

Community Meeting 1/28/07 MidWinter at Rolling Ridge

Jan Morgan presiding. The meeting began at 9:30, approximately 18 in attendance. In the absence of Kay, Peter Bloch took the minutes.

Tee Shirts

Nancy asked about Tee shirts for June, looking for advice about preprinted tee shirts versus iron-ons. Betsy Stout likes the iron-ons, and would like more of the hats that we had last year. Iron-ons are more fun, don't last as well. A decision will depend partly on the design—decision was postponed.

Evening Activities

Discussion of how many nights should have organized activities and whether there should be a theme dance. Scheduled events already include a Sufi dance, coffee house, Roundtop, Talent show. If we have a theme dance, this could/should be organized by the teens themselves, with the teens doing the decorating, etc. A theme dance should not conflict with other activities. Lisa asked that the Coffee House not be the same night as Roundtop, as she misses Roundtop while setting up the coffee house. Judi Blum is already committed to helping organize parents around all youth activities outside of morning program, and in that role will be responsible for finding a volunteer to be the coordinator for the theme dance.

Nancy asked about movie nights. Betsy Taylor said she would only want movies that related to the theme and promoted discussion amongst the people viewing the movie, not just movies as entertainment. If we have movies, they should be shown in Blake.

Sacred Circle Planning Timeslot in June

Last year planning sessions were held just before supper. The plan this year is to have them after lunch. Potential conflicts with Family facilitator meetings. Sacred Circle planning was well attended last year. Having these two things scheduled at the same time forces people to choose, Betsy Taylor said she thinks this is healthy as it keeps people from over committing. Consensus is that both meetings will be scheduled together at 1:00 pm.

MidWinter

Questions about low numbers and costs. Margaret said we were not meeting the minimum of 30 people at Midwinter, so it loses money for the conference. This year we had about 18 for the weekend, plus about 8 for Saturday. As they have done in the past, Rolling Ridge has been very accommodating about charging less than our contract, but it still it is a money loser. Currently we agree that they can hold a second event concurrently with our being here. She

says we need to reconsider our options. We changed our dates this year but this did not lead to higher numbers.

Betsy Taylor suggested as an alternative that we could have a single day-long conference, or that we could use the combination of Peter and Kathy's home and the B+B next door to their house.

Audrey suggested doing a survey, but it was pointed out that Carol and Lisa did a survey of that kind two years ago, Margaret said that enthusiasm during the summer for going to MidWinter is one thing, committing in December for the event is a bit harder for many people to do. Audrey suggested holding it every other year. Ron said he doesn't think there is really a big problem. MidWinter costs us about \$600 and that the value to the community is worth that. This has been a problem for years and it hasn't broken the bank. Margaret is worried that Rolling Ridge will not be so accommodating in future years. Micki agreed that the cost to the community is justified and worthwhile.

Peter described what it would look like if it was held at the Blochs' house and surroundings. It was suggested that we could hire a cook for the weekend. Betsy Stout also suggested that it could be held at Peaks. Jan said it could be held in Arundel for \$60/pp per night. It could move around. If held at a home, would it discourage newcomers? Jeff is new; he thought it might be an issue. Ron suggested that we should have a small subcommittee to investigate alternatives and costs. We were not sure when we need to commit to Rolling Ridge, and how strong our negotiating position would be. There was some discussion about moving the weekend to later. Ron, Margaret and Peter will form the subcommittee.

Campus in June Issues

First about the dorms that we have been allocated. We are currently to get three of the dorms in Cottage Row, which, in total, house 100. Two are air-conditioned, and are new. The 4th that we have been allocated, Overton, is newly renovated, but is a long way from the Dining Hall, which is a big issue. If Summer School enrollment declines then we would have more options. And part of the equation is how many of our own attendees will be at Northfield this summer, last year we had about 105. The executive has asked Andrew to investigate the alternative of using only Crossley. If we are barely more than 100, can we put in a few extra beds in the three cottages? Overton is like Marquand was on the old Northfield campus, maybe even a bit further.

One issue is that the school has not wanted to intermingle summer school interns with our people. We will ask if this is negotiable. We might get a few rooms in a fourth cottage or in Crossley to take up our over-100 numbers.

Discussion of Blake

The problem is that we weren't particularly comfortable there, and it was not used as much as Billings had been on the Northfield campus. How do we go about making it more welcoming to our members? This year, there will be more use of the upstairs of Blake by the summer school. For example, the common room (used for Coffee House last year) upstairs will probably not be as available to us. Similarly, Upward Bound will have more active use of the campus in general, and Blake in particular. This comes with the territory of being there one week later.

Are there alternatives to Blake? Are there other ways to arrange the space in Blake downstairs? There was some competition from adult parties at Manchester dorm. Jan wants to have a volunteer coordinator for all Blake activities. Peter suggested we look at the snack bar space for more purposes like group art, etc. Peter suggested that at the beginning of the week, we could make it a general community priority that we will all make Blake the central focus for activities. Betsy Taylor suggested that the small room near the patio could become the youth activities room. Nancy reminded us that even at Billings, activities had dropped off over the past few years. Betsy Stout emphasized the value of keeping activities close together, like Sanda Countway was in the distant past. She also proposed that the Blake coordinator be a paid or free-room-and-board job. By keeping almost all activities on the first floor, it helps with the supervision of kids' issues. There was general support for the idea that there should be a Blake coordinator and that person should be compensated. Ron asked for a job description. Judi mentioned that Blake snacks are important to the kids as a focus for their activities.

Betsy Stout volunteered to organize the sales of arts and crafts around the coffee house. As for Frank Grillo's music, the feeling was that we should have this happen several nights, but not every night.

Recruitment of new members to our community

Andrew expressed his opinion that we are not putting much energy into bringing in newcomers. We are enthusiastic about coming ourselves, but do not take much responsibility for sharing that enthusiasm with potential newcomers. We need to find some mechanisms and put some community energy towards this goal. Micki reminded us that the other two groups that make up the League need to be warmly invited to join us if and when their own conferences diminish. Betsy said that our marketing efforts should be focused on the societal need for community in our lives. Caroline asked Jeff for feedback about our website, He said it seemed to work for him and that his expectations had been met. (Note: Jeff came to us with no connection to any

previous member, only through googling his way to the website. Nancy suggested that we use the first page of the June booklet "Welcome to Northfield" page as an introduction to the website. Peter agreed strongly and asked for more input into how the website could be improved. Peggy has a lot of cards ready for us to send to people, with "save the date" stickers. Peggy mentioned the importance of being supportive of newcomers during, and even after, the week.

Jan mentioned that we have been remiss in making sure that new names and newcomers really get on to the mailing database and the eGroup. Connie Chandler-Ward talked about the MidAtlantic people who came last June. They felt overwhelmed and pushed into a bit of a clique.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 am.