

The Provident FRIEND

March 2010

Providence Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

Minding our Ministries in Meetinghouse Carpets

By Elsie Morse



Spending can be challenging work for Quakers, but when it combines such good causes as Supporting Sustainability and helping Tibetans eek out a living in the Katmandu Valley of Nepa, we can relax and take joy in our needed refurbishing. With these two good ministries in mind, it is the hope of the Property Committee that all will take pleasure in two newly carpeted areas of the Meetinghouse.

Our footsteps will be quieted by hand-knotted stair treads of Himalayan wool, reputed to last generations and showing very little wear even after years of hard use. The marked distinction between each step answers our major safety concern, and the colors match nicely with our paint colors. The treads'

RugMark GoodWeave certification assures us that no illegal child labor was used in their making. Since RugMark's founding, the number of South Asian children trapped in illegal and exploitative carpet-making work has dropped from 1 million to 250,000; more children are going to school and living with hope for the future. Liza Phillips, the designer of the treads, was pleased to hear they would be installed in a Friends' meetinghouse and gave us a most gracious discount. She hopes to visit during the summer on her way to the Cape and see something from her own ministry in a good home.

And now for a ministry of sustainability: the rug in the new High School Gathering

room upstairs from the Nursery (also happily available for countless cozy small meetings) is made out of "SmartStrand," 37% of which comes from readily available agricultural materials including corn sugars. Our dealer assured us that "SmartStrand's renewably sourced polymer has a built in stain protection that will never wear off or diminish." SmartStrand rugs are also CRI Green Label Plus certified for low emissions.

What 19th century Quaker could have imagined the factors that would weigh into the care of a 21st century Meetinghouse?!

Calendar:

Mar. 20:

10am-noon
Saylesville Book Swap

12pm - National March on Washington, White House (Layfayette Park)

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

Mar. 21:

11:30am - Hospitality Meeting

11:30am - Book Group meets

12pm - Threshing Meeting at Saylesville

4pm - Brown University Chorus, Ryan Concert Hall at Providence College

Mar. 28:

10:30am - Conanicut Friends Meeting for Worship, Studio, Norman Bird Sanctuary, Middletown

11:30am - Book Group meets

12pm - Threshing Meeting at Providence.

Apr. 4: Easter

8:30am - Easter Breakfast at Saylesville Meeting

Apr. 10:

Breadmaking Day

Apr. 11:

10:30am - Conanicut Friends Meeting for Worship, Studio, Norman Bird Sanctuary, Middletown

12:15pm - Meeting for Business, Providence Meetinghouse

Minutes of Monthly Meeting for Business - Third Month 14th

Providence Monthly Meeting, Third Month 14th, 2010. Minutes of Monthly Meeting for Business.

1. Friends gathered at the Providence meetinghouse at 12:15 PM with sixteen Friends present.
2. In the opening worship, the clerk read four queries, prepared by First Day School Meeting in 2006, on living together as Friends: Do you participate in the larger meeting? Do you try to understand what others around you are feeling? Do you try to gather and understand the facts before you make a decision? Do you envy people who have something you don't?
3. Announcements: There will be two Threshing Meetings concerning Saylesville Meeting, the first on Third Month 21st at Saylesville, the second on Third Month 28th at Providence, both at noon. For Communications Committee, Dan Lederer announced that Nina Berry will be stepping down as newsletter editor at the end of this fiscal year. We are grateful for her years of outstanding service in this capacity. The committee requests that anyone interested in considering this position contact Debbie Block.
4. Bill Monroe read the queries proposed by Ministry and Counsel for the Threshing Meetings to take place as detailed above. These are: Given that we all view our obligations to Meeting through the prism of the worship space we each

- prefer to attend, how can we develop a perspective that considers the needs of all Meeting members across the three sites? What does Saylesville Meetinghouse mean to our Monthly Meeting? What does it mean to you? What are our obligations to our Meeting's past? What are our obligations to our Meeting's future? What financial priority do our worship spaces take in our budget? Are we prepared to make the commitments to maintain them? How do we each make an effort to remain a Society of Friends among differences within our community? Are we willing to risk the plain speaking and careful listening that might bring us to a more covered community? Friends approved the queries.
5. Dan Lederer reported that Communications Committee is proposing that the Providence Meetinghouse provide Internet access by authorizing \$30 per month from the Business Meeting budget line to pay for a DSL connection. Communications Committee will make the necessary arrangements. Friends approved.
 6. Presiding Clerk Mark Conley proposed that we host a RI-Smithfield Quarterly Meeting Extended Worship Day at Providence on Fifth Month 1st, in conjunction with Sandwich Quarterly Meeting. This would coincide with our May breakfast. Friends approved. Mark will clerk a temporary committee, to

- include Betsy Zimmerman and Bill Monroe, to prepare an agenda for this event.
7. The clerk read the 2009 State of the Society report. With a few editorial changes, Friends approved the report (see attached).
 8. Treasurer Peter Swaszek presented his report through Second Month 2010, three fourths of the way through our fiscal year. The balance sheet shows a surplus of close to \$1700 at this point. He reminded us that the Providence Meetinghouse addition/renovation fund currently holds close to \$97,000 and that we will need to keep in mind the purpose of this fund. We ask Finance Committee to review the name of this budget line and its purpose by consulting with members who were involved in the initial proposals to expand the meetinghouse.
 9. Bruce Carlsten made an initial presentation of the proposed budget for 2010-2011. Projected income and expenses have decreased by \$2000, expenses primarily due to decreases in the Saylesville Burial Ground budget line and in janitorial services for Providence. The decrease in income is accounted for by a drop in investment income. This has necessitated a small increase in contributions needed to balance the budget. There is extraordinary need at NEYM. The amount of our contribution to NEYM, currently budgeted at \$18,000, will be reviewed

- at Ministry and Counsel on Fourth Month 7th, with consideration of an increase of \$500 to \$2000. It is important that personal expenditures on behalf of Meeting be reported to the Treasurer for reimbursement in order to generate a record of the cost of various committee activities.
10. For Saylesville, Dieter Gomes announced that there will be an Easter morning breakfast on Fourth Month 4th, followed by Meeting for Worship.
 11. We closed with silent gratitude at 1:45 PM, intending if God permits to meet next at the Providence Meetinghouse on Fourth Month 11th, 2010.
- Mark Conley, Presiding Clerk
Dan Lederer, Recording Clerk Pro Tem

Friends Camp By Nat Shed



Our Yearly Meeting camp in South China, Maine will offer four traditional youth camps; Jones Camp – June 27 to July 10 for elementary school age,

Dyer Camp – July 11 to July 24 for middle school age, Fox Camp – July 25 – August 7 and Fell Camp – August 8 to August 21 for high school age youth. Friends Camp will also offer four additional camps: Mott Family Camp – August 22 to August 28 and three drama camps for each age group. Teenage campers who sign up for the Fox Camp can take a bus from Friends Camp to the Yearly Meeting Sessions in Smithfield, Rhode Island.

The one-week Mott Family Camp will offer flexible programming for just twelve families. The days will include; worship, adult workshops, youth programming, rest time, recreation, waterfront activities, and vespers. The Mott Family Camp adult workshop leader is Kathleen Kelly from Friends Meeting at Cambridge. Kathleen will use Quaker testimonies and the concept of “transcendent play” to explore parenting as spiritual mentoring.

Friends Camp is a caring and accepting camp community with Quaker values, creative activities, and lot's of zany fun!

Visit the web page www.friendscamp.org or call or e-mail 207-873-3499 or director@friendscamp.org.

Draft of priorities list for FCNL By Zona Douthit

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.

Providence Meeting has been asked to suggest five topics that we think FCNL should pursue in the next Congress, which begins in January 2011. We began this process with a threshing meeting in February and have until April to submit our response. Below is the initial draft.

Please contact Zona Douthit if you have concerns or thoughts on this list.

In keeping with the mission of the FCNL, the top five priorities of the Providence Friends Meeting for the next session of Congress are

1. An international plan for peace that includes
 - a. aid and policy initiatives in Afghanistan and Iraq that incorporate the concerns of the citizens of those countries,
 - b. enforcement of illegal munitions laws,
 - c. a permanent ban on cluster bombs, and
 - d. nuclear disarmament because

We seek a world free of war and the threat of war

2. A strengthened U.S. commitment to the rule of law, including
 - a. a commitment never to use torture on any human being for any reason and
 - b. treating people who commit or attempt to commit crimes in the United States as accused criminals rather than “enemy non-combatants” because

We seek a society with equity and justice for all

3. A restoration of a democracy of and for the people, including
 - a. revision of congressional rules that allow one senator or representative to block legislation supported by the majority,
 - b. campaign finance reform to define corporations as non-persons because

We seek a community where every person's potential may be fulfilled

4. Independence from fossil fuels because

We seek an earth restored.

Around the Meeting

Pastoral Care Committee:

Have you noticed that someone has not been attending? Do you know that a member or attender is ill or needs a ride?

Pastoral Care encourages members and attenders to bring to our attention any joys, sorrows or needs of our community. Pastoral Care Committee members are Thia Lord, Judy Shaw, Dieter Gomes and Abigail Mansfield Marcaccio

Sorrow: Pastoral care reports with sadness the death of Dr. John Barrett, husband of member Mary Barrett and father of John Barrett Jr. Dr. Barrett was a beloved pediatrician who practiced in Providence from 1949 to 1990, helping to raise innumerable RI

children! He served as Pediatrician-in Chief at the Rhode Island Hospital and the Lying-In (Women and Infants) Hospital. He was involved in the founding of the Brown Medical School and served as Clinical Professor of Pediatrics. He was a mentor and role model for many students and pediatric interns and residents. I was fortunate to practice along side him in my beginning years of practice and to learn from his vast experience and wonderful perspective. Judy Shaw

Quaker Education Support Committee:

Our committee oversees the meetings's scholarship fund whose goal is to make Quaker Education more

accessible to Quaker families from a broader range of income levels than might be assumed. Our scholarships are available to member families for whom a small scholarship combined with what the Quaker schools and camps are able to offer would make the difference in whether or not their children could consider a Friends education.

Many families who have been recipients of our meeting's scholarships plan to repay the meeting when their tuition paying days are over. The scholarship fund, therefore, has the potential to become a revolving fund, perpetuating itself into future generations.

Hospitality Committee:

The next Hospitality Committee meeting will be Sunday, March 21st at 11:30am. It is an important meeting as we will be planning and organizing our first-ever May Breakfast. All are welcome.

Program Committee:

The committee is planning a craft fair for the winter (probably mid-November). If you are interested in participating, you might want to build up your stock. If you want to help, please contact a member of the Program Committee. This will be the main fundraiser for the fall/winter of 2010-2011.

News from Conanicut By Marcia Lindsay

Conanicut Friends Meeting will be meeting at 10:30am at the Studio at the Norman Bird Sanctuary, 583 Third Beach Road in Middletown on the following dates:

March 28
April 11
April 25

We will resume weekly meeting for worship at the Old Meetinghouse on Weeden Lane in Jamestown on Sunday, May 2nd at 10:30am until October 17th.



News from Saylesville By Rosanne Cedroni



The Saylesville Bookswap has a new web-site for the bookswap:

<http://bookswap.webatu.com/>

Please visit the website regularly as the frequency

of "hits" will help the bookswap.

AND interestingly enough, we had a fabulous turnout in January - I was amazed because January is traditionally very slow for us. People brought in books in beautiful condition. So if

you know any book lovers, please pass on this information.

Oddly enough, publicity is one of our biggest challenges - so the more people that spread the word the better!

Clerk's Corner By Mark Conley

All the world is God's own field, / Fruit unto His praise to yield;

Wheat and tares together sown, / Unto joy or sorrow grown:

First the blade, and then the ear, / Then the full corn shall appear: -

Lord of harvest, grant that we / Wholesome grain and pure may be.

- Henry Alford, 1844

THRESHING MEETINGS concerning SAYLESVILLE MEETINGHOUSE

First... just what are Threshing Meetings anyway? Leonard Joy provides this excellent explanation: "Not all meetings need be designed to arrive at decisions. Where decisions are complex or where they are likely to reveal major differences of feeling or understanding, preliminary meetings to air these differences and to hear from one another may be desirable and help the process of mutual understanding. Quakers designate such meetings as 'threshing' meetings that serve to focus down on what is essential."

In Monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business, we have been considering over the past three years matters of immediate concern regarding our worship home at Saylesville: How can we draw up a plan for long-term maintenance? How can we provide a door that opens freely and easily? How do we prevent the east wall from rotting away? Now that

some of these immediate questions have been addressed, it is time for our wider Monthly Meeting community to consider some of the larger issues behind our personal and corporate commitments to Saylesville: the property, the people who worship there, those who have worshipped there in the past and those who may worship there in the future.

Meeting for Business last month approved holding two Threshing Sessions concerning Saylesville meetinghouse. One meeting will be held at Saylesville on the 21st at noon, and another will be at Providence on the 28th at noon. Any Friend may attend either or both of these sessions as one feels moved. To be clear, there is no expectation going into these meetings that there will be any decisions reached – in fact, such decision-making can *only* occur in a regular or specially called Meeting for Business. These are opportunities to worship together while reflecting on a series of weighty issues. The key-word to remember here is "worship:" these are intended to be times of reflection as well as of airing of concerns to the Meeting as a whole. What they are not meant to be are discussions or conversations. We will not be answering or refuting one another, but will be coming together to discuss matters of importance in the spirit of the love that lights us all and passes all understanding.

Meeting for Business requested that Ministry and Counsel draw up some queries to help focus these sessions. The resulting queries, as approved at our most recent Business Meeting, are:

Given that we all view our obligations to Meeting through the prism of the worship space we each prefer to attend, how can we develop a perspective that considers the needs of all Meeting members across the three sites?

What does Saylesville Meetinghouse mean to our Monthly Meeting? What does it mean to you?

What are our obligations to our Meeting's past? What are our obligations to our Meeting's future?

What financial priority do our worship spaces take in our budget? Are we prepared to make the commitments to maintain them?

How do we each make an effort to remain a Society of Friends among differences within our community? Are we willing to risk the plain speaking and careful listening that might bring us to a more covered community?

I sincerely hope you will be able to join us for these special opportunities to labor together in discerning the Divine Will. It will be a special privilege for me to clerk these seasoning

sessions. If you cannot attend, please hold in the Light those of us who will be worshipping together, that we may, as George Fox said, "meet together and know one another in that which is eternal, which was before the world was."

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

AFSC News By Sam Lowe, Clerk, AFSC's General Secretary Search Committee

After ten years of faithful service, Mary Ellen McNish is concluding her tenure as the American Friends Service Committee's General Secretary at the end of this month. We are grateful for her service to the AFSC.

On behalf of the General Secretary Search Committee, I am sending this email to the entire AFSC online community. We would like to keep everyone informed about the search process, and also, provide an opportunity for all to help us identify candidates for the next General Secretary.

I am pleased to report that the search for a new General Secretary for the AFSC is moving forward on schedule. In recent weeks,

we have reached out to Friends Meetings and organizations, asking the Quaker community to nominate candidates who would be able to lead the organization into the future. Because the search committee is committed to looking broadly for the best pool of candidates to choose from, we have also reached out to staff and volunteers, asking for nominations. Now we are also asking for your help in identifying candidates for the next General Secretary of the AFSC.

If you know a seasoned Friend with skills and abilities that can lead the AFSC in our work for peace and justice, please forward the name of this Friend to the Search Committee. Although the Service

Committee embraces people of many faiths and our staff reflects the diversity we find in the neighborhoods and cities where we work, the General Secretary position is the one staff position that must be held by a Quaker.

This Friend will articulate a compelling vision of how AFSC programs effectively promote Friends' testimonies of equity, community, peace and nonviolence. We are looking for someone with experience in peace and justice work, nonprofit management, fundraising interest and expertise – and a person up to the challenge of leading a vibrant, distinct, and energetic organization.

For more about the position or about the search, please visit afsc.org.

We prefer to receive nominations by email. Please forward them to me at: sam_lowe@me.com.

The deadline for receiving resumes and letters of interest is March 19, 2010. This date is fast approaching, so thank you for making your nominations soon!

We are grateful for your support of AFSC and we look forward to sharing updates with you. If the process continues to go as planned, we hope to have a new, permanent General Secretary in place this fall.

Sincerely,
Sam Lowe

Helping Hands By Dede Carlsten

Bruce and I have been volunteering at The East Bay Food Pantry and Stone Soup Thrift Shop. We'd like to share with you our experience with the hopes that if you have time you might find a similar organization that you can support with either donations, time, shopping, or money. Also you might know individuals who could benefit from the services that they offer.

We have been volunteering one day a week. Bruce shelves piles of cans and boxes of food and I do what ever is needed in the Thrift Shop. It may be sorting clothing or linens, organizing books, rearranging and shelving household goods and so on. We may also assist clients in selecting appropriate foods and finding them ways to prepare it in a nutritious manner. We have met a lot of great people in the East Bay and it's becoming the highlight of our week.

The East Bay Food Pantry and Stone Soup Thrift Shop

was originally established (2009) as an outreach of the Bristol First Congregational Church based on the growing need for assistance in the current economy.

After meeting with the Deacons of the First Congregational Church and staff from the RI Community Food Bank (2008), Pastor Dan Randall began a search for space in the community to house his vision for a food pantry and thrift shop. The vision was based on the business model of the Johnnycake Centers in Wakefield and Westerly, RI. This model has a thrift shop connected to the food pantry which serves several purposes. It provides good clothing, household items, and furniture for the general public. The sale of these items provides money for the food pantry. Every ten cents earned buys one pound of food from the R.I. Food Bank. With this in mind everyone in the community is welcome to shop on certain days.

With support from the East Bay Community Development Corporation (CDC), state legislators, and the Town of Bristol, space was secured on the ground level of the Franklin Court building on Wood Street in Bristol (rent and utility free!). Over one hundred volunteers spent countless hours cleaning, painting, and prepping the space for a fall 2009 opening. The food pantry and thrift shop opened with the following mission statement: "to engage, educate, and empower the East Bay in creating a hunger-free community. It has a separate 501(3)(c) status and is officially a separate organization from the First Congregational Church, but it has the Church's continual and ongoing support.

The East Bay Food Pantry is currently partnering with other like-minded organizations in the East Bay to best serve their client population (e.g., RI Community Food Bank, First Congregational

Church in Bristol, East Bay Cares Program-Bristol County Elks, and We Share). They hope to expand their programming efforts in 2010 to include clothing voucher program for families/individuals in need, a "Teen Soup" program, and other meaningful volunteer opportunities for families.

Hours of Operation

For clients: Food Pantry & Thrift Shop – Wednesdays 11 am – 5 pm

For the general public: Thrift Shop – Thursdays, Fridays & Saturdays 10 am – 3 pm

Program Statistics

Numbers of Individuals/Families Served (Sept 2009-Feb 2010) – 402 households (representing over 1200 individuals)
Volunteers – Currently 45 active volunteers

Visit them at www.eastbayfoodpantry.org

CO Day in First Day School

On March 7th, First Day School students learned about conscientious objectors. The students learned the importance of building a file for the future. During the class, the students were asked to write letters reflecting their own personal thoughts about

servicing in the military. The letters were sealed and mailed to themselves. These letters are to remain unopened in a file kept in a safe place.



Bread Making on April 10th, 9:30am



We would like to invite you to a bread making fest at the Meeting House on Saturday, April 10th starting at 9:30 am. We will make loaves of bread for ourselves and for Meeting under Elsie's expert guidance. Also, if you have favorite recipes you would

like to share please let us know. Right now we are in the planning stages and open to suggestions. I'm begging Elsie for her fennel bread that I adore. I'll bring materials to make Anadama bread. We'll have soup and bread for lunch while we wait for some of

the bread to rise. Please let Elsie or myself (Dede Carlsten) know if you will join us.

Providence Monthly Meeting - Contacts

Providence Meeting (401) 331-4218 <http://providencefriends.org>
99 Morris Avenue, Providence, RI 02906

Presiding Clerk: Mark Conley clerk@providencefriends.org
Assistant Presiding Clerk: Betsy Zimmerman assistclerk@providencefriends.org
Recording Clerk: Betsy Cazden recordingclerk@providencefriends.org
Treasurer: Peter Swaszek treasurer@providencefriends.org
Ministry & Counsel: Dan Lederer ministryandcounsel@providencefriends.org
Pastoral Care Committee: Thia Lord pastoralcare@providencefriends.org
Finance: Bruce Carlsten finance@providencefriends.org
Peace & Social Concerns: Dede Carlsten peaceandsocial@providencefriends.org
Social & Hospitality: John Lord socialandhospitality@providencefriends.org
Religious Education: Rebecca Smith & Elsie Morse
religioused@providencefriends.org
Communications: Debbie Block communications@providencefriends.org
Program Committee: Sarah Baily program@providencefriends.org
Marriage Clearness: Erin Hazlett marriage@providencefriends.org
Library: Sarah Morenon library@providencefriends.org
Property: Bob Elliott property@providencefriends.org
Funeral & Burial: Matt Hackman funeralandburial@providencefriends.org
Newsletter: Nina Berry providentfriend@providencefriends.org
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.

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 Brown University 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

Brown Chorus - March 20 & 21

The Brown University Chorus will perform "The Mask of Cain", a set of three short pieces set to some extraordinarily humanistic Civil War poetry by Herman Melville. The free concert will be performed twice:

Saturday, March 20th at 8pm,
Sayles Hall, Brown Main

Green (through the arch at the corner of Brown Street and Waterman Street)

Sunday, March 21st at 4pm,
Ryan Concert Hall at
Providence College (Ryan
Concert Hall is located in the
Smith Center for the Arts on
the East Campus.)

News from the Farm



Ledge Ends Produce, the CSA (community supported agriculture) that distributes its organic produce shares at the Providence

Meetinghouse all summer, is currently accepting 2010 CSA memberships. The shares are limited and filling up quickly, so if you are interested, contact www.ledgeendsproduce.com or call (401) 884-5118.

At the website, you will find printable sign up forms and information about additional kinds of shares (fruit, flowers, cheese and more).

The Provident FRIEND

Newsletter of
Providence Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of
Friends
99 Morris Avenue

Providence Monthly Meeting State of the Society 2009

Our Monthly Meeting includes worship communities in Providence, Saylesville, and Conanicut. Friends gathered in worship sharing during First Month 2010 at the Providence Meetinghouse, with similar gatherings occurring at Saylesville and Conanicut, to reflect on the State of the Society by considering the following queries: What is the state of our society at each place of worship? What is the state of our society in our relationship with one another, within and across our Meetings for Worship? How have we found connection with the national and worldwide community of Friends? What witnesses of our faith have we brought to the wider community and to ourselves?

What is the state of our society at each place of worship?

At Providence:

Our children are integral members of our community and we have a vibrant First Day School. It works well to have the children join us at the beginning of Meeting for Worship and during announcements at the end. One year ago the kitchen was just coming to fruition as we envisioned it; the entire downstairs is now more welcoming and useful. Nonetheless, we recognize several challenges: We want to maintain connections with children in grades 8 through 12 and search for ways to keep Meeting meaningful in their eyes. There is continuing concern that more persons need to get involved in hospitality activities and in caring for

children in the nursery. There is need for a simpler guide for first-time visitors regarding how we worship, perhaps handed out at the door by the greeter.

At Saylesville:

Those who have chosen to worship at Saylesville see it as a refuge and a place for centering. They value the fact that the meetinghouse has been a sacred place for over 300 years and feel a responsibility to be good stewards. However, they also feel somewhat vulnerable because there have been dwindling numbers attending, in most cases due to the growing of babies into toddlers, making attending here difficult for those families. Due to meetinghouse repairs, worship has been taking place in the space that might otherwise be used for First Day School. Activities have included the book swap and participation in the Partners for Sacred Places workshops, the latter fostering greater fiscal awareness and a willingness to contribute financially. Ongoing challenges have been trying to embody simplicity in lives that are complex, finding ways to attract young couples with children, and maintaining connections with infrequent attenders.

At Conanicut:

Occasional visits from the other constituent meetings have strengthened the connection to Providence Monthly Meeting. The size of the group has diminished, due in part to the fact that, having no bathroom or space for First

Day School activities, the facility does not allow for the attendance by young children. Those who attend have enjoyed sharing each other's spiritual journeys as well as the quiet afforded by the location of their meetinghouse.

What is the state of our society in our relationship with one another, within and across our Meetings for Worship?

Our Presiding Clerk has provided excellent guidance through some difficult issues. One of the secrets of Friends is that a skillful clerk is invaluable. The fine work of the newsletter editor has made The Provident Friend another means of binding us together.

The needs and challenges at Saylesville, where the meetinghouse continues to require extensive repairs, have provided an opportunity to make connections with the Monthly Meeting. Conversations with members of Finance and Property Committees and volunteer work done by other Meeting members and attenders have helped bind the Providence and Saylesville groups together.

At Conanicut there is recognition of the unique history of Jamestown's Meeting since it was revived as an Indulged Meeting at the turn of the 20th century. It has served to meet the needs of largely Philadelphia Quakers and their families during their summers there. Those who worship at Conanicut feel that they still are able to meet the needs of

sojourning Friends and others seeking or exploring religious options. The Jamestown Historical Society has been supportive in its appreciation of the history of the meetinghouse and the Quakers in RI and has assumed responsibility for maintenance of the building. The group does not feel called to pursue a preparative meeting status and is comfortable with the term Indulged rather than Worship Group, while being aware of the importance of participating in the life of the parent Meeting.

How have we found connection with the national and worldwide community of Friends?

We are developing a closer relationship with Moses Brown School. Ministry and Counsel has appointed a liaison to Moses Brown School to strengthen this connection. It has been a joy to have the new Head of School joining us for Meeting for Worship on several occasions. When Moses Brown students have Meeting for Worship here, it takes on a unique dynamic, especially when Middle School students are involved. The weekly worship at Brown University has been another form of outreach. We perhaps do not take enough advantage of this opportunity for connection with the wider Quaker community.

Our Peace and Social Concerns Committee serves as our liaison to FCNL. It has not always been clear how to communicate the

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information we receive from FCNL to our members and attenders.

An ongoing challenge is finding ways to increase our identification with Quarterly Meeting and NEYM.

What witnesses of our faith have we brought to the wider community and to ourselves?

We see Meeting as a welcoming place that provides peace for those who attend. Friendly Eights and Game Nights have provided opportunities for members and attenders to be together and to get to know each other better. The pastoral care discussion at Friendly Eights went deeply into how we care for each other, an issue with which we struggle.

Outreach at Saylesville has included participation in a centering prayer workshop at an Episcopal church in Scituate, a silent prayer vigil for veterans, providing lunch for Habitat for Humanity volunteers, leaf raking at the meetinghouse, neighbors helping with

meetinghouse repairs, and working side by side with Heritage Restoration staff. Members and attenders have used "simple gifts" to reach out to the local community, specifically sharing food and being more visible by holding worship outdoors when weather permits. Involving some of the neighborhood residents in the work at the Saylesville Meetinghouse has strengthened our ties with them.

We see many challenges in this area. As with other Meetings, there is regular involvement by many persons, but at the same time some individuals fall away unnoticed, and our ministry to them has been inconsistent. We are connected to the wider community in many ways via the individuals who do good works, but we lack a "corporate voice" in the local community and therefore our influence as a group is less than it could be. AFSC serves that role to some extent but they are a national organization and are not "us".

Even though at times fatiguing and frustrating, the process of addressing our various challenges

has provided an opportunity to share hopes and dreams and has brought us closer together. We are grateful for the great variety of contributions that our members and attenders have made, and continue to make, to the life of our Meeting.