFIA. Darrin Allen is currently serving as Interim Director of the Center.”

The following information was gotten from their website - www.ncym.fum.org. Presently, ministry extended to the surrounding community includes a weekly community rummage sale every Tuesday, youth gatherings, community meals once a month, emergency relief and food pantry on a continual basis, and the establishment of an after-school tutoring program. NCYM is very excited about the possible ministry opportunities God has laid before them. They can use work teams and rummage sale items.

This information was gotten from their website - www.ncym.fum.org. Financial contributions can be sent to North Carolina Yearly Meeting, Darlene Pittman, 4811 Hilltop Rd., Greensboro, NC 27407 with MOWA Choctaw on the memo line. I have met Darlene as well as the rest of the NC contingent who always attended the annual meetings. They are a swell group of people - always positive, outgoing, and fun-loving. I think the MOWA Choctaw Center is in good hands!

Thoughtful reflections:

Are we Friends Seekers? Finders? Both!

By David Finke

For 40 years among Quakers I’ve heard eloquent explanations of how we are Seekers, how our pursuing a non-dogmatic path of openness to the revelations of Truth is what characterizes and unites us. There is much in this message with which I resonate. And, historically, it is true that there was a group in 17th-century England — calling themselves

simply “Seekers” — that met in silence, awaiting God’s presence and guidance. Providentially, they met up with and in fact joined with that itinerant preacher George Fox. So far, so good.

But I’ve often wondered how many of them — after that break-through merging of vision and organizational energy — continued to call themselves Seekers, rather than the early terms Quakers adopted, such as “Children of the Light” or “Friends of the Truth”?

I believe it is likely that, after years of seeking, this group was relieved to realize and declare that they had *found* something. Probably, it was akin to the liberating discovery and revelation which Fox in his Journal reports was what led him out of an Ocean of Darkness into an Ocean of Light. Though they may not be the words that many of us use, Fox declared what he had found, after the various schemes and messages of men had failed him: “That there is one, even Christ Jesus, who could speak to my condition.”

Now I am “universalist” enough that I would never want to claim that God’s presence is only known through the historic Christian faith, or that testimony to the Divine-human encounter can only be validly expressed with Christian metaphors. I also know that George Fox’s sense of religious truth was culturally conditioned by his European environment, which had been nominally “Christian” for some 1400 years.

Having said all those disclaimers, I still wonder why Quakers sometimes seem to want to be stuck in a mode of forever “seeking” without the expectation of “finding.” Yes, I know that much of this comes from a very fitting humility: We blanch at the thought of coming across as persons with “all the answers.” We even sometimes say (in a quote that I’ve never seen attributed), “Quakers are the ones with the questions.” The person whom I most recently heard espousing the case for our being seekers

— a beloved Friend of great sincerity and depth — apparently made an either/or distinction between our being “seekers” and, on the other hand, “claiming to have Ultimate Truth.” That is a choice that I think is needless, which I’m unwilling to make.

My favorite theologian, Paul Tillich, helped me at an early point by describing that our grasp of truth may be “fragmentary, but in principle.” That is, we never have *all* the Truth, which by definition may be God’s province alone. And yet, we have enough of it to get on with living -- with vision, with purpose, with assurance of the companionship along the way of God and of Friends of the Truth. The sustaining measure of Truth given to us can fill us with joy, with courage, with the capacity to endure even the Cross, should that be our lot.

I urge us, Friends, to be bold and unapologetic with declaring — even if with less vehemence and passion than the earliest generation of Friends — that indeed we *have* found something, that we are eager to share it (not by “imposing” but rather by pointing the way). We should give up hoarding our discovery within little self-contained, self-satisfied, ingrown cliques and clubs. This is what it means — in the finest, non-exclusivist way — to be “evangelical.” Literally, that word means, bearers or messengers of Good News.

I believe, in fact, that it would be wrong to keep secret the revelation of God’s Love and Presence among us. Obviously, at some point, each discoverer must find this Truth in their own heart and soul. For integrity’s sake, it must not be second-hand religion, or claiming the virtue that others have demonstrated. Rather, it’s more like learning to walk, to swim, or to ride a bicycle: No one can do that for you, but it certainly helps to have encouragement and a pointing-of-direction from those who have been there already. (Just a little further down the road, not claiming to be on the mountaintop.) That sharing of a measure of truth is usually not

considered arrogant or “imposing” but rather an exercise of responsibility, a transmitting of culture which has survival-value. How much more responsible it must be, if we can share the Good News of what we have discovered, together as Friends? What better gift can we offer our sisters and brothers in the Human Family? Why should we assume that they wouldn’t be open and welcoming of this treasure entrusted to us?

A conversation-stopper I sometimes hear among our branch of Friends is that we don’t want to “proselytize.” That phrase, however, most appropriately has to do with enticing someone away from their own religious practice. If there is a danger confronting us, I don’t think this is one of our temptations. Rather, I’ve found it much more likely for Friends to practice what Jesus denounced as “hiding a light under a bushel,” rather than putting it on a candlestick where it can give Light to the whole house. The Light will give growth and Life, and is not to be feared.

Friends, are we ready to become less reticent in sharing what we have found? This treasure is too good to hide!

Circles of Wisdom: Another Look at the Quaker Clearness Process

By Maurine Pyle

The Quakers, once known by the sobriquet of “the peculiar people,” have been sitting in silence for over 350 years. In our American society it would be considered peculiar indeed to be seated peacefully in a state of expectant waiting. Over the years many people have wondered what these Quakers are waiting for. Quite simply, we are waiting to hear something beyond our own thoughts. We are expectantly waiting to share in a deeper wisdom that comes from within us and among us – the Light within.

Spending time waiting upon wisdom is surely a lost art in our American culture of goals and objectives, timelines and deadlines. Sitting does not look productive. Answers must be quickly accessed — electronically, if possible. Yet the Quakers today have not only continued with this ancient method of spiritual discernment, they have found expanded uses for it in everyday life.

What is meant by the term discernment? To discern, in its original meaning, is to sift. Imagine a Middle Eastern woman tossing grain into the air so that the wind may carry away the chaff, allowing nuggets to fall to the ground. In this same fashion the truth is discerned when Quakers sit in silence, hoping to hear a deeper wisdom than their own thoughts.

One method of seeking discernment is the Clearness Process. Most commonly Quakers use it in determining readiness for marriage or membership. Recently, however, Quakers and others outside the Religious Society of Friends have discovered other uses for this process that have opened doors of insight. This article is intended to explain the process so that someone seeking discernment can use it.

Here is how the Quaker Clearness Process works, in summary:

*First of all, it is vital to remind ourselves at the beginning that whatever is brought into this process is considered **confidential**. No reference should be made to the content which arises in a clearness meeting to any outside person.*

1. A “person with a concern” identifies a personal problem which needs clarification. This concern is often, though not always, described in written form. No more than a few paragraphs are necessary. The process of writing is helpful to the Clearness Committee in understanding the situation and it helps the focal person begin the discernment process beforehand.
2. Then the “person with a concern”

contacts several persons to request a Clearness Process. The selection of the members is usually made by the “person with the concern.” If the matter under consideration relates to membership or marriage, then the committee is appointed by elders of the Meeting.

3. At the appointed time, the Clearness Committee meets with the person who asked for help in a quiet environment. They gather in deep silence before beginning to speak.
4. Out of the silence, the “person with a concern” speaks to make a request for help giving a brief description of the problem under consideration. There is no discussion of the concern.
5. A convener chosen by the group will begin the clearness process by asking a query. Then after the focal person has answered, silence follows. Other queries will arise from within the group, always out of the silence.
6. A scribe may be appointed to write down the queries and summarize the responses if so desired by the focal person.
7. The queries should not be directive. The convener’s role is to guard against hidden advising or steering by the questioners.
8. When all the questions are exhausted, the convener may give the focal person an opportunity to speak. No summation of what has been shared is called for, but sometimes people like to close the meeting this way.
9. Then the group gathers for a few minutes of silent worship.
10. Often at the end of the session there is handshaking or embracing depending upon the intimacy of the group.

The purpose of the Clearness Process is to clarify a situation or concern. At the heart of it is the belief in a collective wisdom which will

emerge and that no single person has the answer. In order for the process to work, each member of the Clearness Committee must submerge the intent to guide or to guard the focal person. As Isaac Pennington, an early Friend, said: "There is that which is near you which will guide you. O wait for it and mind you keep to it."

Parker Palmer, a Quaker writer, says: "Behind the Clearness Committee is a simple yet crucial conviction. Each of us has an inner voice, a voice of truth, that offers the guidance and power we need to deal with our problems. The Clearness Committee is not to give advice or fix people from the outside but to help remove the interference so that they can discover their own wisdom from the inside out."

What are the uses of the Quaker Clearness Process? Truly they are endless. The process is often used in conflict resolution to enable a new truth to emerge that is beyond what is currently known. Some people have used it for matters of the heart or business. In the Clearness Process the original concern is revealed, explored, queried, and often, but not always, resolved. The gentle and focused attention of the committee provides a source of healing and light to the person in the center. Loneliness and guilt can be released. If no one person is being held accountable for the outcome, the greater wisdom of the Light can emerge.

As ancient Native American lore teaches, "Be open to the outcome, unattached to the outcome." From this process comes the higher truth we are all seeking."



Helen Jean Nelson, 1918 –2006, with Roxy Jacobs

The Meeting Place

By Sherry Monroe

Across the bowed heads
I see your face
A settled feeling comes over me
As if an anchor has found bottom
And held fast.

I relax into the silence
I do not have to wait for you to enter
You are here
Waiting
Quietly my thoughts slide next to you
We wait together.

Afterwards
We rise, pleasantries exchanged,
hands shaken,
smiles given and received.
We meet again over brownies and coffee.

We greet each other
Speech eases the separation in time
But more than words are said
Between words, before words, even before thought
That's where we meet
You and I.

There are times
One of us is not among those gathered here
But still the connection holds
We know the meeting place
Any time we wish to meet
We go there.

Revelation

By David Finke

*Reflections on the passing of
his father, in autumn*

The blazing orange/gold colors of fall leaves
were there all the time;
We could not see them, for the green.

The delicate majesty of the stars
is there all the time;
We could not see it, for the sun.

The Presence of Love, Order, Harmony
is here all the time;
We could not see it, for the noise and confusion.

The Eternal Reality
is here all the time;
We could not see it, for the transient we call life in time.



Hadley Finke, 1909 –2006, with David Finke