

The Provident FRIEND

Nov 2011

Providence Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

Seasonal Happenings

Christmas Gathering – December 17th

This year's annual holiday event will be Saturday, December 17 at 5 pm in the Providence Meetinghouse. There will be a potluck dinner immediately following at 6 pm. We will experience this year's version of the Nativity Story, as interpreted by our First Day School, as well as join in the singing of Christmas carols.

Those willing to help set up for dinner, please arrive by 4. Centerpieces or greens for the tables welcome. Food for the potluck dinner at 6 can be kept warm or cooked in the oven during the program.

If you would like to participate in the Christmas Gathering – through sharing a story or a favorite poem, playing an instrument, singing solo or duet, or any variation of these – please let John Lord know.

Our once-a-year orchestra, Sounds of Silence, will be getting ready. Please take a minute and try to remember where you left your instrument and let John Lord know if you are available and if you need sheet music. Again, all are welcome.

Please mark your calendars for what is sure to be a wonderful evening.

Giving Tree

For the upcoming holiday season, First Day School has prepared a giving tree for children from a homeless shelter in Pawtucket. The shelter, New Hope, has 10 apartments for families who are homeless. Currently the families include a total of 12 children. We hope to develop an ongoing relationship with the shelter and provide them with other needed items in the spring when FDS plans to visit. The tree is made so that contributors choose a person or family to sponsor. Contact Sarah Baily with questions.



Saylesville – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

The very beautiful annual Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, a meeting for worship, will be held at the Saylesville Meetinghouse at 4:30 PM on Saturday, December 24. We encourage that you bring candles and candle holders, and finger-foods to share afterward. All are welcome.

Calendar

Nov 24 Thurs: Thanksgiving Day – consider bringing a dish to the “Occupy” at Burnside Park (Kennedy Plaza, Providence).

Nov 25 Fri: 10-2pm (p7) Annual Buy Nothing Day, various places.

Nov 27 Sun: (p4) Walk with Eugenia Marks, when ready, Providence Meeting House.

Nov 27 Sun: 3-6pm (p4) Sacred Harp Singing, Providence Meeting House.

Dec 2 Fri: 8pm (p8) Handel's Messiah, Sayles Hall, Brown University.

Dec 4 Sun: 4pm (p8) Lessons And Carols ceremony, Sayles Hall, Brown University.

Dec 11 Sun: Meeting for Business, following Meeting for Worship, preceded by singing. Providence Meeting House.

Dec 17 Sat: 10am-noon Bookswap, followed by knitting group, Saylesville Meeting House.

Dec 17 Sat: 5 pm (p1) Christmas Gathering and Potluck Dinner (6pm), Providence Meeting House

Dec 24 Sat: 4:30 pm (p1) Traditional Candlelight Worship at Saylesville Meeting House.

Dec 27-30: (p4) Young Friends Retreat, Littleton, MA.

Jan 5-8 2012: (p4) YAF Mid-Winter Retreat, New Bedford Meeting.

Providence Monthly Meeting for Business Minutes - 13 Eleventh Month 2011

1. We gathered at 12:18 pm with a period of worship, with eighteen present. The clerk read an Advice on Meeting for Worship from the *Faith and Practice* of New England Yearly Meeting (1985):

Consider with care how God reaches us in meeting for worship. To every Friend is given a share of responsibility for the meeting. Friends are advised, therefore, to be diligent in attendance at meetings and in inward preparation for them. Let us be concerned to enter reverently into communion with God and with one another, to yield ourselves to the influence of the divine presence. Then what is evil in us may be weakened and the good raised up. God calls each one to the service of the meeting; let us be obedient and faithful, whether by word, by song, or by silent waiting, and let us receive the messages of others in a tender spirit.

2. Announcements:

This year's Holiday Gathering will be 17th of 12th month at the Providence meetinghouse. If you would like to share a song - as singer or instrumentalist or both - or a poem, story, personal recollection or inspirational reading, please contact John Lord.

Saylesville will be hosting the traditional candlelight worship at 4:30 pm on 24th of 12th month to which all are warmly invited.

Appreciation was expressed for the work of many Friends in hosting the two FWCC visitors from Australia earlier this month.

We have also received a thank you note from Nancy Haines, co-clerk of the FGC Gathering Planning committee, for our hospitality to the committee during the weekend of 7-10 of 10th month. She encouraged all to consider attending and/or volunteering to help with the Gathering in July.

3. The clerk announced that he had received a letter of transfer of membership for Gayen Thompson from Milwaukee Friends Meeting. We receive her into membership in this meeting.

4. Clarification of Youth Coordinator budget: When we approved hiring a Youth Coordinator (9th mo. 2011), we left the details to the Religious Education Committee. It was reported that Dylan Block-Harley has been engaged in this position and has begun his work. The Religious Education Committee has asked Betsy Zimmerman and Mike McGuigan to serve as oversight for Dylan's work. They recommend on a trial basis paying him up to \$300 per month for his work, leaving \$200 per month for other expenses of the program. As previously approved, for this year only the funding is to come from the Education Support Fund, not from the operating budget.

Some concern was expressed about the level of compensation relative to other comparable positions. It was noted that the position involves time during the week, keeping in touch with the Young Friends as well as with Yearly Meeting staff, as well as time on First Day mornings.

We approve this proposal, and ask that one of the two oversight people sign off on the stipend and expenses as incurred, before those are submitted to the meeting treasurer for payment. We also ask that the Religious Education Committee review these arrangements in the middle of the year, before any budget request is submitted for the next year.

5. Reduction of Music Program Rate: Bill Monroe, clerk of the Finance Committee, reported that the children's music program that is paying for use of the meetinghouse has fewer classes running than anticipated due to lower demand, and has asked for a proportional reduction in the rent charged. The Finance Committee notes that this will reduce the income budgeted for use of the meetinghouse.

It was clarified that there is a Space Usage subcommittee that is designed to have representatives from Ministry and Counsel, Property, and Finance to oversee this type of use.

We approved in principal reducing the rent proportional to the time used, and asked the clerk and the Space Usage subcommittee to formulate an appropriate addendum to the contract with the music program.

6. Ministry and Counsel: For Ministry and Counsel, Bruce Carlsten announced that Ministry and Counsel had reviewed the meeting's policy regarding allowing members of this meeting to opt out of contributing to Friends United Meeting through the monthly meeting budget. Ministry and Counsel notes that the meeting has not yet reviewed our relationship to FUM as was intended a year ago, and Ministry and Counsel expects to propose ways for that review to happen. It was noted that the NEYM representatives reported at the last sessions of NEYM that there has been significant change in the position of the FUM Board, with a recognition that the Board would not currently have unity on the (cont. on page 3)

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

personnel policy although there is also not unity to alter it.

7. It was reported that the Finance Committee intends to send out a fall appeal letter by early December asking all households to help support the monthly meeting budget. Friends suggested that the letter include information about the existing FUM opt-out, while noting that the policy is under review.

8. Property: We note that a new privet hedge has been planted by the new sidewalk on the Morris Avenue side of the Providence meetinghouse to discourage foot traffic across the property.

9. Saylesville: Joanne Griffin reported the First Day School children went to Saylesville meetinghouse once during the past month, to install a new bat-house and to learn about the history of the meetinghouse and burial ground. There will be a knitting group at the meetinghouse on the afternoon of the third Saturday of each month, following the book swap.

10. Religious Education: Kathi Lyons reported that the committee has changed the program for the younger children to make more connections between what is going on downstairs and the adult meeting for worship. The committee is open to having other members of the meeting speak to or work with the class from time to time, within the curriculum they have developed.

11. We closed with silent worship at 1:20 pm, intending to meet again, God willing, the 11th of 12th month.

Mark Conley, Clerk

Elizabeth Cazden, Recording Clerk

Clerk's Corner – by Mark Conley

“Dearly beloved Friends, these things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by, but that all, with a measure of light which is pure and holy, may be guided: and so in the light walking and abiding, these things may be fulfilled in the Spirit, not in the letter; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.”

– Letter from the Meeting of Elders at Balby

At an Episcopal service I sang for one time, the preacher for that day spoke briefly about the lectionary, or list of appointed Bible readings that rotate in an annual or three-year cycle in many Christian and Jewish denominations. This man explained that though one purpose of the lectionary was to make certain that the congregation heard Old and New Testament readings in an order that made sense and that provided for special occasions in the church calendar, they were also designed to keep priests and preachers “honest.” He said what he meant by that was that each of us gravitates to particular passages in the Bible and, given the choice, any preacher would choose the same few portions over and over to provide inspiration for sermons, thus impoverishing the Biblical knowledge of the congregation and the spiritual life of the preacher.

In our tradition, we have a series of advices or queries that are to be considered each month. In earlier times, these readings rotated in a fashion similar to a lectionary, and Meetings were even expected to provide written responses to queries, a practice that might prove interesting for us to try at some point! This practice of rotation fell out of use, especially as our Yearly Meeting books of Faith and Practice began to differ from one another more and more. So it is now that advice or query selection is often left to the clerk, a particularly enjoyable task to research and to ponder.

I must admit, though, in the past year I have been examining the advices and queries I have chosen over time and have noticed that I, too, may have fallen into that Episcopal preacher's warned-of “trap.” So it is that this year I have decided to revert to the historical tradition of taking the advices and queries in their “old-fashioned” rotation, with two exceptions: if Ministry and Counsel requests an advice or query on a particular topic, and next month's delightful query, which I found months ago in a series of children's queries and immediately put into the template for next month's agenda.

I hope you will gain at least as much spiritually in this approach to advice and query selection as I have had in considering it.

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

Around the Meeting

Walk Nov. 27 - Walk for joy, for gratitude, for pleasure, for awareness of our place in the myriad of life. After meeting, 12 - 3 from meeting house. See Eugenia.

Sacred Harp Singing Nov. 27, Dec ?? – Every 4th Sunday (Providence Meetinghouse) from 3:00 to 6:00 PM, join us and make a joyful noise. December's sing would be Christmas Day, and

may be cancelled or rescheduled. See Bob Elliott for details.

Sing Before Meeting For Business (Dec. 11) - There will be singing before every Meeting

For Business. We gather at the piano at approximately 11:30 for 30-40 minutes. All are welcome, including instrumentalists.

Calendar Notes (Contact and other information about ongoing calendar events described in previous issues)

- Dec. 27-30 - Young Friends Retreats: **Quakerism & World Religions** Friendly Crossways, Littleton, MA
- January 5th -January 8th, 2012 YAF Mid-Winter Retreat "Led to Action" at New Bedford Monthly Meeting (MA)..

For both of the above, to register or to find out more contact Nia Thomas - Nia@neym.org (617) 945-0373

Restricted Donations by Dan Lederer

I'm writing again on behalf of Ministry and Counsel in regard to Meeting's contribution to Friends United Meeting (FUM). This is the season of the year when many of us are thinking about making charitable donations. As always, Providence Monthly Meeting welcomes donations, since they represent a major source of income for our various activities.

Under normal circumstances, donations to PMM go into the general fund and are distributed proportionally among our expenses. However, on October 14, 2010, Meeting for Business approved a minute allowing contributors, if they so wish, to specify that they would prefer that no part of their donation go to Friends United Meeting. Please note that this restriction applies only to FUM and not to any of the other non-profit organizations to which we contribute. The concerns that led to this decision are summarized in a minute from NEYM Sessions held in August.

If you choose to restrict your donation in this way, we are asking that you communicate this to our treasurer, Peter Swaszek, by means of a note accompanying your check (or write "Not to FUM" on your check). This same restriction can be applied retroactively to donations you made earlier during this fiscal year (June 1, 2011 through May 31, 2012), which also requires a written note to Peter. Peter will place that portion (0.66%) in a fund designated for charitable use in the future. The total amount budgeted for FUM (as a portion of our contribution to NEYM) will be reduced by that same amount.

As Peter is required to complete all payments before the end of our fiscal year, we are asking that Friends who wish to exercise this option make their donations before April 15, 2012. Conversely, anyone who feels moved to make a direct contribution to FUM is encouraged to do so. Their address is Friends United Meeting, 101 Quaker Hill Drive, Richmond, IN 47374. Contributions to our Meeting, restricted or not, can be made to Providence Friends Meeting and sent to Peter Swaszek at 57 Brayton Street, East Greenwich, RI 02818.

This issue continues to be a matter of deep concern for NEYM and therefore it behooves us to reconsider it periodically ourselves. A good place to start is with the relevant minute from NEYM Sessions held in August. This document is a little too lengthy to be included in our newsletter, but I will be happy to provide it to anyone interested. Some relevant information is also found in this month's Minutes.

The Wider Quaker World: Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC)

(second in a series by Betsy Cazden describing Quaker organizations)

In October, we hosted a meeting of the **Friends General Conference ("FGC")** Gathering Planning Committee, in preparation for the July 2012 Gathering to be held in RI. This Gathering is how many people learn of FGC, an annual conference of 1,200 to 1,800 Friends from every region of the U.S. and Canada. If you have been to New England Yearly Meeting sessions in the summer, FGC Gathering is like that only more so – and no business meetings. There are evening speakers, and workshops on topics ranging from climate change to meditation, bike riding to the Bible. There is a Junior Gathering for younger Friends. The Gathering includes meetings of Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Concerns; Friends of color; Jewish Friends; and a number of other special-interest groups.

FGC started in 1900, as four Quaker organizations decided it would be more convenient hold one big summer conference instead of each holding separate conferences. For many years (until the mid-1960s) the Gathering was held at Cape May, New Jersey. These organizations all came out of the "Hicksite" or liberal wing of Quakerism; Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (Hicksite) was by far the largest group. New England did not participate in FGC for its first half-century because there were no Hicksite meetings here; Friends Meeting at Cambridge joined FGC as an independent monthly meeting before 1945, and NEYM as a whole joined about 1959. FGC now includes fourteen yearly meetings plus about ten directly-affiliated monthly meetings. Its governing body or Central Committee is made up of representatives from those meetings. Representatives and other interested Friends also serve on FGC's many committees.

In addition to the Gathering, FGC's work includes helping meetings with advancement and outreach (including Quaker Quest), an online bookstore (www.QuakerBooks.org), a Ministry on Racism, Couple Enrichment workshops (for same-sex and heterosexual married and non-married couples), Traveling Ministries, and Religious Education. The new hymnals that Providence ordered last year come from FGC. Its office is in Philadelphia (adjacent to the *Friends Journal* office, but independent of it), and its online address is www.fgcquaker.org.

*All God's Critters Got
A Place in the Choir*



2012 FGC
Gathering of Friends



July 1 to 7 | University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI

A note of thanks from our October FGC guests -

Dear Friends,

The 2012 FGC Gathering Committee thanks you for your hospitality this past weekend. I realize this was a complicated weekend for your meeting because of the wedding and other events, but we felt welcomed and cared for.

Our committee, and Friends around the country and Canada, are excited about coming to Rhode Island. Our planning is going well, and we have an exciting program of speakers, workshops, field trips, and worship. We hope you will join us as attenders or as volunteers.

Nancy Haines (Gathering 2012 co-clerk)

Firstday School Hangs Bat Box at Saylesville Meeting House!



On October 23, First Day School visited Saylesville Meeting to hang a bat box built earlier in the month by the children. Saylesville requested the box for bats displaced from living in the eaves during renovations. The children helped Bob Elliott to mount it in its permanent home—a large tree. Dieter Gomes and others from Saylesville also organized a scavenger hunt to find historical treasures on the meeting grounds. The children worshiped with the Saylesville Meeting prior to all the activities. Thank you to Bob Elliott, Dieter Gomes and everyone else who helped.

15th Annual BUY NOTHING DAY WINTER COAT EXCHANGE - FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 25 10-2PM

State House lawn (across from Providence Place mall) rain location St Johns Cathedral 271 N Main St Providence
If you have a coat to give, please drop it off. If you need a coat, please pick one up (other locations below).

On November 25th 2011 – the busiest day in the American retail calendar and the unofficial start of the international Christmas-shopping season – join thousands in 65 countries as part of the global annual Buy Nothing Day. A 24-hour consumer detox, it is an escape from the marketing frantic consumer binge that peaks during the holiday season, also exposing the environmental and ethical consequences of over-consumption. In Providence, we hold a winter coat exchange on the lawn of the State House, in Pawtucket at the Blackstone Valley Visitors Center, and there are three other locations in Rhode Island. There are many partners for this event, and volunteers are needed to help.

Contact information:

Providence Greg Gerritt: 331-0529; gerritt@mindspring.com; Phil Edmonds: 461-3683; philwhistle@gmail.com

Pawtucket - Pawtucket Visitors Center, 175 Main St. Pawtucket - Arthur Pitt 724-8915; kingarthur02940@yahoo.com

Newport – St Paul's Church 12 West Marlborough St. 10 AM to Noon Maggie Bulmer maggiEBulmer@yahoo.com 849-3537.

Wakefield –St. Francis Church, 114 High Street, 10AM to noon Tom Abbott 364-0778

Barrington Bayside Family YMCA, 70 West St 10 AM to noon Connie Ganley mcganley@comcast.net

THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO COOKED & ATE BREAKFAST WITH US!

The Pancake Potluck on November 6 was a great success, delicious, multi-grain pancakes, maple syrup, and lots of fresh fruit! Members of the Hospitality Committee mixed the batter, and Young Friends, under the guidance of Kathi Lyons and Dylan Block Harley, cooked the pancakes and cleaned up after themselves! What a delightful way to begin a month of thanksgiving for the blessing of this community.

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: Debbie Block assistclerk@providencefriends.org
Recording Clerk: Betsy Cazden recordingclerk@providencefriends.org
Treasurer: Peter Swazek treasurer@providencefriends.org
Ministry & Counsel: Dan Lederer ministryandcounsel@providencefriends.org
Pastoral Care Committee: Judy Shaw pastoralcare@providencefriends.org
Finance: Bill Monroe finance@providencefriends.org
Peace & Social Concerns: Dede Carlsten peaceandsocial@providencefriends.org
Social & Hospitality: Zona Douthit socialandhospitality@providencefriends.org
Religious Education: Kathi Lyons religioused@providencefriends.org
Communications: Dan Lederer communications@providencefriends.org
Program Committee: Sarah Baily program@providencefriends.org
Marriage Clearness: Erin Hazlett marriage@providencefriends.org
Library: Sarah Morenon library@providencefriends.org
Archive: archivist@providencefriends.org
Property: Bob Elliott and Lee Jaspers property@providencefriends.org
Funeral & Burial: Matt Hackman funeralandburial@providencefriends.org
Newsletter: Steve Schwartz providentfriend@providencefriends.org
Email list moderator: Dan Lederer list@providencefriends.org
Website: Dave McNab webclerk@providencefriends.org
Moses Brown School Liaison: Willis Monroe 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
Adult Education: Dave McNab adult_ed@providencefriends.org



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

Tuesday - 7pm - Young Adult Friends at
116 Waterman St. (yaf@providencefriends.org)

Wednesday - 8:25am - Moses Brown Lower School

Wednesday - 9:40am - Moses Brown Middle School

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

Messiah and Lessons and Carols at Brown University

Free and open to all, the Brown University Chorus sings Handel's Messiah with an orchestra (Dec. 2), and performs in Brown's annual Lessons And Carols ceremony. "Lessons And Carols" mixes seasonally appropriate readings by staff and students interspersed with carols (sung by all, one by candlelight) and musical interludes performed by the chorus and others.

Messiah - Friday Dec. 2 at 8 PM .

Lessons And Carols - Sunday Dec.. 4 at 4 PM

Both events in Sayles Hall (Main Green, Brown U.)
(Questions - Steve Schwartz)

* * * * *

Many Thanks to Andrea Starr for doing a lot of work that went into the making of this month's newsletter, help very much appreciated.

The Provident FRIEND

Newsletter of
Providence Monthly Meeting of the
Religious Society of Friends
99 Morris Avenue
Providence, RI 02906