

The Provident FRIEND

May 2013

Providence Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

Mark Conley in Africa

Mark Conley is the previous clerk at the Providence Monthly Meeting, and Director of Choral Activities at the University of Rhode Island. He is spending three months serving as the Guest Choir Director for the Manda Wilderness Choral Festival, and is responsible for touring the participating villages and delivering training sessions to each village choir prior to the festival. He gathered music to bring, and learned some ChiNyanja (aka ChiChewa), the local language of the Manda Wilderness, where he is currently tenting his way from village to village in Malawi and Mozambique (the location of the Manda Wilderness).

Mark writes:

Friend: If you are interested in following what I am doing while working with the choirs in Mozambique, I have started a blog. I will try to update it when I am at the base and when the sun is shining for our solar powered internet! You will find the blog at:

Intrepidconductor.weebly.com

AFSC Potluck and Program with Palestinian Activist

June 9, 2013 - from Martha Yager

Apir Kopty, a Palestinian feminist and political activist touring the U.S., will be in Providence June 9th at the Providence Friends Meeting House. We will have a potluck at 6pm and the program at 7pm. She will speak about the Palestinian Resistance committees, challenges of resistance to occupation in Palestine, and why the international Boycott/Divestment/Sanctions [BDS] movement is important to local organizing.

Summer Palestine Experience for High School Students

June 22nd - July 12th

Moses Brown School and Ramallah Friends School were both founded by New England Friends. One of the Ramallah faculty co-directs a summer camp run by Ramallah Friends for Palestinian Diaspora and Quaker teens ages 14-17, open to those entering 9th through 12th grade this fall. One of our own MB students participated in the program last summer and will be returning as a counselor this summer.

The multi-faceted program includes community service in refugee camps, rebuilding Palestinian homes, olive tree planting, arts/music/dance (focused on Palestinian culture such as debkeh dancing), speaker series, film series, and field trips around the country. Please spread the word about this unique opportunity to travel, serve and learn in Palestine. To apply or learn more, please visit:

www.summerinpalestine.org

Calendar (also see p4)

May 29 Wed: 6pm (p4)
Meeting to organize garage sale, pizza served, Phebe Howland's house.

June 8 Saturday: 5-8pm (p4)
Penny Jackim Retrospective, Tiverton.

June 9 Sun: 12:00 (p3)
Meeting For Business, Saylesville Meeting House

June 9 Sun: 6/7 pm (p1)
Potluck (6pm) and program (7pm) concerning Palestinian activism, Providence Meeting House.

June 14-16: (p 4) Young Adult Friends Retreat

June 15 Sat: 10am-12pm
Saylesville Bookswap

June 15 Sat: (p 2)
Gaffney/Brown wedding, Providence Meeting House
Time to be announced.

June 22: (p1) Trip to Palestine.

June 23 Sun: 3-6pm
Sacred Harp Sing at Providence Meeting House

Providence Monthly Meeting for Business Minutes – 12 Fifth Month, 2013

1. We gathered at the Saylesville meetinghouse at 12:05 pm, with seventeen present. In the opening worship the clerk read the following queries from NEYM's *Faith and Practice* (draft given preliminary approval 2012):

- Am I open to spiritual transformation in others and in myself?
- Do I open myself to listen to those whose spiritual experience is expressed in terms different from the ones I understand and am comfortable with?
- What have I discovered in meeting for worship, and does it inform my life?

2. Announcements:

The meeting's Spring Tea for the Moses Brown community will be on the 23rd of this month from 3:30 to 5:00 at the Providence meetinghouse.

3. Finance Committee: For the committee, Bill Monroe brought a recommendation concerning disposition of the amounts that contributors to our meeting have asked be withheld from New England Yearly Meeting out of concern over the personnel policy of Friends United Meeting. (See minute 5, 5th mo. 2012.) During the past year these withheld amounts total \$51.88. The Finance Committee recommends that we repeat our previous practice of adding this amount to our budgeted donation to the Africa Great Lakes Initiative. We approved this donation, rounded up to \$52.00. The clerk noted that the Yearly Meeting will be considering its policy for donations to FUM at its upcoming meeting in 8th month.

4. For the Finance Committee, Bill Monroe also brought a proposed budget for the 2013-14 fiscal year. The Finance Committee has reduced both spending and projected contributions somewhat from the proposal brought in 4th month. We approve the budget as presented.

5. The Finance Committee requested an additional authorization for overspending in the Religious Education account for the current fiscal year, beyond what was approved last month. We approve an additional \$100, making the new total \$3,800.

6. Library Committee: We approve adding Adele Bourne to the Library Committee for the coming year.

7. Ministry and Counsel: For Ministry and Counsel, David Bourns reported that our attender Jordan Taylor had asked for permission to tape-record a meeting for worship as part of a project at the Rhode Island School of Design. At an open threshing session held on the 7th of 4th month, Ministry and Counsel heard a variety of concerns and opinions on this topic. Some Friends indicated that if a meeting for worship were to be recorded, they would refrain from attending. Ministry and Counsel offered Jordan several alternatives that would not involve recording a regularly scheduled meeting for worship; instead, he has withdrawn his request, with gratitude for the process that the meeting used to consider it.

8. David Bourns presented and read aloud a proposed Memorial Minute for our member John Kellam (1916-2012), prepared by Ministry and Counsel. His former wife, Ann Clement, then read a personal statement about John. After extended discussion, we are not clear to approve the Memorial Minute as presented, and return it to Ministry and Counsel for further consideration.

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

9. For Ministry and Counsel, David Bourns also presented a new handbook section Ministry and Counsel has prepared, reminding us of Rhode Island law requiring all persons to report suspected child abuse. The language was drawn from the state Department of Education's directives to public schools. This would be added to the existing language designed to minimize the risk of abuse at our meetinghouses or in meeting activities.

Questions were raised about how the reporting obligation interacts with the meeting's pastoral care obligations, as a religious body, to persons within our community who wish to confess to and receive treatment for abusive behavior. We also do not want to discourage victims from speaking out, from fear that their families would be immediately disrupted and punished. On the other hand, delaying reporting while meeting committees deliberate does not satisfy our legal obligations and our moral obligations to the children among us.

We accept this draft, but hope that additional work can be done to clarify some of the issues raised. We appreciate Ministry and Counsel taking this matter seriously, and look forward to further opportunities to address the issues as a community.

10. Treasurer Peter Swaszek presented an interim financial report on the current fiscal year. He estimates that the current year deficit will be closer to \$3,000 than to the \$7,000 he projected a month ago, due to more contributions and income from use of the meetinghouses.

11. In response to questions raised last month, Kathi Lyons presented a written report on the Religious Education committee's activities during the past year, including a financial accounting for the high school program. They anticipate continuing the program in essentially the same format for the coming year. Kathi observed that the program has created a richer sense of community among the teenagers, who now communicate with each other between meetings. It was noted that better communication with parents, as well as formal permission slips for field trips, would be helpful. Friends were encouraged to approach Kathi informally with any further questions.

12. For the Marriage Clearness Committee, Erin Hazlett reported on plans for the wedding of John Gaffney and Bill Brown on June 15, at a time to be set (probably early afternoon). They propose an oversight committee of Erin Hazlett, Elizabeth Cazden, Pierre and Sarah Morenon, and Debbie Block and Bill Harley. We approve.

13. Saylesville: We admire the newly plastered ceilings and wall in this meeting room, the wainscoting, and the bookcases that now line the east wall. Acrylic interior storm windows will be added for the winter. We also note the unobtrusive but useful ramp allowing wheeled access to the entry door.

14 We closed at 2:40 pm, intending to meet next at 12:00 pm on the 9th of 6th month at the Saylesville meetinghouse, God permitting.

Daniel Lederer, Clerk

Elizabeth Cazden, Recording Clerk

Housing Sought

Quiet, considerate, non-smoking woman looking for room in house or apt.share. Short or long term. Please contact Kimi Cubbage (401) 288-7651 travel4peace@yahoo.com.

Around the Meeting

Garage Sale: May 29 eve meeting: Our Garage Sale will take place on the first Saturday in October (10/5). We are seeking help with organizing, and all have been

encouraged to come to Phebe's on Wednesday night May 29 at 6:00 pm to plan. Pizza will be supplied! If able to help, but miss the vent, please contact Phoebe.

Camp Street Food Boxes: We remind all that the boxes for Camp Street on the bench in the Meeting House foyer need contributions on a regular basis to supplement food

stamps, especially at the end of the money month. This end-of-month time when money to buy food runs out is when food pantries are critical. Thanks all for your concerns.

Penny Jackim Retrospective Art Exhibit Opening – Saturday June 8

Providence Monthly Meeting member Penny Jackim has produced watercolors, calligraphy, and thought-provoking notecards. The show spans many years of creative endeavor, including works in a variety of styles and media.

Van Wesseem Gallery, 63 Muse Way, Tiverton, RI 02878

Opening reception: Saturday, June 8, 2013; 5-8 pm

Exhibition Dates: June 8 to July 6, 2013

Regular Hours: Wednesdays 12-5 pm, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays 4-8 pm,

or by appointment (401-624-4646)

Directions: <http://sandywoodsfarm.org/directions.html>

Note From Abroad *from Debbie Block, May 13*

Bill and I went to meeting for worship in Invercargill, New Zealand, which took place in the living room of our hostess. There were eight of us in a circle. We send you all love from the other side of the world.

Protocol For Announcements At Meeting For Worship (Reminder)

Meeting for Business decided in 2009 to ask that all announcements following Meeting for Worship be written and brought to the Facing Bench before the start of the meeting. Our expectation has been that announcements will be brief and will include the name of whoever is available to provide more information. If you would like an announcement read but can't be present at Meeting for Worship, you can send it to Dan Lederer, and he will see that it gets to the person responsible for Facing Bench that week.

Also, please remember that our email list and our newsletter are additional ways to publicize upcoming 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]

June 14 -16 - Young Adult Friends Spring Retreat [April p1]

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

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

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

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

First Day School Botany

On May 5, the First Day School children planted peas in connection with a lesson on John and William Bartram. John and William, father and son botanists and Quakers, did some of the first important botanical work in what was then the English colonies. Through that work, they distinguished themselves as two of the most prominent men in the country, establishing relationships with many noted historical figures of the 18th century, including Ben Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and George Washington. These photos, a nice reminder of spring, were supplied by Eugenia Marks.



Reflections from a tragic week in Boston – *from Richard Ristow, April 19, 2013, Boston*

Neither my housemates nor I were really celebrating Patriots Day and the Marathon. We were on various business miles from the bombings, and heard the Marathon news from news media, and each other. We live near the southern edge of Boston, about five miles from Copley Square, the Marathon finish line.

That also puts us several miles from the Watertown-Cambridge area and surroundings, which is on the north side of the city. We're taking the official advice and holing up for the day (not that there's much else to do), but without any real physical worries.

What this is all going to mean for the tone of Boston, I can't guess. To start with, four years of living here are far from making one a real Bostonian; one of my friends spoke of spending Saturday afternoons, as a child, with her father in the Boston Public Library, right there in Copley Square.

Patriots Day is one of the most cheerful of Boston holidays, when the whole area does feel like a small town. Why? I think that, partly, Boston is still proud of its Revolution heritage; partly, taking runners and volunteers and spectators together, the Marathon involves a huge number of people; partly, it's the beginning-of-spring holiday, and I needn't say anything about how welcome spring is in New England. It seems that the response to the Marathon bombs was extraordinarily good, from the emotional mutual support to the competence of the medical care. But how the latest deaths and scares, days later, affect us, we'll just have to see.

With warm greetings to Providence and Saylesville Friends,

Richard

CLERK'S CORNER by Dan Lederer

Tolerance

"Discord is the great ill of mankind; and tolerance is the only remedy for it." Voltaire

"Tolerance becomes a crime when applied to evil." Thomas Mann

As Quakers, our belief that there is that of God in everyone, along with the realization that each person is unique, leads us to consider tolerance of differences to be a virtue. However, not uncommonly we find that some differences are just plain unacceptable. In other words, our tolerance has its limits, but is that necessarily a bad thing?

On January 3 the Providence Journal published an interesting article by John Tessitore entitled "Cultural norms and limits on tolerance". In it, the author notes the importance of tolerance of differences as necessary for peaceful co-existence, whether between persons or between nations. He then follows with a discussion of multiculturalism, which he defines as tolerance of the cultural norms of others. However, he points out that there are some cultural norms that shouldn't be tolerated, examples being the burning of "witches" in Nigeria, female genital mutilation in Chad, and, in other parts of the world, honor killings, the sale of women and children, and the exclusion of girls from education. This raises a question that defies any easy resolution: Does the fact that we find another people's cultural norms to be abhorrent give us the right to impose our cultural norms on them?

This article got me wondering about our own cultural norms here at home. Just as we deplore our country's history of slavery and mistreatment of Native Americans, future generations may judge us harshly for certain features of our current culture such as the glorification of violence, or the proliferation of guns, or the pursuit of continuous war.

While it seems there is little we can do to alter practices in other nations, we can certainly address what's going on in our own country, perhaps finding inspiration in John Woolman's gentle but persistent efforts to encourage slaveholders to free their slaves, and in his wise prediction that the institution of slavery "in future consequence will be grievous to posterity." His concerns extended to Native Americans and to others whom he considered oppressed. Looking to John Woolman's example, and striving to follow Quaker principles, can we find ways to communicate to those in power, in a civil yet firm way, what should be acceptable and what should not?

Albert Einstein said, "The world is in greater peril from those who tolerate or encourage evil than from those who actually commit it." In some contexts tolerance can be considered a virtue, but we need to be discriminating about what we allow ourselves to tolerate.

Gaffney/Brown Wedding Saturday June 15, 2013 Providence Meeting House

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. After a civil marriage in Massachusetts on June 14, 2013, they will have a wedding under the care of Providence Meeting on June 15, 2013. The time is still to be set, and will probably be in the early afternoon.

Creative Idea To Help Students From U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren

Senator Warren (Massachusetts) has noticed that the interest rate on federal subsidized Stafford student loans is set to increase from 3.4% to 6.8% on July 1st. Without Congressional action, millions of student loan payments will jump.

Against the argument that it's too expensive to keep government loans at low interest rates, she notes "the federal government makes low interest loans all the time—just not to everyone. Big banks can borrow money through the Federal Reserve discount window at a rate of about 0.75%." The 6.8 student rate will be about 9 times that.

She has introduced the "Bank on Students Loan Fairness Act", which would direct the Fed to make money available to the Education Department for one year at the discount window rate (described above) to fund federally subsidized Stafford student loans. She has started this petition on MoveOn's petition site to support it:

"Wall Street banks—the ones that wrecked our economy—should not be getting a better interest rate on their government loans than young people trying to go to college."

If you agree and would like to sign the petition, click the "Give students..." box at the left side of their site:
MoveOn.org

The direct link for this is:

<http://petitions.moveon.org/sign/give-students-the-same?source=homepage>

Providence Monthly Meeting - Contacts

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

Presiding Clerk: Dan Lederer clerk@providencelfriends.org
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 To schedule the Meetinghouse: Bruce Shaw scheduling@providencelfriends.org
 AFSC SENE: Martha Yager (508) 399-6699 or myager@afsc.org or
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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
Conanicut (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

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.

Poster from MB Nonviolence Training Student Group



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99 Morris Avenue
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