

FIELD SECRETARY'S REPORT TO CONTINUING COMMITTEE

OCTOBER 19, 2013

It feels as if it has been only a moment since annual sessions! Where does the time go?

Visiting and listening continue to be a joy!

Last year I learned about the challenges we face: "questions and concerns around conflict, lack of participation, lack of vocal ministry, sometimes a divide between young Friends and older Friends, the illness and loss of many of our Elders, and a sense of disconnection between our lives as Friends and our Meetings and our Faith in our Quaker Tradition." These issues continue to challenge us. As I have visited, I am aware of the work MMs are putting into meeting these challenges.

As I visit, I continue to encourage Meetings to identify and celebrate their strengths. In many meetings, I am aware of their work to grow, to strengthen and build community and to nurture new members and attenders.

DEVELOPING AND AVAILABLE PROGRAMS

At annual sessions, M&A presented two workshops for members of Ministry committees, inviting them to come to share joys of ministry, what has worked for them and what challenges they have faced. The workshops were well received and participants expressed a wish for an opportunity to continue the discussion in half-day or full-day workshops to be offered regionally. We hope to be able to facilitate a workshop later this Fall and in the Spring. I have been contacting Meeting clerks and Ministry Committee clerks to get their input as we develop this program.

I will be presenting a program on Eldering at 57th Street Meeting on November 3rd.

I continue to be available to offer the programs listed below, or to develop other programs to meet the specific needs of Meetings and individuals.

- Spiritual Genograms
- Discernment and Decision-Making in the Manner of Friends
- Clearness Committees (Process and Experience)
- Conflict Resolution
- Vocal Ministry
- The Journey of the Seeker
- Eldering: Nurturing, Celebrating and Passing It On

On a recent visit to Oak Park FM, I learned of a program on Grief that was offered for them by one of their members, and this program might be available to other meetings as well. There is great spiritual depth in our members, many of whom can offer resources to our MMs.

Travel and Visits

During the past three-and-a-half months, I've visited

- Downers Grove
- 57th Street,
- Oak Park
- Upper Fox Valley
- Southern Illinois
- Macomb
- Urbana-Champaign

I attended the Corn Roast and visited with the Howenstines, and others from many of the Chicago area meetings. I also traveled to Macomb with Beth Schobernd, Diane Clark Dennis, Rose Dennis, and Rose's son Milo.

I attended Blue River Quarterly in DuBois, and participated in the intergenerational program, which was a delight. Being there provided lots of opportunities for meeting with and listening to members of the southern meetings.

Because I finally have accepted that I can't bi-locate, I've visited in person and by phone, email and regular mail with members of Rock Valley, Northside, Evanston, Lake Forest, St. Louis, Clear Creek, Bloomington-Normal, Southern Illinois, and Columbia.

I've tried to keep up with newsletters and email messages from those meetings that have been kind enough to add me to their email lists.

Future Visits

My plans for future visits include the meetings I have not yet visited: Columbia, Oshkosh, and Springfield. (This September, I was able to attend Southern Illinois Quaker Meeting, and to participate in their continued discussion of the newest section of Faith & Practice.) Plans also include visits to small meetings, like Rockford and Spoon River, as well as the new Northside mid-week MfW at the Admiral in Chicago, Duneland, South Bend, and the Elkhart Worship Group.

I also will be attending the Chicago Friends Gathering of MCGM on November 2nd, to which all are invited. The meeting will be held at 57th Street Meeting House.

I am a joy-filled Field Secretary! Friends continue to offer me their kindness, their guidance, their eldering their mentoring, and their wisdom. Once again, please accept my thanks to YM members for all the ways you support me, nurture and guide me in this work.

Respectfully submitted,
Judy Wolicki, Field Secretary