

The Provident FRIEND

February 2010

Providence Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

Saylesville Becomes a Classroom

By Joanne Griffin



On February 1st, students of the Adult Education Program at RISD gathered at the Saylesville Meetinghouse to participate in a hands-on application of their Preservation and Restoration course. Rob Cagnetta of Heritage Preservation is the instructor of this 3 credit course that is part of a certificate program. From 6:30 to 9:30 the students covered the inside and outside of the building learning the various aspects of making a conditions assessment report. As part of the assignment, students must take various components of the building, state the condition and make recommendations. We will be receiving the results of these efforts at the end of the course.

As part of the presentation, for the last half hour I answered questions about how the building was used at different parts of its history, putting flesh on the bones of the structure because the building is an extension of the people who used it. It was a marvelous opportunity to explain who the Friends were, why they settled here and how their philosophy and theology translated into the architecture of their houses of worship.

On Saturday the 6th, at the Partners for Sacred Places workshop, I again met one of the students from that night, an architect whose husband has been hired to oversee the restoration of the Newport Congregational Church with its noteworthy La Farge windows. He told

me that his wife had not stopped talking about the meetinghouse since that night and he would like the opportunity to see it as well.... Doreanna was most taken with the curved supports for the posts and beams. I explained that these were to keep the structure square and true against the burden of snow or the twist of storms. It is sometimes called a Ship's Knee Brace and because of it, it is presumed the framers were ship builders, possibly from Providence but most probably from Newport.

I look forward to hearing from the other students and adding their suggestions to our own conditions report

"The buildings's architecture symbolizes the lives of its builders-simple but not drab, plain but not ugly, austere but not forbidding."

The Great Road by Charles H. Leach and Edith Nobrega

Calendar:

Feb. 21:
Study Group begins six-week study of *Christians at the Border*

Feb. 24: 7-8pm
Moses Brown School
Quaker Conversations
"Peace Testimony at a Friends School"
Providence Meetinghouse

Feb. 24: 7pm
"Understanding the War Economy" seminar at URI
Providence Campus

Mar. 6: Friendly Eights

Mar. 7:
FDS Conscientious Objector Day
Begin with Meeting at 10am and at 10:15am FDS begins downstairs

Mar. 12-14: JYM Retreat
"Bodyworks" for 6th Graders, Westport Friends Meeting

Mar. 14:
12:15pm - Meeting for Business, Providence Meetinghouse

Religious Ed. Mtg.

Mar. 20: 10am-noon
Saylesville Book Swap

8pm - Brown University Chorus concert "The Mask of Cain" - Sayles Hall

Minutes of Monthly Meeting for Business - Second Month 14th

Providence Monthly Meeting
Second Month (February)
14, 2010

Minutes of monthly meeting
for business

1. Friends gathered at the Providence meeting house at 12:16 p.m., with fourteen Friends present.

2. In the opening worship, the clerk read Advices on Worship, from Britain Yearly Meeting's *Faith and Practice* (1985):

When you are preoccupied and distracted in meeting let wayward and disturbing thoughts give way quietly to your awareness of God's presence among us and in the world. Receive the vocal ministry of others in a tender and creative spirit. Reach for the meaning deep within it, recognising that even if it is not God's word for you, it may be so for others. Remember that we all share responsibility for the meeting for worship whether our ministry is in silence or through the spoken word.

3. Announcements: The clerk noted that the next Quarterly Meeting gathering will be a meeting of Quarterly Meeting ministry and counsel.

4. The clerk announced that our member Elizabeth Cazden has requested a letter of introduction to Friends in England, where she expects to travel during the summer of 2010 in connection with her research on Quakers and slavery. The clerk has prepared a suitable letter.

Elizabeth Cazden has also requested a travel minute to accompany her as she speaks at the 2010 session of Baltimore Yearly Meeting. After review of this request by Ministry and Counsel, the clerk prepared a proposed minute, which the meeting

heard and approved. The minute will be forwarded to Quarterly Meeting and, if that meeting approves, to Permanent Board, in accordance with the procedure outlined in *Faith and Practice*.

5. For Ministry & Counsel, Dan Lederer brought a recommendation that M&C host two discussions or threshing meetings focussing on the relationship between the meeting and the Saylesville Meetinghouse. The first is to be March 21 at Saylesville, following meeting for worship; the second, on March 28 at Providence, following meeting for worship. It was suggested that it would be useful to have queries to focus the discussion. The meeting approves this manner of proceeding.

6. The Finance Committee has prepared proposed guidelines for the meeting's use in preparing grant applications and executing contracts on behalf of the monthly meeting. It sought to address potential legal issues while making the process simple and transparent.

The draft led to considerable discussion. Questions were raised about how to determine which contracts could "subject the Meeting to potential liability," since any contract by definition involves legal liability. Concerns were also raised about the potential need to respond or act more quickly than this proposed procedure could permit, although called meetings are always possible.

It was noted that we do not have good system for filing and maintaining documents like this. For example, the treasurer has not had access to the grant applications for which

money had been received, listing the purposes for which the money was to be used. A file cabinet on the upper level could serve, though it is not readily accessible. It was suggested that documents could be archived on a password-protected section of the meeting's website. It is not currently part of the recording clerk's job to maintain an office or filing system for the monthly meeting, which would be a significant expansion of the role. The Finance Committee hoped to spark this larger issue, but it may be larger than we can productively address right now.

The meeting agrees in principle with the thrust of the proposed guidelines that grant applications and substantial contracts come through a standing committee and be approved by the monthly meeting clerk or designee. However, the details require additional discernment, and we look forward to a revised proposal from the Finance Committee as they are led.

7. Treasurer's Report: Peter Swaszek presented an interim report on the first eight months of the current fiscal year. Income and expenses have been running about as expected.

8. Finance Committee reported that the proposed monthly meeting budget for FY 2011 should be presented at the next meeting for business.

9. For Property Committee, Lee Jaspers reported that two Friends had taken initiative to completely rearrange the main room on the upper level primarily for the use of high school Friends, including clearing out one of the smaller rooms for storage. Property committee is also

considering the need to replace the boiler, which is original to the building and has far exceeded its recommended useful life. The committee will take into account both energy efficiency and durability. Friends with concerns or suggestions are encouraged to join the Property committee's consideration of this issue.

10. Joanne Griffin reported that the Saylesville Meetinghouse was recently used as a study site for a RISD class learning how to do building condition assessment reports for historic preservation and restoration projects. Members of the meeting recently attended the fourth Partners for Sacred Places session, which focussed on possible "Friends of..." charitable organizations to help support old houses of worship.

The meeting has become aware of two old trees on the property that required attention. One has been removed at the request of the abutting neighbor, who paid for the work. Another has lost several substantial limbs and may need additional pruning or removal.

11. We closed with silent gratitude at 1:30 p.m., intending if God permits to meet next at the Providence meetinghouse on the 14th of 3rd month 2010, at 12:15 p.m.

Mark Conley, Presiding Clerk
Elizabeth Cazden, Recording Clerk

Our Email Listserv



Providence Monthly Meeting maintains a listserv on the internet. There are two different lists. The first list sends only this monthly

newsletter and no other postings. When visitors sign the guestbook at Meeting and request the newsletter, they are added to this first list.

The second list is for regular members and attenders who would like to receive all postings on the listserv.

If you find that you are receiving more postings than you would like from

the listserv, please send an email to Dan Lederer at list@providencefriends.org and request to be placed on the “newsletter only” list.

Meeting Handbook By Dan Lederer (for Communications Committee)

Communications Committee has again updated the Meeting Handbook. Members and attenders wanting to receive an electronic version can contact Dan Lederer at list@providencefriends.org. Paper copies are available for anyone who does not have email access; please

contact Dan or Debbie Block. Also, the Handbook is easily accessible on the Meeting’s website (<http://providencefriends.org/>); just click on Resources, then Meeting Documents, then Meeting Handbook. Our hope is that this revised version will be useful as a reference for

you in that it contains a general description of Meeting activities and then specific details about each committee.

Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL)

What is the Friends Committee on National Legislation?

FCNL is the largest team of nonpartisan registered peace lobbyists in Washington, DC. FCNL is not a political action committee (PAC) or a special interest lobby.

FCNL’s [multi-issue advocacy](#) connects historic Quaker testimonies on peace, equality, simplicity, and truth with peace and social justice issues which the United States government is or should be addressing.

What is the [FCNL Education Fund](#)?

The FCNL Education Fund supports the research, analysis and education for which FCNL is known and respected. It informs members of the public and government leaders about issues that have long been of concern to Quakers and others, including war, the [peaceful prevention of deadly conflict](#), [conventional](#) and [nuclear](#) arms control, the [environment](#), [civil liberties](#), and [Native American issues](#).

What has the FCNL accomplished?

FCNL played a pivotal role in the creation of the Peace Corps, was instrumental in lobbying for the creation of

the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, helped lobby for the Civil Rights Act, and led efforts in Washington to oppose both the first (1991) and second (2003) Iraq wars.

[FCNL’s recent accomplishments](#) include encouraging Congress to challenge the direction of U.S. policy in Iraq; leading the effort to block the development of a new generation of new nuclear weapons; and successful lobbying for a one-year moratorium on cluster bomb exports. See <http://www.fcnl.org/about/> for more details.

Around the Meeting

Adult Bible Study Group:
Friends will be meeting to study *Christians at the Border, Immigration, the Church and the Bible*, by Dr Daniel Carroll, for six Sundays, beginning on February 21st.

Dr Carroll, professor of Old Testament at Denver Seminary, is the son of a Guatemalan mother and an American father. He was brought up bilingual and

bicultural. He brings this perspective to an examination of how the Bible can offer guidance as we consider the present debate about immigration.

Rufus Jones Study Group:
The Rufus Jones Study Group is taking a break. We will not meet in either February or March, but hope to start up again on April 18. More info as April approaches.



Saylesville Threshing Meetings

Meeting for Business has approved a plan to hold two threshing meetings to consider Monthly Meeting's relationship to its Saylesville Meetinghouse. Remember, a threshing meeting helps the Meeting consider questions of importance without feeling that there is any need to come to any specific conclusion. It is hoped that

such sessions will assist the Monthly Meeting in moving forward as recommendations come before Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business.

Ministry and Counsel will be designing some queries to help us focus our worship. There will be more details in the next newsletter. Joanne Griffin and Mark

Conley are working on providing a timeline to help explain where we are in regard to the Saylesville Meetinghouse and how we got there.

Please plan to save these dates in your calendar: March 21st at Saylesville and March 28th at Providence.

Concert on March 20th

By Stephen Schwartz

The Brown University Chorus has a concert on Saturday, March 20, at 8pm in Sayles Hall (main green of Brown University, near through the arch at the corner of Brown Street and Waterman Street). I believe it is free. This may be of interest to the meeting because of the performance of "The Mask of Cain", a set of three short pieces set to some extraordinarily humanistic Civil War poetry by Herman Melville. One excerpt is below.
Youth is the time when hearts are large,
And stirring wars
Appeal to the spirit which appeals in turn
To the blade it draws.
If woman incite, and duty show
(Though made the mask of Cain),

Or whether it be Truth's sacred cause,
Who can aloof remain
That shares youth's ardor,
uncooled by the snow
Of wisdom or sordid gain?

The liberal arts and nurture sweet
Which give his gentleness to man--
Train him to honor, lend him grace
Through bright examples meet--
That culture which makes never wan
With underminings deep,
but holds
The surface still, its fitting place,
And so gives sunniness to the face
And bravery to the heart;
what troops
Of generous boys in
happiness thus bred--

Saturnians through life's Tempe led,
Went from the North and came from the South,
With golden mottoes in the mouth,
To lie down midway on a bloody bed.
.... Youth is the time when hearts are large, when hearts are large.

January 30th Update on AFSC progress in Haiti

Dear Friends,
I'm glad to report that AFSC's assessment team arrived safely in Haiti earlier this week. They have been visiting sites where AFSC's initial response of medical and shelter supplies and food are being distributed. They are visiting informal neighborhood camps and talking with people who are now homeless after the earthquake, as well as meeting international and local Haitian organizations to identify where AFSC's expertise can best be used long term.

Our staff report that the city is surprisingly calm, the damage to the infrastructure and government is immense, and many residents are resiliently continuing daily life among the rubble. Traffic is heavy and slow moving, so cars can avoid people living on the street. People are sleeping under the open sky or in tents and remain afraid of sleeping indoors. Those who can are giving tent space in their yards.

AFSC's initial funds of \$100,000 for immediate aid have been gratefully

received. With \$50,000 from AFSC, Swiss Interchurch Aid is providing 10,000 meals in three of the most needy neighborhoods in Port-au-Prince. Our second disbursement of \$50,000 helped transport medical supplies and kits with Handicap International: about \$3,000 for medical freight shipment and \$47,000 for emergency shelter kits that include blankets, plastic sheeting, ropes, mats, water filters, 15 liter Jerrycans, and cooking sets.

The assessment team will spend a few more days in Haiti and they expect to bring back ideas for AFSC to consider for next steps in Haiti.

In addition to our direct response in Haiti, the Service Committee is helping immigrants, particularly in the Miami and New York metropolitan area. Both locations have significant numbers of Haitians who, under President Obama's recent decision, now qualify for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for up to 18 months. Haitians who resided in the United States as of January 12, 2010, and whose

paperwork is approved will be protected from detention and deportation, and they can obtain employment authorization.

Since the announcement of TPS for Haitians, AFSC staff have "spread the word," offering up-to-date and accurate information to immigrants via the media, a Creole-language radio show, and community meetings. This is particularly important since we have heard reports of many attempts to defraud Haitians attempting to file TPS applications. AFSC volunteers and staff are already processing applications and fielding questions.

We will continue to send updates on AFSC's Haiti response. Meanwhile, I encourage you to check our website at www.afsc.org/haiti.

Please help us get the word out to Friends Meetings and publications. You can send out the following update about AFSC's work for your Meeting newsletter, blog, or email list.

The American Friends Service Committee's

assessment team in Haiti reports that while the situation is calm, needs are great. Many in Haiti are now homeless, living in temporary camps or sleeping in the streets. In Haiti, AFSC has granted \$50,000 to provide 10,000 meals for 100 days and another \$50,000 to transport medical supplies and provide emergency shelter materials for medical teams. The Service Committee is thankful for the generous contributions from thousands of Friends and others and is in the process of determining a longer-term plan that supports a Haitian-led recovery. For more information, please visit the web site, www.afsc.org/haiti.

Finally, as you know, AFSC Board member Taylor Brelsford's daughter and son were injured during the earthquake in Port-au-Prince. Please join me in holding them, and all in Haiti and in the Haitian diaspora, in the Light.

Sincerely,
Mary Ellen McNish
General Secretary, AFSC

Seminar Invitation From Bruce Carlsten

You are all cordially invited to join me at the following seminar:

Understanding the War Economy
Special Educational Forum - Free and Open to the Public
WEDNESDAY, February 24, 7PM
Auditorium, URI Providence Campus
80 Washington St, Providence, RI
INFO: <http://www.ristopwar.org> | ristopwar@gmail.com

Featuring Professor Richard McIntyre (Department of Economics, University of Rhode Island)
Sponsored by the RI Mobilization Committee to Stop War and Occupation.

Nearly nine years since the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, the costs of the wars and occupations in the Middle East continue to skyrocket-before even counting the explosion of the entire "national security" budget. As Washington commits to

bailing out the financial sector, can it also meet the needs of working people battered by the recession? How is the current system sustained? Can it last? And is there an alternative?

Dr. Richard McIntyre is Professor of Economics and Director of the Honors Program at the University of Rhode Island. He has lectured at the University of Le Havre, Euromed Marseille École de Management, Novgorod State University, the

Université de Lyon II, and École Normale Supérieure de Cachan, where he was a visiting researcher in 2002, as well as at many universities and colleges in the US. Professor McIntyre's book "Are Worker Rights Human Rights?" was published in 2008 by the University of Michigan Press. He also edits the New Political Economy book series for Routledge Press. Professor McIntyre received the URI Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence in 1997.

Helping Hands By Bruce Carlsten



Recently, I have become involved with The Community String Project, a new initiative of a group of individuals on the East Bay.

The intent of The Community String Project is to serve at risk youth in the East Bay area with an innovative music program. It is directed primarily at low income and under privileged students and is centered on string instruments.

We are working in partnership with the Bristol

Warren Schools to the extent that they only provide space to deliver instruction and hold concerts. Otherwise it is a completely independent project

Since its start in July of 2009, we have grown to serve 60 students and adults. Many of these individuals are receiving free instruction and the free use of a violin.

Although we will continue to serve those presently enrolled, the unexpected additional requests to join

the program have outstripped our resources.

We are in desperate need of quality instruments and qualified music instructors. On a more personal note, one month ago we had a concert at Mount Hope High School. This was the first time many of the participants had ever been on a stage. I will never forget the look on the face of one very young girl when it was announced at the end of the concert that the parents could come forward to take pictures. There she stood, holding her head and

violin high with the biggest smile that you could ever imagine. And, of course, the parent was glowing with pride.

That made it all worthwhile!



Suggestions for learning about race and white privilege

From FFM and NEYM Working Groups on Racism/February 2010

A Hall of Fame for Abolitionists: Friends and others in the Smithfield, New York, area have been active in creating a National Abolition Hall of Fame and Museum in a restored church building where the first meeting of the New York Anti-Slavery Society took place in 1835.

In March 2005 the first people nominated for the Hall of Fame by scholars of abolitionism were inducted. Among the nine named so far was one Quaker—Lucretia Mott. If you're in the area (off the beaten track in Smithfield, Madison County—not Dutchess—south of Oneida), plan ahead for

a visit. See and sign up for Northstar, the newsletter at www.abolitionhof.org.

Clerk's Corner By Mark Conley

O happy home, where two
in heart united,
In holy faith and blessed
hope are one,
Whom death a little while
alone divideth,
And cannot end the union
here begun.

- Carl Spitta, transl. Sarah
Findlater

An interesting and unpredictable part of being Clerk is the unexpected correspondence one receives from time to time. These can be phone calls asking when the next Meeting for Worship will be, an e-mail from a family new in the area looking for assistance in the community, or even (as once happened), contact from someone unfamiliar with our Meeting wishing to give us money.

One particularly interesting and unusual contact came two years ago when a gentleman called me from Philadelphia. He told me that he was a relative of two sisters who had once been members of our Meeting: Anna Harvey Chace and Elizabeth Moon Chace. He had been researching their lives for quite some time and had recently written a small paper about them. He wondered if Providence Monthly Meeting would be interested in receiving a copy when he finished.

Naturally I told him that we would be delighted to have a copy, and so it was that a manila envelope came to the meetinghouse some months later. A Mr. Samuel Snipes had sent me an account of not just the lives

of these two sisters, but a bit of the Quaker history that surrounded their family as it wound its way through New England and Philadelphia Yearly Meetings. He traced their family back through their time as prominent Quaker merchants during the Industrial Revolution through the many schisms that affected Quakerism in the mid-nineteenth century, up to approximately five years ago. The paper includes some historic photos and references, as it is partially a memoir, their lives having overlapped by over twenty-five years. I commend it to your attention; let me know if you would be interested in seeing it or having a copy.

And, as one might expect of a weighty Friend born in

1919, he includes in his cover letter words of reminder to remember our obligations to the generations who brought us to this point:

“An occasional visit to the Friends section of the Providence Cemetery and an inquiry to the attendant keeps them on their toes. It helps keep the Friends section better looked after.”

And as always, thank you for all you do in the Life of our Meeting.

Providence Monthly Meeting - Contacts

Providence Meeting (401) 331-4218 <http://providencefriends.org>
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Listserv Moderator: Dan Lederer list@providencefriends.org
Website: Dave McNab webclerk@providencefriends.org
Moses Brown School Liaison: Thia Lord liaison@providencefriends.org
Young Adult Friends: Stephen Higa yaf@providencefriends.org
To schedule the Meetinghouse: Bruce Shaw scheduling@providencefriends.org
AFSC SENE: Martha Yager (508) 399-6699 or myager@afsc.org or www.afsc.org/sene



Elizabeth Bonner Zimmerman

Newsletter of
Providence Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of
Friends

Meeting for Worship each Sunday

Providence: 10:00 am Saylesville: 10:30 am
Jamestown: 10:30 am

First Day School, Providence - Sunday. Children join Meeting for Worship from 10:00-10:15 am and then proceed to First Day School from 10:15-11:00 am.

Worship Sharing

Every third Sunday after Rise of Meeting in Providence

Other Meetings for Worship (All welcome):

Monday - 12:30 pm - Moses Brown Upper School
Wednesday - 8:25 am - Moses Brown Lower School
Wednesday - 9:40 am - Moses Brown Middle School
(all three in Providence Meetinghouse)
Thursday - Noon-12:45 pm in J. Walter Wilson room 411

Potluck, Providence - each first Sunday

Meeting for Business

Providence: Second Sunday each month at 12:15pm
Saylesville: Last Sunday of each month

AFSC SENE Support Committee - Second Tuesday, 6:30-9:00 pm
Volunteers needed and welcome. Call (508) 399-6699

Conscientious Objector Day

First Day School will hold Conscientious Objector Day on March 7th. Mark Conley and Mike McGuigan will lead the students in a historical review and a discussion about CO's and Quakers. Students will take steps to begin or to continue to build a file.

First Day School invites the Meeting's high school students to join the class. Moses Brown students who are interested in learning more about conscientious objectors are welcome to attend.

All students attend Meeting for Worship at 10am for fifteen minutes and then go downstairs to the First Day School class.



Kits for Haiti

By Eugenia Marks

Thanks to the generous response of the Meeting, First Day School Elementary A (the youngest children) experienced and expressed service in preparing 32 personal hygiene kits for

Haiti. These kits and additional materials were taken to American Friends Service Committee regional office in Cambridge which transported them to Haiti.

The Provident FRIEND

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