

The Provident FRIEND

Dec 2014

Providence Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

Holiday / Christmas Gathering

Thanks to Nina Berry, Dieter Pohl and Betsy Zimmerman for all the photos within.



Jan 9-11 Workshop – “Conflict In Monthly Meetings”

To be held at Woolman Hill and facilitated by the NY Yearly Meeting Committee On Conflict Resolution, the program will address a vital need in our Quaker communities and will likely provide useful learning for any situation, Quaker or not. Ask Dan Lederer or Margaret Cooley (413-774-3431) for more info. Online registration is at: www.woolmanhill.org/upcomingprograms/

Jan 3-5 Mayoral Inauguration Interfaith & Community Events

Inaugural activities for Mayor Jorge Elorza will include an Interfaith Prayer Breakfast, 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. on January 5 at the Providence Career and Technical Academy, 91 Fricker Street. Please RSVP by December 31 to Andrew Moore at andrew@transitionpvd.com or (401) 400-2294.

There is also a Community Food Drive (Saturday, Jan. 3, 10am-2pm), and an arts/education nonprofits resource fair. Volunteers are sought (cont p 5)

Timely Young Adult Friend Events

Jan 1-4 – Woolman Hill – Midwinter YAF retreat: “How do we make peace?” is the topic, there is probably still room (contact Nia). A great way for young adults to make connections with Friends from all over the region, parents are welcome to bring their young children, and you can attend just part of the time (tell them).

Jan 24 – Moses Brown School - Consultation on Young Adult Ministries:

From 9:30-3:30, this event seeks reflections from Friends of all ages about the needs of young adults, with a goal to develop NEYM’s suggested priorities in serving young adults. [Please register by January 16.](#)

Mar 14-17 – Washington DC - FCNL Spring Lobby Weekend: The focus issue is Climate Change, and the event involves workshops, training, and actual lobbying of your Senators and Representatives, a chance to really affect the world. [Funds are available if you apply by January 15.](#)

(contact info and more p 5)

Next Meeting Movie Night – 7pm Wednesday January 14

Encounter Point is a documentary film that follows a former Israeli settler, a Palestinian ex-prisoner, a bereaved Israeli mother and a wounded Palestinian bereaved brother who risk their lives and public standing to promote a nonviolent end to the conflict, ordinary people who feel driven (cont p 6)

(Published December 29)

Calendar (also see p 4 Events)

Dec 27-30 Sat-Tues: (p 4)
Young Friends Retreat,
Harvard MA

Jan 1-4: (p 1) Young Adult
Friends retreat, Woolman Hill.

Jan 3-5: (p1) Mayoral
Inauguration events,
Providence RI

Jan 9-11: (p 1) Meetings
workshop, Woolman Hill.

Jan 11 Sun: (p 5) Open House,
Moses Brown School

Jan 14 Wed: 7pm (p 1)
Meeting Movie Night,
Providence Meeting House.

Jan 17 Sat: 10am-12pm
Saylesville Bookswap

Jan 24 Sat: (p 1) YAF
Consultation, Moses Brown
School

Jan 25 Sun: 3-6pm Sacred
Harp Sing at Providence
Meeting House

Providence Monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business Minutes – 14 Twelfth Month, 2014

1. We gathered at the Providence meetinghouse at 12:00 pm with ten present. In the absence of the clerk, Assistant Clerk Abigail Mansfield Marcaccio served as clerk for the day. In the opening silence she read the following Queries from NEYM *Faith and Practice* (Interim printing 2012):

Are you ready to respond to any concern God may lay upon you, large or small? What does love require of you?

2. Announcement: Our annual candlelight Christmas Eve service will begin at 4:30 pm on the 24th of this month at the Saylesville meetinghouse.

3. Correspondence received: The NEYM Young Adult Friends Midwinter Retreat with the theme “How do we make peace?” will take place from 7 PM Thursday January 1 through noon Sunday January 4, 2015, at Woolman Hill Retreat Center, Deerfield, MA.

4. Treasurer Peter Swaszek presented an interim report for the second quarter of FY 2015. Individual contributions are running noticeably ahead of the same period last year. Donations for use of the Providence meetinghouse are also higher than budgeted. Expenses are about as budgeted. He noted that the transfer of meeting assets from Pax World Fund to the Friends Fiduciary Green Fund, as approved by the Finance Committee, has been completed (see 9th mo. 2014, minute 4). We accept this report.

5. The clerk invited those present to offer up concerns for consideration at a later meeting. It was reported that the minute approved last month relating to fossil fuels was considered this past week by the NEYM Board of Managers of the Pooled Funds, along with similar expressions from several other meetings and committees, and the Board is working on an amendment to its investment policy consistent with our minute.

It was also reported that a meeting group this morning decided to rehang the “Torture is a Moral Issue” banner on the Providence meetinghouse, as a response to this week’s release of the U.S. Senate report on the use of torture by the C.I.A. The banner, which was previously approved by this meeting in 4th mo. 2008, had fallen down in a windstorm, and will be rehung as soon as repairs are made. We approve this action.

No further business appearing, we closed with a period of worship, intending to meet next, God willing, the 11th of 1st mo. 2015.

Abigail Mansfield Marcaccio, Asst. Clerk

Elizabeth Cazden, Recording Clerk



Ad Hoc Expansion Committee Formed

An Ad Hoc Meetinghouse Expansion Committee was formed to develop a proposal for use of around \$162,000 in a fund that is designated for an addition to the Providence Meetinghouse. At the first meeting on Dec. 21, there was representation from Finance, Property, Program, Religious Education, and Ministry and Counsel.

The committee sent an email later that day, describing possibilities involving a storeroom, a workbench, a bathroom with shower, and an extra classroom for First Day School. An addition with all of that seems feasible using just the money currently in the fund, but additional sources of funding can be explored if necessary.

There will be a worship sharing so that everyone has an opportunity to be heard, but in the meantime the committee is interested in hearing any new ideas you may have. If you have any thoughts, or a different idea about how the money could best serve our Meeting community, please let Dan know so he can bring it to the committee's next meeting. Replies to the email so far have included:

- a designated library space or a second designated meeting space
- a brighter, more inviting spot for the Library.
- large classroom with a small playground, possibly with the goal of a pre-school
- full bathroom with a simple adjacent guest room for one or two overnight guests.
- combination convertible bowling alley/indoor mini-golf



"Saylesville Bookswap" from Rosanne Cedroni

As many people already know, we have a bookswap at the Saylesville Meetinghouse once a month. This has been going on for years and it really has been a great source of community building, as well as just plain joy :-)

Most people know that we have an overabundance of books, a secret that is hard to keep in our small Meetinghouse. However, it may not be as evident how far our books have traveled. In the past the books have gone to many places, including nursing homes, the VA hospital and Habitat for Humanity. My favorite stories, though, are more personal. For example, one person told me they were taking VHS tapes to a housebound neighbor that greatly enjoyed watching movies. What a wonderful excuse for a friendly visit. I often joke that we are generating an ocean of good karma.

Lately we have been expanding our selection of children's books, which has been a challenge for us. Storage is another of our challenges (.....hmmm, it would be nice to have more boxes that fit neatly under the benches....). And I would love to get a better handle on social media sites; when I get on facebook, I sometimes break out in hives...

But we really do have lots of good news to share. I'm very excited to report that the ethnic diversity of our patrons is growing. It's wonderful to feel that we are reaching a wider audience, one that reflects our state, because we want to be as inclusive as possible. And we continue to get very positive feedback. It is wonderful just to have the Meetinghouse open. People constantly tell us that they have driven by the place a thousand times and were curious to know more about it; some of them live within walking distance!

We may be a small group but I think we are winning a place in our neighbor's hearts. I often feel that the exchange of books and fellowship is a visible sign that we are abundantly blessed.

Around the Meeting

East Bay Donations

(from Eugenia Marks) - Gratitude to all who have donated to the East Bay families in need. Your generosity will bring delight to several children and good

feelings to their parents. Your gift cards will help with essentials of food and utility payments. Your wrapping with card info visible has made coordination easy. Thank you for these

expressions of care.

New Member - Meeting for Business accepted Steve Thomas's transfer of membership from Friends Meeting of Louisville to Providence.

Please add to your directory: Steve and Molly Thomas, 179 Medway Street, Providence, RI 02906; cell 516-383-4437 sbthomas02@gmail.com mollythomas25@gmail.com



Helpers Found

On December 7, Bruce Carlsten asked for help with an AFSC mailing after meeting. Ben, Amy and Liam all volunteered.

Connanicut in Snow

This came from Marcie Lindsay with an update.



Pendle Hill Pamphlet Series, Children's Books, and Question - from the library committee

The Pendle Hill pamphlet series has been published by the Pendle Hill center in Pennsylvania since the 1930s. Each pamphlet is a 36 - page meditation on a single topic of interest to Friends (sample titles: *Children and Solitude*, *Let Your Lives Speak*, *Reality of the Spiritual World*), and there is no need to read them in order of publication. Providence Meeting has a fairly complete collection of the (so far) 400+ pamphlets, and they have recently been re-shelved to be more accessible and fitted with borrowing cards. The most recent issues are displayed in the rack at the end of the shelf on the left-hand side of the library, and the remainder are immediately below.

The library committee continues to try to make the library more useful to the meeting community. This week, we relocated the children's books to a low shelf near the door where we hope they will be easier to find. (Some of the Bibles and commentaries have been moved to shelves opposite the door to make room.)

We added a section for our small video collection (some VHS and some DVD). These are now ready for borrowing.

We have a question: do you use the card catalogue? There are boxes of title and author catalogue cards, but we have not been aware of anyone actually using them. We wonder if it is worth the effort to create and file these cards for each new book. Would the meeting approve laying down the card catalogue? We would like help in our discernment. Please send suggestions to committee clerk Rebecca Smith at AcelineBarrett@aol.com.

Future Events – Events that recur and/or happen beyond the next month

[2015 unless noted, month in brackets indicates a recent issue that has an article about this event]

Jan. 1-4 YAF (Young Adult Friends) retreat at Woolman Hill in Deerfield, MA [Sept p5]

Jan 11 Sunday - 1:30 - 3:30 pm – Moses Brown School Open House [Nov p5]

Feb. 13-15 Young Friends retreat - The Rejuvenation Retreat, Wellesley Meeting, MA [Sept p5]

Mar. 14-17 FCNL Spring Lobby Weekend – Climate Change – Washington DC [Dec p1]

Mar. 20-22 Young Friends retreat - Relationships, Sexuality & Gender, Hartford Meeting, CT [Sept p5]

May 8-10 Young Friends retreat - Transitions: Change and Purpose, Westport Meeting, MA [Sept p5]

From Communications Committee: Meeting's Email List

Meeting's email list provides information about all Meeting activities as well as various items of interest to Friends. It also delivers our monthly newsletter, The Provident Friend, and, when necessary, communicates last-minute cancellations or postponements. So if you're an engaged participant in Meeting activities, this is an important way to keep informed about what's going on in the life of the Meeting.

You are a 'member of the email list' if we have your email address on it. All 'members of the list' receive all emails sent, and any list member may send emails that will be received by everyone else in the group. To send a message, send it to the email address providence_quakers@yahoogroups.com. The email list functions as Meeting's electronic bulletin board, and we ask that certain guidelines be followed. The list's purpose is to inform Friends about upcoming events and other items of interest. It is not an appropriate place for back-and-forth dialogue or for expressing concerns about individuals or committees. As stated in the Meeting Handbook, "No editing is done, so it's left to the individual's judgment to determine that a message will be of interest to Friends."

Links to websites are acceptable in the text of a message, but the list's standard settings do not allow attachments, which we would prefer to avoid unless we can be sure of their origin, an example being something we compose ourselves such as the Meeting newsletter. If an attachment is essential to your message, and you are confident about its origin, you can send your message with attachment to the list moderator at list@providencelfriends.org; the moderator can then send your message out with the attachment.

If larger print is easier to read, you can easily change the screen contents and type size. To make it larger, hold the "Ctrl" key and press the "+" sign. To make it smaller, do the same but with the "-" sign. To reset to the original (default) setting, use "Ctrl" with the number "0". For other problems or questions, send an email to list@providencelfriends.org or leave a note in the Communications Committee mailbox.

Timely Young Adult Friend Events (cont from p1)

Consultation on Young Adult Ministries - Monthly meetings have struggled with questions of how best to support and engage young adults, to provide structure for young families and how to keep NEYM alive and engaging for youth in the first few challenging years out of high school. This gathering will be most fruitful with a wide variety of Friends—new and old, urban and rural, young and less young. Includes coffee with pastry at 9:30am and lunch. Childcare is available if requested when registering.

FCNL Spring Lobby Weekend - A BIG group of YAFs from New England recently traveled to Washington, DC to go to Friends Committee on National Legislation's Quaker Public Policy Institute and to lobby our congresspeople as part of a group of 430 Friends. It was a really rich experience - a great way to learn about a specific issue, meet other Friends carrying similar concerns, and engage with our government.

Nia Thomas, NEYM YF and YAF Coordinator: Nia@neym.org
(617) 945-0373 - (978) 886-7179 - Twitter: @youngNEYM

Mayoral Events (cont from p1)

for the food drive and other events related to the Inauguration. To sign up, use the form at this address:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1okU9Mxs8edMQjaLlSUv31q_sgiR5li0z3VawSRAezl4/viewform?c=0&w=1

Non-perishable food items can be contributed on Saturday January 3 at these places:

10am-2pm: Compare Foods (Broad Street), Eastside Marketplace, Whole Foods (U. Heights), Mt. Pleasant Library
12pm-4pm: Knight Memorial Library, Rochambeau Library

And on Sunday Jan. 4, 12-3 pm at the Providence Children's Museum (100 South Street), there is a resource fair to learn about and try activities with Providence-based arts/education nonprofit organizations, including Providence Children's Museum, Providence Children's Film Festival, Providence Community Library, the Partnership for Providence Parks, and the Manton Avenue Project. Admission is free 9am-6pm to Providence residents with ID.

CLERK'S CORNER by Dan Lederer

What Do Quakers Believe?

If you've ever been asked what it is that Quakers believe, you know that it's not an easy question to answer. Arthur Larrabee, former General Secretary of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, took a stab at it and came up with the following:

"Quakers believe that there is a living, dynamic spiritual presence at work in the world which is both within us and outside of us...that there is that of God in everyone...that each person is capable of the direct and unmediated experience of God...that our understanding and experience of God is nurtured and enlarged in community...that our inward experience of God transforms us and leads us into outward expressions of faithful living, witness and action...that the revelation of God's Truth is continuing and ongoing...that the Bible is an important spiritual resource and the life and teaching of Jesus are relevant for us today...that modeling God's presence in our lives is more important than espousing beliefs."

He expresses lots of ideas here, each worthy of careful consideration. But perhaps what we should explore first is the idea of belief itself. Some would consider religious belief and religious faith to be synonymous, but just for the sake of discussion I would choose to see them as related but different. To me, a belief is something for which one has evidence based on personal experience, acknowledging that such beliefs may be false because our perceptions at times can be mistaken. Faith on the other hand is made up of the assumptions one lives by in the absence of evidence, accepting that we need faith in order to move ahead in life. For example, before undergoing an elective operation I would check out the surgeon's credentials, experience, and reputation, or, in other words, evidence that he or she is competent. But even knowing this, when the time comes to have the operation I will still need to summon faith that the surgeon will be having a good day. The two are related in that my belief leads me to and informs my faith.

Arthur Larrabee points out that Quaker practice offers each of us the opportunity to experience the continuing revelation of spiritual truth. The spiritual search he refers to doesn't necessarily yield immediate results. It requires diligence and patience, and only after one practices for a period of time can belief and faith, as defined above, develop. What first attracted me to Friends was the Quaker premise that we each have the ability to discover truths and thereby develop our own beliefs, without relying on someone else to dictate them to us.

Rather than a recitation of what he thinks we should believe, I expect that the beliefs Arthur Larrabee lists are those he has verified by his own experience as a Quaker. A newcomer to Friends is not required to accept these beliefs, or any others, at face value. Rather, he or she may, over time, find them to be true, or not. That's what, to me, makes the whole process so interesting.



Meeting Movie Night (cont from p1)

to work for an end to bloodshed and occupation in favor of peace. Their journeys lead them to the unlikely places to confront hatred within their communities. The film explores what drives them and thousands of other like-minded civilians to overcome anger and grief to work for grassroots solutions. It is a film about the everyday leaders in our midst. The event is free, coffee and snacks are provided, and conversation/discussion is encouraged after the film.

First Day School

Upon completion and submission, a report will be made soon about the results of the First Day School Heifer International project – this is an advance thank you to all who helped.



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

Assistant Presiding Clerk: Abigail Mansfield Marcaccio
assistclerk@providencefriends.org

Recording Clerk: Betsy Cazden recordingclerk@providencefriends.org

Treasurer: Peter Swaszek treasurer@providencefriends.org

Ministry & Counsel: David Bourns ministryandcounsel@providencefriends.org

Pastoral Care Committee: Judy Shaw pastoralcare@providencefriends.org

Finance: Mike Hirtle finance@providencefriends.org

Peace & Social Concerns: Mark Conley peaceandsocial@providencefriends.org

Social & Hospitality: Dede Carlsten and Kim Wiegand
socialandhospitality@providencefriends.org

Religious Education: Sarah Baily and Betsy Zimmerman
religioused@providencefriends.org

Communications: Dan Lederer communications@providencefriends.org

Program Committee: Nina Berry program@providencefriends.org

Marriage Clearness: Erin Hazlett marriage@providencefriends.org

Library: Rebecca Smith library@providencefriends.org

Archive: archivist@providencefriends.org

Property: Bob Elliott 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: webclerk@providencefriends.org

Moses Brown School Liaison: Willis Monroe liaison@providencefriends.org

Young Adult Friends: (To Be Named) 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



Elizabeth Bonner Zimmerman

Newsletter of
Providence Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of
Friends
(401) 331-4218 or <http://providencefriends.org>

Happy Holidays

Meeting for Worship each Sunday

Providence: 10:00 am Saylesville: 10:30 am
Conanicut (Jamestown) 10:30 am (Mabel's Studio)
Jan 11, 25 Feb 8, 22 March 8, 22 April 5, 19

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 12:00pm
Saylesville: Second Sunday of each month at 9:30am

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



The Provident FRIEND

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