

# The Provident FRIEND

Jan 2011

Providence Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

## First Snow of 2011



January 12



### Calendar:

**Jan 18:** Music For Children open classes, Providence Meeting House (see Dec PFM).

**Jan 23:** Rise of Meeting - Peace and Social Concerns to meet, Providence Meeting House

**Jan 23:** 12 noon (p4) State of Society Worship Sharing, Providence Meeting House

**Jan 23:** 12 7pm (p4) Green Reel film series starts, Congregation Agudas Achim.

**Jan 28:** 7:30pm (p7) Movie Night and discussion with Martha Yager and guests. Providence Meeting House

**Jan 30:** 3pm (p5) RI State Council of Churches Annual Unity service, St. John's Episcopal Cathedral, Providence.

**Feb 6:** (p8) 12:15pm - Walk with Eugenia Marks, Providence Meeting House

**Feb 13:** (p5) Historic New England membership meeting, Saylesville Meeting House and Arnold House.

## Providence Monthly Meeting for Business Minutes- First Month 9th

### Providence Monthly Meeting for business – 9 First Month, 2011

1. We gathered at 12:15 p.m. at the Providence meetinghouse with twenty-three people present.
2. In the opening worship, the clerk read the queries on the care of children from New England Yearly Meeting's *Faith and Practice* (1986):

Do children receive the loving care of your meeting? Does the meeting nurture their religious life and give them an understanding of the principles and practices of Friends? Do you listen to children, recognizing that the Spirit may lead them along paths you have not foreseen? Do you assist them to assume their rightful responsibilities in the home, the meeting, and the community?

3. Announcements:

Dede Carlsten and Phebe Howland will be coordinating a yard sale again next fall. Items can be contributed beginning later this spring.

The annual Unity service of the RI State Council of Churches will be held at 3 p.m. on January 30, 2011 at St. John's Episcopal Cathedral on North Main Street. The main message will be brought by minister and pediatrician Rev. Gloria White Hammond, on "Children and Poverty." All are warmly invited.

4. Nominating Committee: The clerk brought suggestions for constituting a Nominating Committee, as is our practice. Elsie Morse, Betsy Zimmerman, and Pamela Dahlberg have agreed to serve, with Elsie once again serving as clerk. These names are approved. The meeting also approved allowing this committee with the presiding clerk to add two more members and report those names to the next meeting for business.

5. Quaker Quest: For Ministry and Counsel, Dan Lederer brought the following proposal concerning Quaker Quest:

Ministry and Counsel is asking Meeting for Business for approval to form an ad hoc committee to explore the question of whether Meeting should proceed with the Quaker Quest public sessions, whether we should do some modification of these sessions that better suits our needs, or whether we should instead direct our energies to other activities. Ministry and Counsel will take responsibility for identifying committee members. The committee will be drawn from Meeting members and attenders in general rather than just from members of Ministry and Counsel, the idea being that the options to be considered are all Meeting-wide projects. The committee will be asked to gauge the level of interest in these options via conversations with members and attenders, a questionnaire, a worship sharing, or any other means they choose, and then will present a proposal as to how Meeting should proceed.

Friends approved this proposal with appreciation for Ministry and Counsel's careful way of proceeding.

6. Smith Bequest: For the Finance Committee, Bruce Carlsten presented a status report and recommendation on further expenditures from the Smith bequest. Finance Committee has heard some questions about why the meeting is seeking ways to spend this money, while simultaneously asking for increased donations for the general operating budget. Bruce reminded us that although the Smith bequest itself did not restrict use of the funds, previous decisions by the meeting for business designated it for "extras" for the Providence meetinghouse, not to be used as endowment or as a regular contribution to the operating budget.

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**Providence Monthly Meeting for Business Minutes (cont. from p2)**

Items already approved total just under \$6,000. The items brought for consideration today total less than the funds remaining in the designated fund.

(a) Coffee-maker: John Lord, who works with the Hospitality committee and coordinates the May breakfast, proposes spending up to \$700 for a new coffee-making set-up. He feels that we should be able to prepare consistently adequate coffee for after-meeting fellowship and special events. The final cost would depend on the system chosen and whether it is connected to plumbing or free-standing. Any of these systems would enable us to prepare coffee right at the end of meeting so it would be fresher.

Concerns were raised about the safety of glass carafes that people can lift, which may be dropped and may pose a risk to children, as could heated burners. Built-in plumbing adds cost and complexity. In the discussion Friends settled around the middle-tier system, a Newco pour-over (unplumbed) system with insulated carafes. It appears that bulk Fair Trade coffee could be used in this system, which would also avoid excess packaging. John noted that the company offers a 30-day return policy.

Friends approved Hospitality Committee spending up to \$500 for the Newco pour-over coffee system including at least three carafes.

(b) Kitchen dish sets: The Hospitality Committee proposes purchasing 120 sets of Corelle<sup>TM</sup>-type dinnerware, at an estimated cost of \$1,400 if purchased retail in six-setting cartons. This would ensure sufficient plates and bowls for our events, and would be more efficient for storage and loading the dishwasher than the current hodge-podge.

It was suggested that purchasing needed items in bulk from a restaurant supply house would be more satisfactory and cheaper than buying complete place-settings from a retail store. Friends felt it would be useful to be able to serve more people with a consistent set of dishes, especially as we host larger and more public events. Some enjoy the individuality and hodge-podge of our current collection. It was noted that Saylesville plans to continue to use hodge-podge. A concern was also raised about unnecessary purchase of goods; Friends have divergent senses of what constitutes "simplicity." Some of the practical difficulties might be resolved with better management. That management is difficult, however, given our reliance on a shifting roster of volunteers and use by groups outside the meeting. Users may also show more respect to a matching set.

There are other items on the committee's wish-list, such as large soup pots, knives, and cutting boards that can go in the dishwasher.

Friends support the concept of purchasing new dishes, and entrust the final decision to the Hospitality Committee. We approve the Hospitality Committee spending up to \$1,000 on dishes and other accessories, encouraging them to consider beginning with a smaller number of items and to utilize wholesale rather than retail purchasing.

(c) Sleep-sofa: The Property Committee proposes purchasing a convertible sleep-sofa to replace the existing sofa in the library, particularly for the use of adult retreat leaders during weekend youth retreats. The committee has not yet settled on a specific brand or model, but intends to find one that is durable and comfortable for both sitting and sleeping.

It was noted that it would also be useful to be able to offer hospitality when the meeting hosts Yearly Meeting committees.

We authorize the Property Committee to use up to \$1,500 for this purpose.

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## Around the Meeting

### From Ministry and Counsel:

Ministry and Counsel encourages members and attenders to continue to submit announcements in writing to the Facing Bench before Meeting for Worship. If an announcement is about an upcoming event, please be sure to include the date, time, and place. On all announcements it is helpful to include the name of the person who is available to answer questions about it. Communications Committee has taken on the responsibility of sending these written announcements to our email group later in the day so that the information can reach the widest possible audience.

### Finance Committee to all Committee Clerks:

Finance Committee would request that committee clerks submit their future budget requests to Bruce Carlsten of the Finance Committee as soon as possible.

### State of Society Worship Sharing, noon, Jan 23:

Members and attenders of all three of our constituent worship communities (Providence, Saylesville and Conanicut) are invited to come to Providence Meetinghouse on the 23rd of this month at noon. We will be joining in our worship sharing session to consider

the State of our Society. This worship sharing is part of the process Ministry and Counsel uses to prepare a report for New England Yearly Meeting, a report that will be sent to them after its approval by Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business some time in mid- to late Spring.

Please join us to consider the state of our society: its important events, its service, spiritual state, and any other strengths or weaknesses we feel moved to record as we reflect on who we were in 2010.

### Green Reel film series:

Congregation Agudas Achim in Attleboro is presenting a free film series

on sustainable living, starting Jan 23. More information at: 508-520-1507 and <http://agudasma.org/events.shtml> (Tyler Lewis)

### Request for Website Photos:

Do you have any jpegs in your computer of meeting activities? Communications Committee is doing an update to our website and we'd like to follow the advice of our Quaker Quest trainers and include some more photos. Please send any files you may have to Dave McNabb at [webclerk@providencefriends.org](mailto:webclerk@providencefriends.org). Debbie Block for Communications Committee

## PROVIDENCE MONTHLY MEETING GARAGE SALE - OCTOBER 1<sup>ST</sup>, 2011

The PMM Garage Sale is back by popular demand!

Phebe Howland's garage will be open for donations in May!

Tentative plans are being made. Input, advice, and willing supporters are welcome.

We'd love to have another evening of fun and music with a silent auction before the Saturday event. Therefore..... we need donations of auctionable items, art work and crafts. At present we have no Steuben or Tiffany but "hope springs eternal".

Needed: a lead on a tent since Westport's is no longer available; a publicity guru to get the word out in September; workers to sort and organize in Phebe's garage on weekends in September; workers including someone responsible for each day the week before the sale - this includes people with an aesthetic eye, a love for organization, and a fascination with stuff; someone to direct and organize the bake sale (a big hit that keeps people buying); people to make appetizers for Friday night; workers on Friday night and Saturday; clean up crew; etc, etc, etc.; and some one to create a table about the Society of Friends and outreach and, of course, volunteers to man it. There must be lots of things missing from this list, so please feel free to comment and offer ideas.

We'd love to have a committee to help this run smoothly and create a festival of fun and community.

Dede Carlsten and Phebe Howland

**Providence Monthly Meeting for Business Minutes (cont. from p3)**

7. State of Society report: We approve holding a time for worship-sharing to consider the state of our society over calendar year 2010, on 1<sup>st</sup> month 23<sup>rd</sup> at 12 noon.
8. Treasurer's Report: For the Finance Committee, Bruce Carlsten noted that as of 12<sup>th</sup> month 31, 2010, contributions for the first seven months of the fiscal year have totaled some \$6,000 less than the same period in the prior year, and less than half of what is needed for the full year.
9. Saylesville Preparative Meeting: Joanne Griffin announced that on 2d month 13, 2011, Saylesville meetinghouse and the Arnold House will be co-hosting an afternoon membership meeting of Historic New England. The preparative meeting looks forward to this opportunity to showcase our historic building.
10. Property Committee: Bob Elliot reported that the heating system problems have been repaired.
11. We closed at 2:15 pm following a period of grateful worship, intending to meet next, God willing, on 2d month 13, 2011, at 12:15 p.m.

Mark Conley, presiding clerk

Elizabeth Cazden, recording clerk

**Intercontinental Children's Advocate to Speak to RI Interfaith Community – Jan. 30, 3 pm**

The Rhode Island State Council of Churches and its members will join in a Service of Prayer for Christian Unity, Sunday afternoon, 3 p.m., January 30, 2011, at St. John's Episcopal Cathedral, 241 North Main Street, Providence. Members of all the churches and the public are invited. The focus will be "Children and Poverty." Preaching will be the Rev. Gloria White Hammond, pastor, physician, community activist and co-founder of My Sister's Keeper, a humanitarian group focused on freedom and healing for enslaved and abused women and children of Darfur and the southern Sudan.

The purpose of the service is to emphasize unity for all the churches. Service leaders will include Episcopalians, Lutherans, Quakers, Baptists, Methodists, Congregationalists, Unitarians, Orthodox and Roman Catholics. This service will not only emphasize unity, but the practical purpose of unity to work for the benefit of all creatures and peoples.

The preacher of the day, Pastor White Hammond, is known for her faith, humanitarian efforts and preaching skills. She is co-pastor and co-founder with her husband, Rev. Ray Hammond, of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church of Boston; she pursues an active pediatric practice and serves on the board of Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston; and she spearheads projects for the benefit of high risk girls and women in the Boston area as well as Africa. Rev. Gloria, as she is called, received her MD at Tufts Medical School, and her Master's of Divinity degree from Harvard Divinity School. She and Pastor Ray have two adult daughters, Mariama and Adiya.

**Clerk's Corner** by Mark Conley

Quaker decision-making is a form of corporate discernment of God's will for the faith community.

- Annie Patterson and Peter Blood at quakersong.org

Okay, I admit it: I love Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business. I have loved it since I first read about the Society of Friends in my Mid-western small-town library at the age of sixteen... and even more since I felt the privilege of actually worshipping at those Meetings from the age of seventeen. Indeed, this unique witness of our faith community was one of the things that led to my application for membership at my first Monthly Meeting. Its power was palpable and authentic in its spirituality.

I had attended many worship services of high-minded sentiment and beautifully-worded sermons, but never had I observed a close community of worshippers engaged in the difficult matter of living together in the Love of that Power that overrides all personal desires. And "living together" means what it always does sooner or later: dealing with the mundane matters of painting the walls and paying the bills, not merely the spiritual infatuation that comes with the aforementioned high-minded sentiment and the freedom to worship without perceived encumbrances to one's personal path to enlightenment. True commitment, it seems, involves the day-to-day struggle of weighing our personal wishes against the good of the relationship. It involves constant evaluation and examination. Queries and advices are good for that. Can *all* our decisions be weighed against the standard we aim for, the abiding love we feel for one another, in our weekly Meetings for Worship?

Many have made fun of Meetings for Business with examples of the purchase of seat cushions taking months of threshing meetings and minutes of exercise, while resolutions against torture in foreign lands or large expenditures to service organizations are almost immediate. But isn't that the way in all loving relationships? Is it not possible to support one's beloved in her/his calling in life, all the while grouching when the tube of toothpaste is squeezed from the middle? In that case, which shows the real strength of a relationship: supporting abstractions in which one may not be personally involved, or working through the mundane details of daily living in a spirit of love, forgiveness and (most important) humility?

One of the most beautiful experiences I have had as a Friend occurred early in my time in the Society. A Friend who had a personal antipathy to another Friend was opposed to a course of action proposed by the latter (an action of much more import than paint or cushions). Many months were spent in deferral, clearness and minutes of exercise. The Meeting itself seemed poised to "take sides" between the two faithful members as the division deepened. At one Meeting for Business however, which began like many others before, the first Friend rose after a period of silence and asked forgiveness for his behavior toward the latter Friend and toward us all in previous Meetings. The feeling of Divine Love that surrounded him at that point was palpable to all present. After a deep silence, a third Friend felt moved to make a proposal that somehow spoke to the condition of all present, including the two aforementioned Friends. The Meeting closed with reverent Awe at the power of our process. A covered Meeting for Business may be the most rare of occurrences, but it does happen. It often happens in difficult circumstances, not in spite of them.

Our Meeting is blessed with many individuals who possess different personal leadings. Our Meetings for Worship are often deep and diverse, to the glory of the Divine. Who among us would test those spiritual leadings against the day-to-day life we all must lead? Do our Quaker principles extend to those sitting next to us when they wish to turn the thermostat down to fifty degrees and to paint the Meetinghouse bright orange inside and out? That – with the careful listening involved in such a case - is living in community. That is Meeting for Business.

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

## MOVIE NITE at PROVIDENCE MONTHLY MEETING - JANUARY 28<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 PM

On Friday, January 28<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 PM Peace and Social concerns and AFSC SENE will be showing the movie "Papers" at Providence Monthly Meeting, followed by refreshments and a discussion led by Martha Yager of AFSC SENE. "Papers" is a powerful film which deals with young immigrants who have lived and attended school in the U.S. but are in an undocumented limbo. These immigrants hoped that the Dream Act would enable them to find a pathway to citizenship, and Martha is hoping to bring some young people who are directly affected by this issue.

The following is from Martha Yager.

"The DREAM Act was a small piece of immigration reform that would allow undocumented young people, who came here when young, to get on a path to citizenship (i.e. get a green card and be eligible for applying for citizenship) if they completed 2 years of college and/or served in the military. Many of these young people have no future since they have been in terrible schools, have no money, can't work, get drivers licenses, etc. Without a good education and a means of making money they are not going to be able to use the college option. So that makes them incredibly vulnerable to military recruitment. AFSC and others worked to add a community service option to the path to citizenship in the DREAM act.

"The yearning for so many youth for a path to citizenship is so palpable in the movie. They communicate so beautifully how fully "American" they are. The photos of them in tears in the halls of Congress after the vote made me cry. It also is provocative to Quakers due to the inclusion of a military path. The question of us is how do we honor the yearning of these young people while also honoring our concerns about using the military in this way. AFSC's answer has been to work for improving the bill by adding a provision to include community service (such as City Year) as a pathway, since many kids won't be able to go to college and are very vulnerable to recruitment."

You can find more about this movie on the following web site [http://www.papersthemovie.com/about\\_papers/trailer.html](http://www.papersthemovie.com/about_papers/trailer.html)

Please plan on joining us and bringing friends from the larger community on Friday evening January 28th.

### Providence Monthly Meeting - Contacts

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Elizabeth Bonner Zimmerman

Newsletter of  
Providence Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of  
Friends

(401) 331-4218 or <http://providencefriends.org>

**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** - 12:30pm - Moses Brown Upper School  
**Wednesday** - 8:25am - Moses Brown Lower School  
**Wednesday** - 9:40am - Moses Brown Middle School  
**Wednesday** - 7pm - Young Adult Friends at  
116 Waterman St. ([yaf@providencefriends.org](mailto:yaf@providencefriends.org))  
**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

## February 6 walk with Eugenia Marks

Nourish your being with the company of Friends, refreshing natural beauty, and awareness of the connectedness of our world by joining a walk to extend worship. February 6, leave around 12:15 from Meeting House, and return around 2:30, weather permitting. Contact Eugenia Marks for details.

## Mmmm, cooookies

My Girl Scout troop, troop 507 of Rehoboth, is selling cookies once again. This helps us raise funds for troop activities and individual summer camp sessions. I can deliver cookies after Meeting most weeks until early March. If you would like more information, please talk to me after Meeting.

Elizabeth Oakley

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