



the Friends Circle

ISSUE 13, NUMBER 2

SPRING/SUMMER 2001

Letter from the Head of School

Friends School of Minnesota prepares children to embrace life, learning, and community with hope, skill, understanding, and creativity. We are committed to the Quaker values of peace, justice, simplicity, and integrity.

—Friends School Mission Statement, revised January 2001

This issue of the Friends Circle is going to press just as we complete the school's 12th annual Friends School Plant Sale. The Plant Sale has become the school's signature event. Over the course of three days, a group of parents, students, staff, board, alumni, and community volunteers worked to sell over \$125,000 of plants—netting more than \$50,000 to support the school's educational programs. In addition to being a highly successful fundraiser, it is even more successful as a community celebration. Over the course of the weekend, one encounters alumni families, past School Committee members, people from all the metro area Quaker meetings, and more. As one spends a few hours at the sale, chatting with friends, seeing the school's students help patrons carry their plants to their cars, and watching thousands of people arrive, it is clear that the school's existence has brought into being around it a community presence that otherwise would not be here. One Friends School parent even tells us the Plant Sale is responsible

for her decision to enroll her child: she saw the role our kids played at the sale and wanted her son to grow up to be like them.

The Plant Sale is also an annual marker like New Year's Day. Last

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year the sale took place on the edges of the construction zone for our addition. This year it took place outside of the completed facility that has been in use for nearly a full school year. Last year we were a school of 120 students; this year we enroll 142, with a planned enrollment of 158 for the fall. Last year we were preparing a graduating class of five for graduation; this year 12 students will move on to high school.

At the Plant Sale, I also spoke
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\$100,000 Challenge Gift

Friends School has been offered a \$100,000 challenge gift by an anonymous donor. This dollar for dollar match means that each dollar donated by an FSM supporter will be matched until an additional \$100,000 has been raised. The school has until March 1, 2003 to meet the challenge. All funds will be dedicated to reducing the indebtedness acquired by the school to complete the addition.

The school's successful capital and endowment campaign completed earlier this year raised just over \$1,800,000. When the challenge is met our total will rise to over \$2,000,000 and the debt reduction will free up at least \$15,000 per year to be used to support other areas of the school's operations.

To make a donation please contact Head of School Mark Niedermier at 651-917-0636.

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From the Head

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with one of the founding trustees of Friends School and as we stood outside of the school's 30,000-square-foot home we chatted about the school's beginning with 12 students in one room in a church basement. It is this sense of what can happen in a little more than a decade that has motivated Friends School's Board of Trustees and the School Committee to launch a major strategic planning effort. Having begun at the Board's annual retreat this past October, the strategic planning process will seek to provide a framework to guide all aspects of the school as we look ahead to the next ten years, twenty years, and further. The first step in this process was to review the school's mission statement, an activity also required for our continued accreditation by ISACS.

The finished product is at the top of the page. You will notice that our students now "embrace" rather than "face" life, a change which we hope communicates the school's desire to encourage a joyous approach to life. The words "kindergarten through eighth grade" were removed to leave open the possibility of a future preschool or high school. The inclusion of the word "Quaker" makes more explicit the spiritual foundation of the school, as does the addition of the traditional Quaker values of "simplicity" and "integrity." These small changes do not indicate a shift in the mission of Friends School of Minnesota, but more clearly express the mission of the school and its spiritual foundation. It is a foundation which encourages us to look to the future with high expectations.

Wind

Wind
softly rustling
harshly roaring shrieking storm
bending breaking trees.

—Alex Christensen (4th grade)

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Poetry, art and writing:
Friends School children

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Alumni News

Class of 1992

Benjamin Robinson attends Southwest State University. He was an active volunteer for the DFL in the fall, 2000 elections and is a member of the United Nations Club.

Class of 1994

Andy Karis reports that he is studying graphic arts at Saint Paul Tech, working part-time at Cub Foods, and helping to build an addition onto his parents' house.

Nicole Kendricks is studying photography at Metro State University and is now a part-time staff member at Friends School

where she helps out with the after school program and in the office.

Class of 1995

April Cusick is graduating from Saint Paul Open High School and in the fall will attend the California Institute of Art.

Class of 1996

Edwin Holmvig-Johnson has been awarded a Presidential Scholarship to attend Luther College this fall.

Katty Schallert has completed her junior year at the Arts High School where she is studying creative writing.

Class of 1997

Monica Bicking writes to tell us that she is in her senior year at South High in Minneapolis.

Alex Holzinger, also at South High, works as a lifeguard at the new Midtown YWCA, is a "Big Brother" to a seven year-old, and recently traveled to Cuba as part of a Quaker teen group.

Friends School wants to hear from you! Alums are invited to contact the school with an update about themselves at 651-917-0636 or mnfsmhead@aol.com.



Terry Kaiser, on-site artist, painting at the Silent Auction.

Silent Auction and Great Gatherings 2001

This year's Silent Auction and Great Gatherings was an unprecedented success. The \$14,000 goal was far surpassed with an actual gross of \$23,000. The "Evening in Paris" theme was evident in the accordion music, an on-site painter, and a large mural of a Paris street scene. The dedication of the volunteers, contributors, and event chair Michele Boston was evident in the number of wonderful items solicited, the beautiful auction catalog, and the celebratory ambience of the evening. Proceeds from this event are used to enhance the curriculum with visiting artists, field trips, and all the extras that provide our students with a richer Friends School experience.

Judy Siegle Featured at Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges Forum

Paralympic athlete Judy Siegle visited Friends School on March 8th and 9th. Judy is a quadriplegic athlete who represented the United States at the 2000 Paralympics in Sydney, Australia, the 1996 Paralympics in Atlanta, and the 1998 World Games in Birmingham, England. At the Mexico City Para-Pan-Am Games in 1999 she received gold medals in the 400- and 800- meter events and a silver medal in the 1500-meter event.



Judy led a faculty inservice, met with students, and spoke at a community forum. In support of Friends school's commitment to diversity, Judy spoke about her own personal story and how she overcame obstacles as a physically handicapped woman and athlete.

The Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges Forum is the 7th annual event of what was formerly known as the Undoing Racism Forum.

These events have been organized by Friends School in recognition of the role the school can play in changing the status quo by supporting ongoing conversations about racism, classism, homophobia, and other forms of bias in our society. This year's forum was made possible with the generous support of the Musser Fund.

Named Rooms Dedicated

In recognition of their generosity of support during the school's capital and endowment campaign, four individuals have been awarded naming privileges for rooms at Friends School.

Our new science facilities are now known as the Margaret Perisho Science Room, named in honor of Margaret by long-time Friends School supporter Clarence Perisho. Clarence and Margaret are profiled elsewhere in this newsletter.

The newly renovated library space will be known as the Gandhi

Library, named in honor of Mohandas K. Gandhi and in memory of Betty Osborn Irish and Mulford Q. Sibley. The library will include a special peace studies collection.

The music room is known as Emily's Room. The plaque outside the entrance features the words "Making music is like being inside a work of art," highlighting the importance of music in a Friends school education.

Our kindergarten classroom has been named the Lucretia Mott

Room. Quaker Lucretia Mott was born on the island of Nantucket and is an inspiring figure from Quaker history. She championed freedom for slaves when it was considered dangerous and shameful; she worked for equal rights and the right of women to vote when it was considered ridiculous; she spoke against war when almost everyone believed it was the only way to settle disputes. The school is pleased to have the first classroom that one encounters upon entering the school named for this individual.

Where Are They Now?

It's been almost a year since Friends School graduated its first 8th grade class. As they are finishing their 9th grade year at various high schools throughout the Twin Cities and Iowa, we were able to contact four of the five graduates to find out what life is like in high school.

Kate Abrams is a student at Central High School in St. Paul. Julian Grant is a student at Saint Bernard's High School in St. Paul. Ana Nordin attends Roosevelt Open High School in Minneapolis. Max Perry is a student at Waldorf Watershed High School. And David Curiel is enrolled at Scattergood Friends School in Iowa.

All of the graduates felt that

Friends School prepared them for high school and cited the School's commitment to strong community values and the academic success of all students as the foundation for this preparation. They felt that Friends School values work and responsibility, and purposefully teaches students how to get along with each other and community members. One graduate said that Friends School "made her her own person" and gave her confidence in who she is.

The graduates also felt they carried with them elements of the conflict resolution process taught at Friends



Max



Ana



Kate

School. They all felt that the skills they learned made them better at solving problems, knowing how to handle situations with peers, and taught them how to be patient. They all believed that it is easier for them to approach people to talk about the "stuff that goes on with friends."

The graduates have become valuable members of their communities. Some play on soccer and basketball teams and participate in track and

Quaker Education through the Eyes of Friends

At the close of a unit on Quaker history, middle school students were asked to reflect on their own personal experience with Quakerism as students at a Friends school. Here is a selection of their replies.

"One of the Quaker values is equality. I think we should treat each other equally and not judge people by their skin color or where they are from. At my old school we were more likely to judge people by what they looked like, or how they talked, or how they dressed, and not by who they were as people... I try harder now to greet someone visiting our school and make friends with someone from a different part of the world outside of school."

—Mia Beeson, 7th grade

"Going to a Quaker school has... changed the way I see things. I think back to the ways I used to handle conflicts. I was never one to resort to violence to try to solve my problem but now I wonder what made me choose that way to try and solve it. I think back to ways that some of my friends solve their problems and I think that was not a very considerate or understanding way to solve that. They did not even take time to listen to what everyone had to say!"

—Brianne Macemon, 8th grade

"Quaker schools have silent meditation on a regular basis. This practice in the school is related to the Quaker testimony of God in everyone. It also is related to simplicity and honesty. I am not sure all of the

kids use it for this, but I have found that it does help me learn to quiet myself."

—Patrick Raines, 7th grade

"I have gone to Friends School of Minnesota since kindergarten. At Friends School they haven't told us until this year exactly what Quakers believe. But they have emphasized the Quaker values and testimonies without actually telling them to us.

"For example, one thing Friends School strongly believes is the Quaker testimony of 'God in everyone.' After almost nine years of freedom songs and songs about everyone being equal, it's hard not to know that Friends School believes in equality. But it's not only the songs that show you this. If you look around at the



David

Julian

running club. One graduate takes acting classes, and feels that his love of acting grew out of his involvement in the theater production for FSM's Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration.

These alumni cited fond memories of the days spent at Friends School including the small class size, the teachers, and the trips to Wolf Ridge. But their best memories include their friends, and the people and community that nurtured them and then sent them on their way.

School Students

students, teachers, and other adults you'll see all sorts of people. There are different genders, races, ages, sexual preferences, economic classes, religions, marital statuses, and many other differences. I think that being surrounded by this openness for 6 1/2 hours, five days a week is something that every kid needs and deserves.

"I think that this part of Friends School has influenced my life a lot. It has helped me to be more accepting of differences within our school and in the whole world. It has taught me about discrimination, and taught me not to be the discriminator. It has taught me that there are differences in people, but instead of rejecting the differences we should embrace them."

—Rachel DeYoung, 8th Grade

Portraits from the Prairie



Robele Mamo, first grader

Students in one of Friends School's first and second grade classrooms, The Prairie, spent time with Jungle teacher Lauri Carlson to paint their self portraits in a variety of media. Here is a selection of their work in acrylic.



Gus Bruggeman, second grader



Danielle Eckhoff-Bennett, second grader



Allie Dulles, first grader

Margaret and Clarence Perisho

BY RAQUEL K. WOOD

As one passes by the science room, one may notice that it is named for Margaret Perisho. Who was she and how did the naming come to be?

Margaret White Perisho grew up in a Friends farming community in Indiana learning to live by the values of simplicity, integrity, and conscientious hard work. Margaret attended Earlham College, majoring in home economics and mathematics, which she would pursue in higher education later in life. She and Clarence met while they both were teaching at Friendsville Academy in Tennessee. They were married in 1941. Margaret followed the traditional role of “at home Mom” while her children were still at home, then taught mathematics at Mankato State.

Clarence also was born into a Quaker family, and later attended New York University where he earned a Ph.D. in chemistry. After two positions in Nebraska, the family moved to Mankato in 1954 where Clarence taught until his retirement in 1982. He kept up-to-date professionally through membership in various scientific organizations, always interested in the practical ways that science could help improve life for humankind.

Clarence and Margaret were a great team. While each had their own interests, their Quaker concerns were the primary commitments they shared. They were especially interested in Scattergood School, which their three children attended, and later Friends School



of Minnesota and Pendle Hill. They also were active with Friends World Committee for Consultation. From their upbringing, they had strong ties with Friends of a more conservative theology, but as I knew them, they were entirely comfortable with Quakers of all theological outlooks and traditions. They held membership in Paullina Monthly Meeting of the Iowa (Conservative) Friends Yearly Meeting, the group which has long sponsored Scattergood Friends School.

In the late 1970's, Ralph Hilgendorf and I were asked to serve on the Scattergood School Committee on which Clarence had served as Clerk for many years. We drove together several times a year to Committee Meetings. (This meant a weekend trip for those of us in Minnesota). Thus began a true friendship and opportunity to know Clarence and Margaret at a deeper level.

Together they led a simple, sustainable lifestyle. At home they

practiced conservation of practically everything. They had an old spin-dry type washing machine. Once when we were coming back from West Branch, we took a little detour to an old friend of the Perishos to pick up a similar old machine so that Clarence would have repair parts for theirs along with some he had gotten when the company went out of business. That Speed Queen was still operating in 2000! When Clarence's '67-era Chevrolet needed new suspension or engine work, he went to the Technical College and learned how to repair it. When the car was 20 years old he offered it back to GM (it had way over 200,000 miles on it) as an example of good stewardship, but they weren't interested. Every time I saw Clarence he was wearing the same (indestructible) polyester suit. Wherever they went—work or travel—they always took lunch along. They made a special, healthful molasses cookie which they used to joke that you could live on it if you needed too. (Clarence, particularly, had a droll, understated sense of humor.)

In the '70s, Clarence took up the cause of alternative energy—a coming together of his scientific and humanitarian interests. He found practical applications at home and also supported installations at places like Scattergood. He invested where he could find opportunities, such as the local hydroelectric plant, wind energy, and such.

With their frugal lifestyle the Perishos managed to save quite a bit over the years. Managing money for

Margaret and Clarence Perisho
continued

the good it could do became another major interest of theirs. Clarence became very knowledgeable about socially responsible investing. Some of my best lessons in money came on our long trips to Iowa.

Prior to opening Friends School of Minnesota in 1988, we had established a Founders Fund, to which the Perishos contributed the first \$1,000 check. "If you need more, just ask," Clarence said. Late in August, 1988, I did ask. An envelope with a check for \$500 for curriculum materials came. That evening Kris Hilgendorf Cusick called me to tell me that Margaret had died of an aneurysm the evening before. Her check was dated on the day of her death!

Clarence Perisho developed a very strong interest in support of Friends School of Minnesota. He contributed major gifts every year, usually for a particular use, including: a matching grant for a foundation; expenses connected with developing a particular math curriculum; rehabilitation of the present building in 1997; and then a particularly generous gift to the Capital Campaign for the new addition.

Clarence died of a stroke in October, 2000. Clarence and Margaret were very modest people, living out their lives in accordance with their religious leadings. When given the opportunity to name a room, Clarence suggested that it be named for Margaret. I hope we will all remember how much we owe to both the Perishos—Margaret for trusting in our vision and Clarence for giving so much material help for the vision to move forward.

Leaving a Legacy

Friends School of Minnesota benefits immensely from the financial support it receives from its supporters. One of the most powerful ways an individual can help the school is through a planned gift. Individuals can make a planned gift to Friends School through any of a number of vehicles, including bequests, insurance policies, life income trusts, and charitable lead trusts.

Here are ten things you can do to leave a legacy to Friends School of Minnesota:

- 1** Prepare a will. Only 50% of people who pass away have one. Without a will, you will lose control of the assets you worked a lifetime to build.
- 2** Leave a gift in your will for Friends School of Minnesota. Fewer than six percent of American households have included nonprofit organizations in their estate plans.
- 3** In your will, consider leaving a percentage of your assets to Friends School of Minnesota.
- 4** Consider using assets as your charitable gift. These can be stocks, bonds, certificates of deposit, real estate, art, etc. Such gifts may provide tax savings.
- 5** Name Friends School of Minnesota as a beneficiary of your individual retirement account or pension plan.
- 6** If you own a life insurance policy, consider renaming the school as a beneficiary.
- 7** Purchase new life insurance, naming Friends School as a beneficiary.
- 8** Encourage family members and friends to leave gifts to Friends School of Minnesota in their wills and help them to establish a relationship with a qualified estate planner.
- 9** Begin planning now for how you wish to dispose of your estate. The earlier you begin to plan, the more you can increase the size and value of your gift to Friends School of Minnesota and to family members.
- 10** Learn more about leaving your legacy to Friends School of Minnesota by contacting Head of School Mark Niedermier at 651-917-0636 or mnfsmhead@aol.com.

Calendar

Graduation

Lake Como Pavilion

June 10 (Sunday)

Last Day of School

June 12

Conflict Resolution Summer Institute

August 16–18

New Family Orientation & Reception

August 27

Back to School Picnic

August 30

First Day of School

September 4



Flower Vase by Rachel Boardman
(4th grade)

World Always Whispers

World always whispers
with the wind.

Beyond the sun
like a whispering gem

World weeps
when dark clouds roll in.

World always hears
in the silent night
wishing like a star.

World always touches you
with its running streams.

—By *Spencer Gale (3rd grade)*
and *Talia Glass (4th grade)*

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