

# The Provident FRIEND

January 2014

Providence Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

## Feb 8 – Moses Brown Hosts NEYM Committee Day

Moses Brown is hosting New England Yearly Meeting's bi-annual Committee Day on Saturday February 8th. This is a great opportunity for members of Moses Brown and this meeting to interact with Quakers from all over New England. We're looking for people willing to offer hospitality for Friends traveling from further away on Friday and Saturday night. There may be an opportunity for PMM Friends to share in worship with them around lunchtime. Contact Willis Monroe (401-868-5071) for more information.

*A Message as given by Joanne Griffin at the recent Saylesville Christmas Eve Candlelight Service.*

I have been looking at the candles, and the one in the lantern caught my eye.

At first I thought I saw three candles, and then realized that it was really one candle.

The other two were both reflections in the surrounding panes of glass.

I love glass. I have always been enchanted by glass.

I thought of things I hope and do, and thought, "Oh so many times I fall short."



And as I watched, I realized my wish....my desire....was to be like that glass and reflect the light. I saw how the glass reflects the light, that the light comes on its own, and the glass simply lets the light reflect.

And I thought of The Light as like the candle, and I am like the glass. I need only seek and face The Light, and then simply reflect it.

The Light will take care of the rest.

*Pictures from the Dec 15 celebration at the Providence meetinghouse are found throughout this newsletter – thanks to Nina Berry for her skills and care.*

## **A Gathering of NEYM Friends Concerned About Climate Change March 7-9, Woolman Hill, Deerfield, MA**

You are invited to join with Friends who are actively following the concerns that climate change raises, to hold those concerns in worship, and talk about what rises in our hearts. We will gather in small groups, share stories, resources and our own leadings through engaging conversation, and together see how we may be led to make our concern more visible.

For information, contact Will Taber at [wt33@verizon.net](mailto:wt33@verizon.net)

Calendar (also see p4 Events)

[Jan newsletter sent late, thus no Jan events listed here – see previous letter for reference]

**Feb 8 Sat:** (p1) NEYM Committee Day, Moses Brown School

**Feb 9 Sun:** 12:00 (p2) Meeting For Business, Providence Meeting House

**Feb 11 Tues:** 10 pm Provident Friend Newsletter deadline

**Feb 15 Sat:** 10am-12pm Saylesville Bookswap

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

**March 7-9 Fri-Sun:** (p1) Climate Change event, Woolman Hill

**March 12 Wed:** 7pm (p1) Movie Night at Providence Meeting House (to be announced)

**Mar 15 Sat:** 10am-12pm Saylesville Bookswap

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

**Providence Monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business  
Minutes – 12th First Month, 2014**

1. We opened at 12:00 at Providence meetinghouse, with twenty-seven present. The clerk again reminded Friends that the entire meeting is held in a spirit of worship. In the opening silence, he then read the following Advice from NEYM *Faith & Practice* (2012 revision):

Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts. Seek to live in affection as true Friends in your meetings, in your families, in all your dealing with others, and in your relationship with outward society.

2. Announcements

- The next Meeting Movie Night will be at 7:00 pm on the 15<sup>th</sup> of this month at the Providence meetinghouse. The film to be shown is “Facing Evil”, featuring Maya Angelou, Barbara Jordan, and others.
- Saylesville will be hosting another “Music at the Meetinghouse” from 12 to 3 next First Day. All are invited.
- NEYM Committee Day will be hosted by Moses Brown School and Providence Meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> of 2<sup>nd</sup> month. Home hospitality may be needed for some Friends, as well as help with refreshments and other hosting tasks. Willis Monroe is coordinating.
- RI Interfaith Power & Light, which this meeting has participated in, will hold its Annual Meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> of this month, 6:00 to 8:00 pm, at the Westminster Unitarian Church in East Greenwich. Eugenia Marks has offered rides from the meetinghouse.
- A new choral group, “Grace Notes Singers,” has formed, to provide music for end-of-life care. It will be rehearsing monthly at the Providence meetinghouse, and welcomes new members; see Debbie Block for details.

3. For Ministry and Counsel, Betsy Zimmerman presented a proposed Minute of Apology concerning physical and sexual abuse that took place many years ago in a meeting family. This minute follows our meetings for business over the past year and the worship-sharing held in 11<sup>th</sup> month. After considerable discussion, the meeting was not able to unite with the minute either as presented or with minor editing. We thank Ministry and Counsel for their careful work on this matter, and return the minute to Ministry and Counsel for further seasoning.

4. Ministry and Counsel also brought a revised Memorial Minute for John Kellam (see 5<sup>th</sup> mo. 2013, #8). Friends were not in complete unity with the minute as presented, and felt it would be useful to keep it with the Minute of Apology. We therefore return both texts to Ministry and Counsel for further seasoning.

5. For the Finance Committee, Bill Monroe reported that the committee had sponsored a discussion of socially responsible investing after meeting during 12<sup>th</sup> month, and intends to continue this conversation. He further reported that the meeting had received a bequest of more than \$60,000 from the estate of John Kellam. Finance Committee intends to follow its usual procedure to list this type of bequest as “other income,” and to put it into the General Fund reserves, where its income would come into the meeting budget each year.

6. Treasurer: In the absence of the Treasurer, Bill Monroe reported that meeting income is about as expected, with the usual surge of donations at the end of the calendar year.

7. No further business appearing, we adjourned about 1:25 pm, intending to meet again on the 9<sup>th</sup> of 2<sup>nd</sup> month at the Providence meetinghouse.

Daniel Lederer, clerk

Elizabeth Cazden, recording clerk

## Adult Ed – After Thoughts groups and Quakerism 101 *from Zona Douthit*

The After Thoughts groups, facilitated by Carol Smith and Zona Douthit, continue to meet every First Day except when there is a Potluck lunch. All are welcome to join in the often lively discussions that begin with a discussion of the messages received in Meeting for Worship and often lead to wonderful conversations about new topics. Drop in for a few minutes or for the whole conversation.

The Adult Education Committee has received queries about having a Quakerism 101 class. This is an opportunity for new members and attenders to learn some of the basics of Quakerism and for longtime Friends to enrich their understanding of Quaker history, and faith and practice. The last time PMM offered Quakerism 101, at least 20 people participated. We need one or two people who would like to lead this class. While no fixed curriculum is required, materials are available to use or adapt by the leaders. (see for instance, <http://blog.quakerism101.org>) Please consider volunteering to lead this vital opportunity for everyone in the community to strengthen our understanding of Quakerism. Contact Zona Douthit at [zdouthit@cox.net](mailto:zdouthit@cox.net) or 401-728-2090. Thank you.



## Conanicut Meeting (Jamestown) Winter Update *from Marcie Lindsay*

The Conanicut Friends Meeting (Indulged) will hold Meeting for Worship at the Norman Bird Sanctuary, 583 Third Beach Rd., Middletown at Mabel's Studio at 10:30 AM on the following dates:

February 9, 23

March 9, 23

April 6, 20

We will offer refreshments after the break of Meeting on the last Sunday, which is Easter this year.

We will resume weekly worship at the old Meetinghouse on Weeden Lane in Jamestown on the following Sunday, April 27, also at 10:30 am.

We welcome visitors, but because of the aged manner of the 1797 Meetinghouse, there are no bathrooms available, and we do not provide First Day School. If there are any questions, feel free to call 423-9122 or 683-9660.

## Around the Meeting

### Trip To Ireland

Margaret Fraser, a Friend with long experience with Quakers around the world, will be leading a trip to Ireland from April 22 to May 5, 2014. She describes it as a chance to "Spend time in worship and conversation with Irish Quakers. Appreciate the rich history of Friends in Ireland, enter into the spiritual life of this diverse group as a guest at their yearly meeting sessions and visit some of their meetings." The group will also learn about Quaker efforts at reconciliation during the Catholic-Protestant violence. The co-leader is Anne Bennett, director of Quaker House in Belfast, Northern Ireland. More information at

<http://goodnewsassoc.org/associates/margaret-fraser/delegation-to-ireland/>



**On The Horizon: Future Events** – Events that recur and/or happen beyond the next month  
[2014 unless noted, month in brackets indicates a recent issue that has an article about this event]

February 28-March 2: Mindful Mortality, with Rob Spencer - Woolman Hill [Oct p 7]

March 13-16: Writing Out of the Presence, with Ellen Michaud - Woolman Hill [Oct p 7]

March 28-30: Noticing God's Nudges In Our Lives: The Sacred Art of Individual Spiritual Discernment, weekend workshop led by Nancy Bieber - Woolman Hill [Oct p 7]

April 4-6: Couple Enrichment, Mary Kay Glazer & Mark Moss, Carol & Peter Letson - Woolman Hill [Oct p 7]

June 19-22: Summer Solstice Retreat, facilitators TBA - Woolman Hill [Oct p 7]



**Peace and Social Concerns Hosts Selective Service Information Session**

In the room at the top of Meeting House, on January 5, a group of young Friends considered their options as they face registering for the Selective Service . They were joined by 6 members of PFM and Ruthe Ben-Artzi, Ph.D., a professor of Political Science at Providence College who has experience with resistance to militarism as an Israeli. We listened to Bruce Downing's observations as a reviewer of deferment and draft status, including Conscientious Objector. Martha Yager brought pamphlets on questioning enlistment appeals and the 60% of the federal budget that goes to military from American Friends Service Committee. Others shared history of draft and witness to applying for CO status so that young Friends had a range of ideas as they consider their own decisions.

This was the first in a planned series of events and efforts to educate people who may have an interest in his topic. Someone at Moses Brown has contacted us with interest in this, and we are looking to reach out to Hope High School also. If you have an interest in helping with this endeavor, or know of someone who may be served by learning about this topic, please contact someone on the Peace and Social Concerns committee.



**DIRECTORY ADDITIONS**

Robert and Carla Dowben      14 Loring Avenue      Providence, RI 02906      401-421-1366  
David Ellis      116 Cliff Avenue      Portsmouth, RI 02871      401-683-3848

The next edition of the Meeting Directory will be made in the spring, and these will be included. If you have updates that you would like people informed of, please let Dan Lederer know, and we will put them in the newsletter.

## CLERK'S CORNER by Dan Lederer

**Gratitude**

Albert Schweitzer called gratitude the secret to life, and Eckhart Tolle has said, "Acknowledging the good that you already have in your life is the foundation for all abundance." This line of thinking is the basis for psychologist Robert Emmons' book entitled Thanks! How Practicing Gratitude Can Make You Happier. The title may bring to mind the multitude of self-help books that occupy countless bookstore shelves, and I suppose Emmons' work could be considered in that category because it does point the way to a happier life, but it's also an exploration of gratitude as an emotion, an attitude, a personal virtue, and a practice. And beyond all these it's an argument for gratitude as a way of life.

So what then is gratitude? It's the recognition that the source of goodness in one's life lies at least partially outside the self, the acknowledgement that we are the recipients of help from others, and the realization that the gifts we receive are the result of the kindness of others rather than our own merit. Gratitude is "a stance, a posture, a way of positioning oneself so that one is attuned to the gifts that come one's way."

Based on his observations and research, Emmons recounts the many benefits that gratitude brings. It's one of the few things that can change people's lives for the better by driving out such emotions as envy, resentment, and anger, making room for more happiness. It facilitates a relationship with the Divine, from which all good arises, because grateful people may develop the sense that they are not separate from others or from God. And it motivates a person to do good works. As Emmons points out, "In many world ethical systems, gratitude is the compelling force behind acts of compassion, because life is seen as a vast network of interdependence, interpenetration, and mutuality that constitutes being."

So if being grateful brings about so many good things, why don't we all just do it? Well, there are obstacles to leading a life of gratitude, a couple of common ones being forgetfulness and lack of mindful attention, often combined with our frantic pace as we pursue the business of life. A sense of entitlement, spending a lot of time with ungrateful people, and an inability to acknowledge that one is not self-sufficient can all get in the way of being grateful. Some folks even see gratitude as humiliating because it makes them feel inferior. And we mustn't forget consumerism, which fuels ingratitude by trying to influence us to want what we don't have.

Recognizing the obstacles to a gratitude-filled life is a good first step, but we don't want to stop there. Emmons asserts that it's possible to create "a life of pervasive thankfulness" by means of a chosen attitude, although he admits it's not easy, especially when things are not going well. He recommends keeping a "gratitude journal" while bearing in mind Eleanor Roosevelt's words, "Yesterday is history, tomorrow a mystery...today is a gift." Emmons' highly worthwhile book contains other useful suggestions for deepening the gratitude in your life, so I hope you'll consider reading it. I'll close by sharing this quote from the Buddha: "Let us rise up and be thankful, for if we didn't learn a lot today, at least we learned a little, and if we didn't learn a little, at least we didn't get sick, and if we got sick, at least we didn't die; so, let us all be thankful."



## Preparing the State of the Society Report *from Ministry and Counsel*

On Sunday February 2 Friends gathered around tables during potluck to discuss the state of our Meeting. Someone at each table recorded the thoughts expressed, which will serve as the basis for our annual State of the Society report. This is a start to the process, and input is requested from anyone who feels moved to do so (contact Ministry and Counsel). We considered the following queries:

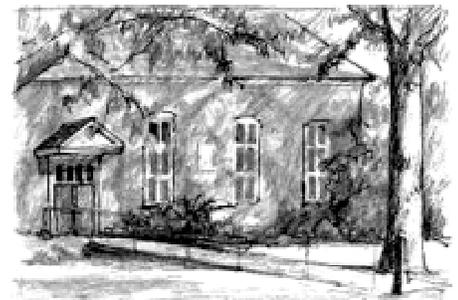
### State of the Society Queries

1. *How would you describe the Quality of our worship? In what ways were your spiritual needs being met or not met in our worship?*
2. *How has our meeting for worship reached out to the wider community? What have we been doing to invite new attenders and encourage continued participation?*
3. *How are we attending to the needs of our own community?*
4. *How have we deepened our connection to the testimonies that guide our faith? Peace and Social Witness? Environmental stewardship? Simplicity? Equality? Integrity? Stewardship of resources?*
5. *In what ways does our meeting recognize, develop, and nurture the gifts of our members and attenders of all ages?*
6. *How did meeting for business play a part in your Meeting life in 2013?*

## Providence Monthly Meeting - Contacts

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

Presiding Clerk: Dan Lederer [clerk@providencefriends.org](mailto:clerk@providencefriends.org)  
 Assistant Presiding Clerk: Mark Conley [assistclerk@providencefriends.org](mailto:assistclerk@providencefriends.org)  
 Recording Clerk: Betsy Cazden [recordingclerk@providencefriends.org](mailto:recordingclerk@providencefriends.org)  
 Treasurer: Peter Swaszek [treasurer@providencefriends.org](mailto:treasurer@providencefriends.org)  
 Ministry & Counsel: David Bourns [ministryandcounsel@providencefriends.org](mailto:ministryandcounsel@providencefriends.org)  
 Pastoral Care Committee: Judy Shaw [pastoralcare@providencefriends.org](mailto:pastoralcare@providencefriends.org)  
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 Website: [webclerk@providencefriends.org](http://webclerk@providencefriends.org)  
 Moses Brown School Liaison: Willis Monroe [liaison@providencefriends.org](mailto:liaison@providencefriends.org)  
 Young Adult Friends: (To Be Named) [yaf@providencefriends.org](mailto:yaf@providencefriends.org)  
 To schedule the Meetinghouse: Bruce Shaw [scheduling@providencefriends.org](mailto:scheduling@providencefriends.org)  
 AFSC SENE: Martha Yager (508) 399-6699 or [myager@afsc.org](mailto:myager@afsc.org) or  
[www.afsc.org/sene](http://www.afsc.org/sene)  
 Adult Religious Education: Zona Douthit [adulsted@providencefriends.org](mailto:adulsted@providencefriends.org)



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: 10:30 am alt. Sundays

**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](mailto:yaf@providencefriends.org))

**Wednesday** - 8:25am - Moses Brown Lower School

**Wednesday** - 9:40am - Moses Brown Middle School

**Wednesday** - 10-11:30am 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> 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 12:00pm  
Saylesville: Second Sunday of each month at 9:30am

**AFSC SENE Support Committee** - Second Tuesday, 6:30-  
9:00 pm Volunteers needed and welcome.

## Upcoming Events

*Feb 8 – NEYM Committee Day, Moses  
Brown School (p1)*

*March 7-9 – Climate Change event, Woolman  
Hill (p1)*

*Mar 12 – Movie Night (to be announced)*

[Ed. note – We apologize for the tardiness of this  
publication]

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