

The Provident FRIEND

April 2013

Providence Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

"Fierce Light: When Spirit Meets Action" Movie At The Meetinghouse Wednesday, May 15, 7 pm

Fueled by the belief that another world is possible, this documentary takes us on inspiring journey into what Martin Luther King called Love in Action, and Gandhi called Soul Force; filmmaker Velcrow Ripper is calling it Fierce Light. Illustrated by interviews with spiritual luminaries Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Thich Nhat Hanh; and activists including Alice Walker, and Julia Butterfly Hill - FIERCE LIGHT documents activism that has been spiritually inspired, and the impact and necessity of spiritual action in today's world. Sponsored by the Communications Committee: admission is free, and there will be coffee and cookies.

Spring Tea: a Gathering of Friends - Thursday, May 23, 2013

10th annual afternoon tea

Please join us in celebrating spring, after the school day 3:30–5:00 pm, downstairs in the Meetinghouse.

Come meet and renew acquaintances with F/friends in our mutual communities of Moses Brown School and Providence Monthly Meeting.

Questions? Contact Galen Hamann, ghamann@mosesbrown.org or Willis Monroe willismonroe@gmail.com.

Saylesville Craft Show – May 18, 9am to 4pm

The Craft Show will be held on the grounds of the Saylesville meetinghouse, and limited to 15 crafters. Saylesville Meeting will have our own table with crafts, drinks, lunch and dessert, all for sale. Donations of any of these items for our table will be gratefully accepted. All proceeds to benefit Providence Monthly Meeting and help meet our fundraising goal for the year. All inquiries may be directed to Joanne Griffin (jgriffin1@verizon.net) (401-726-1741).

Young Adult Friends: Spring Retreat and Survey Request

Friday June 14th at 7:00 PM until Sunday June 16th at noon

Monadnock Quaker Meeting in Jaffrey, NH

A weekend-long gathering of young adult Quaker-types where we explore a theme, hang out, eat, sleep, worship, and get to know each other.

Our theme is "Homeward Bound: Belonging Everywhere and Nowhere"
How can we build our spiritual homes when we don't know where will be living in the next five years? Do Quakers need to live near each other to be in community together? Is meeting membership still relevant to young adults? How can we help each other throughout periods of transition? These are among the questions we hope to explore together at this retreat. (cont p 6)

Calendar (also see p4)

May 15 Wed: 7pm (p1) Movie "Fierce Light", Providence Meeting House

May 18 Sat: 10am-12pm Saylesville Bookswap

May 18 Sun: 9am-4pm (p1) Craft show, Saylesville Meeting House

May 19 Sun: after meeting Walk with Eugenia Marks, Providence Meeting House

May 23 Thurs: 3:30-5pm (p1) Moses Brown Spring Tea, Providence Meeting House

May 24-26 (Fri-Sun): (p5) Friends Camp Work Weekend and 60th Reunion, Waterville ME.

May 26 Sun: 3-6pm Sacred Harp Sing at Providence Meeting House

June 9 Sun: 12:00 Meeting For Business, Saylesville Meeting House

June 14-16: (p 1) Young Adult Friends Retreat

June 15 Sat: (p 2) Gaffney/Brown wedding, Providence Meeting House

Providence Monthly Meeting for Business Minutes – 14 Fourth Month, 2013

1. We gathered at 12:00 at the Providence meetinghouse with fifteen Friends present. In the opening worship the clerk read the following queries, from *NEYM Faith and Practice* (revised, given preliminary approval 2012):

1. Do I practice spiritual disciplines during the week to prepare my heart, mind, and spirit for corporate worship?
2. Am I faithful and punctual in attendance at meeting for worship?
3. What are my particular spiritual gifts and do I exercise them in meeting for worship?
4. Has my understanding of worship and its possibilities deepened over time and nurtured my spiritual growth?

2. Announcements:

The AFSC-SENE Tenth Anniversary Celebration and Fundraiser will be at 6:00 PM on Friday April 19 at the Providence Meetinghouse.

Rhode Island/Smithfield Quarterly Meeting will take place at the Smithfield Meetinghouse on April 21. Worship is at 10:30, followed by lunch and program. All are welcome.

3. Marriage Clearness Proposal: Erin Hazlett, clerk of the Marriage Clearness committee, reported that the committee received a request for marriage from John Gaffney, a long-time member of this meeting, and Dale William ("Bill") Brown. They are currently living in Florida and John has some health issues that make it difficult to travel. They have been together as a couple for 33 years but have never had a public commitment ceremony. They plan to have a civil marriage in Massachusetts on June 14, 2013, and request a wedding under the care of Providence Meeting on June 15, 2013. The Marriage Clearness committee has talked with them extensively by telephone and recommends that the meeting take oversight of this marriage.

Consistent with this meeting's minute of 11th month 2006, we approve this request and appoint a special meeting for worship for this purpose on June 15, 2013, at a time convenient to the couple and the meeting calendar. We ask the marriage clearness committee to name an oversight committee, after consultation with the couple.

4. Nominating Committee: Ruth Bourns, clerk of the Nominating Committee, presented a proposed list of people to serve the meeting for the year beginning June 1, 2013. We approve the nominations as presented and thank the Nominating Committee for their careful work on this matter.

5. Proposed 2013-14 Budget: For the Finance Committee, Peter Swaszek presented a Proposed Budget for 2013-2014, together with colored graphs illustrating the meeting's spending, income, and fund status over the past eight years. He noted that the current year budget depended on a significant increase in contributions, which has not been fully realized. He projects that we will finish the year at the end of May with a deficit of just under \$7,000. He views this as consistent with normal year-to-year fluctuations.

This proposal would require increased contributions from members in an amount even greater than the current year. Some find this overly optimistic. The largest increases in the proposed budget are for nursery care and the high school program. Although some meetings rely on volunteers, we have found it useful to pay workers in order to have a reliable and robust program for both age groups. The Finance Committee would welcome additional suggestions from members on how to bring expenses and income better into balance with a more realistic figure for contributions. We ask the Finance Committee to consult with committees to see if their requests could be reduced. We look forward to seeing a revised budget (or several alternative budgets) at our next meeting.

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

6. Saylesville: For Saylesville Preparative Meeting, Joanne Griffin reported that they have changed the schedule of their preparative meeting for business in order to be able to get to Providence earlier for monthly meeting. She noted that they are currently completing the final phase of work on the first floor of the east wall, namely installing bookcases. The ceiling has also been replastered. The second floor still requires some work, and the interior storm windows need to be installed.

An anonymous donor has agreed to provide materials to construct a wheelchair ramp into the meetinghouse. The meeting still needs to research design options and whether this construction will require permission from the local historic preservation commission.

Joanne listed several upcoming events, including book swaps, a music program, a craft fair, and a program on Quaker activities during the War of 1812. More details will be made available in the meeting newsletter.

7. Treasurer's Report: Peter Swaszek presented an interim report on the meeting's finances through the end of March 2013. He requested permission to overspend the line for high school program up to a total of \$3,700, which will exceed what he is authorized to pay out above the budget. While we see the value of this program, questions have been raised about how the compensation was set and why it is exceeding the budget. The meeting approved authorizing the Treasurer to pay bills incurred, but asked that there be a forthright conversation between the Finance Committee and the Religious Education Committee about the increasing spending for this item, with a report back to this meeting.

8. No further business appearing, we closed in grateful silence at 2:00, intending to meet next on May 12, at the Saylesville meetinghouse.

Daniel Lederer, Clerk
Elizabeth Cazden, Recording Clerk

[Ed. note- Article from Joanne (item 6 above) will appear in a future issue.]

CFM returns to Jamestown *from Marcie Lindsay*

We had our last winter Meeting at the lovely space at the Norman Bird Sanctuary in Middletown on Sunday.

We will open the Meetinghouse for weekly regular Sunday worship starting on Sunday May 5th at 10:30 AM at the Old Meetinghouse on Weeden Lane in Jamestown. While the trees on the property definitely show the signs of our difficult season, the Meetinghouse seems to only require a good sweep-out before we resume our worship there. During the season, we will clean windows, and wash down the woodwork once again. David's peony in the small front garden actually has a bud on it, well ahead of any other plants that I've seen.

I would like to encourage any of you who have not done so to date to consider giving a contribution to Providence Friends Meeting at this turn of the year, kind and caring sponsors of our worship here, with Jamestown Historical Society, to keep the building suitable for our worship. They also are aware of the unique needs of small groups such as ours and foster pathways for us to share and explore the larger experience of the Religious Society of Friends. Our unique existence as an Indulged Meeting under the care of Providence allows us to have much freedom and flexibility we might otherwise lack. Checks may be made out to Providence Friends Meeting, and sent to there c/o "Treasurer" at the 99 Morris Ave., Providence, 02906.

Around the Meeting

New Directory: On April 8, Dan Lederer emailed an updated Meeting Directory, provided courtesy of Communications Committee (esp. Dan – thanks, Dan!).

It is hoped that you will find it useful for maintaining connections within our Meeting community. For anyone without access to an electronic copy: if you would like a paper copy,

and/or if you would like to make a correction or addition, please contact Steve Schwartz (401-273-7076).

AFSC/SENE is taking up the issue of payday loans and their abuses. Contact Bruce Carlsten. Similarly, Dede Carlsten can be contacted about ongoing efforts for better gun control laws.

Thoughts On Our Behavior and the Environment –from Eugenia Marks

Our life-styles are leading to a condition of nature that will be difficult for us to adjust to. Collectively, nationally we need to vastly reduce the emissions that are leading to warmer ambient temperatures, more intense storms, sea-level rise, and other adverse climatological changes, things about which I am pessimistic.

At this season of year when we are lifted by the emergence of green and multi-colored beauty, we celebrate escape from oppression and the hope of new life. Let us use that buoyancy in whatever ways our intelligence, skills, and spirit lead us, collectively and individually, to pledge action against further increases in "greenhouse gases."

Ask discernment from Cynthia Giles, support efforts like Paul's, walk instead of driving where you are able, think Albie's electric car, eschew the use of small motors in household applications, write to state reps to support public transportation, write to federal delegations on various bills, offer solutions, think of alternatives to burning fuels and of more efficient use of fuels. Be aware of the sun's benefits.

Knowing how I fail, I seek greater awareness, discernment, and effectiveness in action.

[Ed.Note: Cynthia Giles Assistant (EPA Administrator For Enforcement), Paul Klinkman (inventor) and Albie Dahlberg (electric vehicle advocate) are members of our meeting.]

Conversation with Robert Yaeger from Dan Lederer

I just had a nice conversation with Robert Yaeger, who is a long-time member of our Meeting and whom many of you will remember. He had his 90th birthday in February. He asked me to let Friends know about his new address, which is an assisted living facility. It's 320 Fifteenth Street, Court West, Room 171, Bradenton, FL 34205-5920. His telephone number is 941-747-4398, and he told me that he welcomes calls. He does not have email, but he says he has been receiving our newsletter regularly and has been happy to see how active our Meeting continues to be.

ED NOTE: Please note that this "April 2013" newsletter is being published in the second week of May, two or three weeks later than usual, which may affect the announcement of some events.

On The Horizon: Future Events – Events that recur and/or happen beyond the next month

[month in brackets indicates a recent issue that has an article about this event]

May 18, 9-4 – Saylesville Craft Show [Feb p4]

June 30 to July 6 - 2013 Friends General Conference Gathering, Greeley, CO [Jan p4]

Summer - Friend's Camp summer employment opportunities [Jan p4]

Quaker Service and Study in Bolivia July 8-28, 2013 [Mar p3]

Quaker pilgrimage to Ireland, July 22 to Aug. 5, 2013 [Mar p3]

To Friends of Providence Meeting

Rebecca Leuchak

I will always remember a message shared in worship one Sunday a long time ago that reflected with joy and thanks on an island retreat in Maine. An island removed from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. An island that the speaker returns to every year to find anew a deep and real sense of calm and repose. A place to go to be quiet and focused, inspired and refreshed, because there is on this island that special time and space that is removed from the everyday world. The message bearer remarked that those times and places where/when we are able to center down, and listen for the voice of the spirit within us, are so very precious. Their boundaries are fragile and need protection from incursions by the outside world that so insistently clamors for our attention.

That island in Maine seems to me a metaphor for our time together on Sunday mornings – a precious brief hour – a quiet room - to gather as a community in waiting worship in that oasis of time and place in which we center ourselves. Where, in the calm and focus, we may find inspiration and refreshment in the presence of the Light.

Now, as a place removed from the world, the island has one obvious geographical feature in its favor. It is surrounded by water. To get there is to leave the mainland and worldly cares behind. In our Meeting House we do not have the same clear physical boundary. On Sunday mornings, we need to create a special place and time together. Each one of us, old and young, is a crucial participant in this creation!

And so these queries come to mind: Do we value that hour of worship time together enough to protect it from the incursions of the everyday world? How do we in our own individual ways honor the gathering as we join in and participate? Do we, each one of us, make sacred the hour - the full hour - when we worship together – preparing for and entering the Meeting House with anticipation, settling ourselves beforehand so that we are present and ready to fully create our centered worship together?

And when running late, as we all strive not to...but inevitably may sometimes do, do we nevertheless join quietly and unobtrusively into the gathered worship knowing that the Light we bring is joyfully welcomed and fully contributing?

In the spring of the year, I offer these thoughts with love and tender concern for all in our community!



Friends Camp, Waterville ME: May 24-26 Work Weekend & Reunion - Rental - Teen Camp

Work Weekend May 24-25 (Fri/Sat): Help get camp ready for the 60th Reunion Gathering and for the summer camp sessions. Plan on coming to work, enjoy good food, and share Vespers together. This spring, we have some important work projects: taking out a few tree stumps, moving Pooh Cabin, raking, mowing, building two small wood sheds, and-always and of course- cleaning everything!

60th Anniversary Reunion May 26 (Sun): To celebrate this special anniversary we are hosting a gathering at Friends Camp on May 26, 2013! If you are a future, current, or former camper or staff member, or if you are a parent, volunteer, or donor, you and your family and friends are welcome to join us for a fun day of renewed friendships, games, songs, and good food!

Rent the West View Cottage on China Lake (photo above): Nice two bedroom cottage for \$895 per week + 7% tax, available the weeks of July 20, July 27, Aug. 3, Aug. 10 and Aug. 17.

New Teen Camp - Relationship, Sexuality and Spirituality - Aug. 18 to Aug. 21: As a creative alternative, the Teen Camp on Relationships, Sexuality and Spirituality will offer a unique, four-day program that will focus on the skills and ideas that will assist young people in negotiating sexual intimacy and relationships in positive and healthy manor. It will have the same daily schedule as our other youth camp sessions, with jobs, free time, worship, business meeting, rest hour, waterfront time, evening games and vespers, with the theme workshops in the morning and at night after vespers. The elective time will have optional affinity groups and the usual fun activities; arts & crafts, games, sports and free time. [ed. Note – an excellent syllabus was included that will not fit here, but is recommended reading for thoughtfulness and clarity – see below]

To inquire about any of this: Website = www.friendscamp.org Email = director@friendscamp.org Phone = 207-873-3499

CLERK'S CORNER by Dan Lederer

Proof of Heaven?

Eben Alexander III is an academic neurosurgeon who, in 2008 at age 54, developed bacterial meningitis and was in a coma for seven days. He is convinced that during this near death experience he found himself free of memory or bodily identity and yet somehow was able to maintain consciousness such that he became, by his own description, "a point of awareness". In this state he entered a divine realm where he felt himself close to and in fact surrounded by God.

Given the severity of his illness, his subsequent emergence from the coma and gradual recovery of complete neurological function was something of a medical miracle and a good story unto itself. But with an even more astounding tale to tell, he has taken on the mission of sharing his spiritual experience and detailing the effect it has had on him, accomplishing this via speaking engagements and a book entitled "Proof of Heaven: A Neurosurgeon's Journey into the Afterlife". Not surprisingly, there has been plenty of skeptical commentary about his book, but given the possibility that what he says is valid, we earth-bound seekers owe it to ourselves to examine his interpretations and conclusions, even if just out of curiosity. Here are some of them.

- *On our connectedness to God and to each other:* No physical particle in the universe is separate from any other, and God is present in every particle of the universe. God is present in us at all times, and we are connected to each other through this divine link with God. Every one of us is deeply known and cared for by our Creator.
- *On our spiritual nature:* We are cosmic beings, not limited to our physical bodies. We can get closer to this genuine spiritual self through prayer and meditation and by expressing love and compassion.
- *On the role of consciousness:* Consciousness is the basis of the physical world, "the deep mystery at the center of existence." Our own consciousness is a direct extension of the Divine rather than just the result of brain activity.
- *On life here on earth:* Without recovering the memory of our larger connectedness, and of the unconditional love of our Creator, we will always feel lost here on earth. Evil exists on earth but this is not evidence of the absence of God's love; rather, it's an inevitable result of our having free will.
- *On the afterlife:* The human experience extends beyond the grave. The death of the body and brain are not the end of human consciousness.

Is it possible to "prove" the existence of heaven, or the existence of God? Dr. Alexander makes a compelling case, but there's still room for doubt. His book has received lots of attention in the media, with predictably mixed reviews. For me it was an absorbing and provocative read, so I recommend it to you on that basis. I think you'll find that much of what he says is consistent with truths we come to in our Quaker practice, but my question is, "Does it speak to you?" I invite you to share your reaction with our Friendly community.

Young Adult Friends (cont from p1)

Survey: A group of Young Adult Friends in New England have been trying to better understand people ages 18-35 in or from New England with a connection to Quakerism. We'd like to learn more about who makes up this group and what their experiences with Quakers have been like, so we made a survey that asks a lot of really helpful questions and we really hope you will take it. We're really hoping for a wide variety of responses.

To inquire about the retreat or survey, please email or call YAF Coordinator Nia Thomas <Nia@neym.org> or (617) 945-0373.

A Graduation To Be Proud Of - from Nina Berry et al

On April 5th, Friends from the Meeting had the honor of joining with Moses Brown School parents and staff to attend a very special graduation ceremony. The fifth grade class is the first group of children to graduate from the Nonviolence Training program, taught by The Institute for the Study & Practice of Nonviolence.

The course was initially designed to teach the principles and practices of nonviolent conflict resolution to police officers, inmates and community members. Teny Gross, the Executive Director of the Institute, gave an introduction to the nonviolence program and Sal Monteiro, the organization's nonviolence coordinator, explained the training work done with the students. The students met three times each week during the semester with Mr. Monteiro to learn conflict resolution techniques adapted from Martin Luther King. Jr. Students demonstrated their learning in several role-playing presentations as part of the ceremony; they included how to work as a community, and how to act in response to limited resources. Each student received a certificate from Executive Director Gross, all signed by Providence Mayor Angel Tavares.

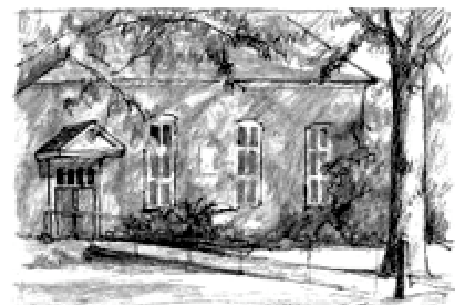
The training is considered to be important at this Quaker school, where students at all levels are taught to respect and honor the unique light inside each individual and to find meaningful, non-violent resolutions to conflict. Moses Brown teachers believe that these values, and programs such as the Non-Violent Training, are critical to developing 21st century skills in students, including creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, communication, collaboration, citizenship and social responsibility.

The Institute was founded in 2001 with a mission to "foster a community that addresses potentially violent situations with nonviolent solutions". To learn more, visit nonviolenceinstitute.org.

Providence Monthly Meeting - Contacts

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Elizabeth Bonner Zimmerman

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

Meeting for Worship each Sunday

Providence: 10:00 am Saylesville: 10:30 am
Conanicut (Jamestown) winter: 10 am alt. Sundays (see p4)

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

Wednesday - 10-11:30am 2nd & 4th Wed's - Saylesville

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.

Help RI Say No To Citizens United

(from a Sierra Club note)

Rhode Island is the first state in the country to consider amending the state constitution in response to the controversial US Supreme Court "Citizen's United" ruling. The Sierra Club note calls it a way "to say that corporations aren't people and money isn't speech." A petition to support amending the RI Constitution has been started, reading in part:

"We, the People of Rhode Island, reject the U.S. Supreme Court's Citizens United ruling and other related cases, and move to amend our state Constitution to firmly establish that money is not speech, and that human beings, not corporations, are persons entitled to constitutional rights."

More information and a place to sign it is at:

http://movetoamend.nationbuilder.com/amend_ri

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