Providence Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

FCNL Urgent Call For Action – Serious Deadlines in May and June Iran is seen as the biggest foreign policy issue since the Cold War Senator Reed is a key player – he needs to have our support

On Sunday and Monday April 26 and 27, Julia Neumann came from Friends Committee for National Legislation to ask for our help in supporting the negotiations with Iran regarding nuclear disarmament, which we need to do by meeting with Senator Reed during the May recess. This brief article was written with her help.

Why do I care about Iran negotiations?

As the United States continues to engage in war in the Middle East, a peaceful path forward is impossible while we continue to have weakened diplomatic contact with Iran. For the past 18 months, the United States and Iran (cont page 5)

Special Events May 1, 2, 3, 17, and 23

Moses Brown Annual Spring Tea – <u>May 1, 3:30-5</u>, Providence Monthly Meeting Friends are invited to join Moses Brown Friends for our annual Spring Tea, a time for our communities to gather for fellowship and to say thank you and goodbye to any Quaker students or teachers who may be leaving MB. Ross House room 112 is adjacent to the Sinclair Room, which is open 3-4 for the All School Art Show opening. Refer questions to Galen Hamann or Willis Monroe.

Saylesville Grounds Cleanup – On <u>May 2 at 9am</u> (or whenever you can get there) we will be repairing winter damage, planting shrubs and placing a gravestone. We will lunch together when done, hopefully around noon. See more on page 3.

Family Worship – 9:30-10:15 <u>May 3</u> will be our first family worship, with the aim to be more engaging to young children. See how you might participate on page 3.

May Breakfast – The <u>May 3</u> potluck will be a May Day breakfast/brunch. People bring crepes with toppings; a variety of pancakes being cooked as we serve; muffins; and scrambled eggs and sausage or bacon, etc. You can let your imagination run wild (continued page 3)

Gun Lobbying - <u>May 12</u> is Lobby Day at our State House on three bills concerning guns: (a) domestic violence; (b) guns in schools; (c) limiting the number of bullets in a magazine. Please contact Dede Carlsten soon to find out how you can help this effort.

Nurturing the Nurturers – <u>May 17</u> is the 2nd annual Peace and Social Justice event honoring anyone who either "gives their whole life explicitly to a concrete life of service," or lives "a dedicated life lived in simple surroundings or 'ordinary' occupations." We are asked to invite these people for no other purpose than to acknowledge them (cont p 4)

Friendly 8's – <u>May 23</u> is the next of these lovely and meaningful 6-9pm gatherings. To join, host, facilitate or inquire, please contact Ariana Steele: <u>fancyoats@gmail.com</u> 401-461-2168

Movie Night – Wed. May 13 - Double Feature

Communications Committee will be presenting the next Meeting Movie Night at 7:00 PM on Wednesday evening, May 13. The films to be shown are "Trevor", a 17 minute drama about a 13 year old boy's struggles with sexual identity, and "As We Forgive", a powerful 53 minute documentary about forgiveness and reconciliation in Rwanda. Coffee and cookies as always.

April 2015

(Published April 30)

Calendar (also see p 4 Events)

May 1 Fri: (p. 1) 3:30-5:00 pm Moses Brown Spring Tea, Ross House, Room 112

May 2 Sat: (p. 1) 9:00 am 'til ? Saylesville Grounds Cleanup

May 3 Sun: (p. 3) 9:30-10:15 Family Worship

May 3 Sun: (p. 1) 11:30 am May Breakfast Potluck

May 8-10 Fri-Sun: (p.4) Young Friends retreat, Westport MA

May 10 Sun: 12:00 Meeting For Business, SAYLESVILLE Meeting House (corrected).

May 13 Wed: (p1) 7pm Movie Night, Providence Meeting House.

May 16 Sat: 10am-12pm Saylesville Bookswap

May 17 Sun: (p. 1) 11:30 am Nurturing the Nurturers Potluck, Providence Meeting House

May 23 Sat: (p1) 6-9pm Friendly Eights.

May 24 Sun: 3-6pm Sacred Harp Sing at Providence Meeting House

May 29-31 Fri-Sun: (p.4) Pendle Hill event. 1. We gathered at 12:00 pm at the Providence meetinghouse, with nineteen present. In the opening worship, the clerk read the following query from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's *Faith and Practice*:

Does worship deepen my relationship with God, increase my faithfulness, and refresh and renew my daily life, both inwardly and in my relationship with others?

2. Announcements

Friends are urged to help Communications Committee with its Meeting Network project. See the most recent issue of *The Provident Friend* for details.

3. Correspondence

The annual sessions of New England Yearly Meeting will take place August 1 - 6, 2015, at Castleton State College in Castleton, VT, with the theme of "Living Into Covenant Community."

4. Nominations: For the Nominating Committee, Ruth Bourns distributed a proposed list of officers and committees for the year beginning 1st of 6th month 2015. She reviewed the process the Nominating Committee uses to develop these lists, and clarified that the new appointments are for three-year terms ending June 1, with some committee memberships limited to two three-year terms. This list was previously distributed electronically for information and posted in the fellowship room. The list was approved with several amendments, and will be appended to these minutes. Committees were reminded that the meeting held in 6th month should be the new committee, convened by the outgoing clerk, and each should select its new clerk.

5. State of the Society Report: For Ministry and Counsel, David Bourns read a revised draft of the State of Society Report for 2014, which was previously circulated electronically. Several Friends expressed gratitude to Ministry and Counsel for their reworking of the previous draft. One Friend requested more time to study the proposed revised draft. In deference to that Friend, the matter was laid over until next month's meeting, understanding that Ministry and Counsel need not do any additional revisions unless they receive specific objections or comments before the first of next month.

6. Quarterly Meeting Name Change: David Bourns reported that the Quarterly Meeting at its last session suggested changing its name from "Rhode Island-Smithfield Quarter" to "Rhode Island-Worcester Quarter," to more accurately reflect the current quarterly meeting configuration, which consists of three Rhode Island meetings (Providence, Westerly, and Smithfield) plus Worcester-Pleasant Street meeting in Massachusetts. The change would take effect only if approved by all meetings in the quarter. Ministry and Counsel supports this proposal. Providence Meeting concurs with this suggestion.

7. Letter to Islamic School of Rhode Island: Following up on minute 4, 3d mo. 2015, Ministry and Counsel presented a proposed letter to the Islamic School of Rhode Island. After some textual editing, the letter was approved, with thanks to Ministry and Counsel for its tone. David reported that Ministry and Counsel is also working with the Peace and Social Concerns Committee to consider a possible longer-term relationship with the Islamic School community.

8. Budget for 2015-2016: For the Finance Committee, Peter Swaszek presented a revised proposed budget for the fiscal year beginning 1st of 6th month 2015. He projects that we will break even on the current year. It was noted that this proposed budget envisions donations increasing about 5% over the current year, and the Finance Committee was asked to make all members of our community aware of this as they consider their contributions. We approve this budget, with thanks to the Finance Committee and the Treasurer for their careful work.

9. Treasurer authorization: Treasurer Peter Swaszek requested authorization to exceed the current year budget for the Hospitality Committee by up to \$375, reflecting the committee's actual expenses for purchases for the fellowship time after meeting. We approve.

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

10. Religious Education Committee Report: Betsy Zimmerman reported that the Religious Education committee has been considering how to increase the children's sense of engagement with the meeting. One suggestion that has been discussed is a "family meeting" with a format geared to younger attenders. The committee is planning such a family meeting, as an experiment, from 9:30 to 10:00 am on the first First-Day next month. The children are doing a service project to collect socks and other warm gear for homeless people, and are looking forward to creating a raised bed garden at the meetinghouse.

11. Audit: Bruce Carlsten reported that the Audit Committee, consisting of himself and Matt Hackman, have extensively reviewed the Treasurer's books for the five fiscal years from 2009-10 through 2013-14, and found them entirely in good order. A copy of their written report will be appended to the record copy of these minutes.

12. Saylesville Preparative Meeting: Joanne Griffin reported that in response to concerns raised at and following last month's meeting for business, she had met with Ministry and Counsel, and a joint committee has been set up to consider the issues raised. She noted that the meetinghouse will host another program in conjunction with Arnold House / Historic New England during the coming week, on "Oddities and Curiosities in Colonial New England." The book swap will be held as usual next Saturday. The meeting is still considering holding a public music program.

13. We closed at about 2:00 pm, intending to meet next on 10th of 5th mo. 2015, God willing.

Daniel Lederer, Clerk Elizabeth Cazden, Recording Clerk

Help With Saylesville Cleanup Saturday May 2

Saylesville Burial Grounds are at one with Meeting House as landscape of heritage and history. Join us on Saturday, May 2, to clean winter's storm damage and plant 2 or 3 new shrubs on the border. Please bring rakes, clippers, spades, small tarpaulin, and most importantly lunch. We will supply beverages. Meet with us at 9am at Morris Avenue Meeting House to drive to Saylesville, or go directly to Saylesville, for a morning of spring gardening. Children and families of First Day School are encouraged to spend some time on the morning of May 2 to help and gain a sense of the history of our heritage. Contact Eugenia Marks or Matt Hackman.

Family Worship Service to start May 3, 9:30 – 10:15 from Galen Hamann

On Sunday May 3rd, the Religious Education Committee will be hosting the first family worship at PMM from 9:30-10:15. Our hope is that the first half hour can be a bit more programmed and age appropriate for younger children and then lead into the first 15 minutes of shared silent worship. We hope this to be an opportunity to nurture the spiritual side of all children and engage children in an extended worship with adults. We hope all members and attenders will join us for family worship before the regularly scheduled worship. I will be planning the programming; if you have ideas or suggestions please let me know. If you would like to read a story, lead us in singing a song, or play an instrument please send me an email or speak with me. Many meetings in New England have a family worship on a regular basis, and we are trying this out once this spring to see how it works for us. Thanks for considering how you might support our families through attending or helping to lead.

Ghamann@mosesbrown.org 401-831-7350 ext 220

May Breakfast (cont from page 1)

with all the unique and special breakfast/brunch items that you'd like to share. And it is a great opportunity to bring a neighbor or friend to either Meeting or the potluck or both.

Around the Meeting

New Members –Victoria Ekk was welcomed as a member of Providence Monthly Meeting at our April 5 potluck, where people also welcomed her by signing her copy of NEYM Faith and Practice, as is our custom. Also, Steve Thomas' transfer from Louisville was completed.

New Meeting Directory

 An updated Meeting Directory was emailed on April 7 to the listserve. If you did not get it or otherwise have a question or need regarding it, please contact Dan Lederer or Steve Schwartz.

Kitchen Reorganized -

Those helping in the kitchen will notice that the placement of plates, utensils and supplies has been re-organized to better fit how the room is used. Thanks to those who did the work.

Nursery Volunteers Sought – For summer and fall, Wendy Virgadamo is asking that those willing to serve two consecutive Sundays get in touch with her.

Review of Our Meeting's Quaker Education support - from Elsie Morse

While nothing is new in the following summary of our Meeting's Quaker Education Support, it may be timely to review for new members as well as for anyone who may wonder if any policies have changed.

The Quaker Education Support Committee grants modest scholarships to active members' families for Quaker tuition fees where such grants can make the difference in allowing their children to attend a Quaker elementary or high school. The Committee also reserves approximately a quarter of its annual budget to support families' participation in other Quaker school-age programs such as Quaker camps or Quaker service trips. As it is with school scholarships, our goal is to provide support when it makes the difference in the ability of active members' families to participate in such programs.

Members of the meeting who would like to apply for a scholarship should write to the committee clerk, currently Elsie Morse, stating the names of their child or children and the Quaker school or program whose tuition needs to be supported. Specific granting levels will vary from year to year depending on need and availability.

Funds may be reserved in years of less need to be able to continue support in years of greater need. In addition to regular budgeted amounts, the meeting will accept special contributions designated for this committee. We encourage families who have received our scholarship aid in the past to repay these funds according to their ability in the future so that the fund will be available to assist other families in need.

Nurturing The Nurturers (cont from page 1)

for their witness and to nurture them with a meal. We ask each person who attends Meeting on that day to consider joining us at Providence meetinghouse after worship for this potluck, and to consider inviting someone you know who you would like to honor and nurture in this way.

P&SC wants to take care of all hospitality needs for this event. If any Friends feel moved to help us make this event happen (preparation, decoration, set-up, clean-up, etc.), please let us know by emailing Mark Conley (<u>mconley@uri.edu</u>) or Steve Schwartz (<u>steve@absteve.com</u>) - let's give Hospitality Committee a break!

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]

May 8-10 Young Friends retreat - Transitions: Change and Purpose, Westport Meeting, MA [*Sept p5*] May 29 -31 - An Oasis on the Journey – Learn basic massage, laying-on-of-hands, simple charting. Pendle Hill [*Feb/Mar p7*] July 5 - 9 - Writing Your Spiritual Autobiography – Pendle Hill [*Feb/Mar p7*] July 26-30 - Spiritual Discernment – Whether a burning issue or to follow the Spirit day by day... Pendle Hill [*Feb/Mar p7*] August 7-9 and August 9-13 - Arts and Spirituality Workshops - Creative paper arts, poetry. Pendle Hill [*Feb/Mar p7*]

Quakerism 101 Course Design and Scheduling in Progress from Zona Douthit and Betsy Cazden

Sensing that Meeting has a strong need for it, the Adult Education Committee is planning to run a six week "Q101" course, to cover basic Quaker history, beliefs, and practices. It's designed for relatively new attenders and members. We envision weekly 90-minute sessions.

It is progressing on a proposal to break it up into parts such as History, Teachings of George Fox, Quaker Testimonies and Worship, Functions of the Meeting. This is not a fixed or exhaustive list, just a starting point for planning. One or two people would take on teaching just one of the topics. Volunteers were sought at a table during the April potluck, and if you have something to contribute and teach, contact Zona.

We've put together a survey to gauge interest and find out when would be the best time to run the course. It's likely that we'll do the course more than once, if there's sufficient interest. Click on this link to fill out the survey (only 5 short questions);

Quakerism 101 Survey (aka https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/7HZF9P7)

If there's more than one person in your household, you can do the survey more than once.

Thanks -- The Q101 working group

FCNL Urgent Call For Action (continued from page 1)

have been negotiating a nuclear deal that would keep Iran from developing nuclear weapons and end the sanctions that the United States and others have imposed on Iran. This has already made the world a safer place, with the elimination of much of Iran's uranium stores and newly allowed UN observers watching in order to prevent the development of nuclear weapons. Those interested in a foreign policy that focuses on peaceful solutions to conflict should be doing what they can to encourage the success of these negotiations.

Why is it important to act so soon?

June 30th is the deadline for a finalized deal that will prevent a nuclear-armed Iran and prevent another war in the Middle East. For a variety of reasons, some understandable and some misguided, there are constant attempts by a significant number of members of Congress to make this process fail. RI Senator Reed is the ranking Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee, and so is in a uniquely influential position to prevent the Senate from jeopardizing these negotiations. The last week of May is the only recess before that June 30 deadline, during which our representatives make time to meet with constituents here in RI. This is an important time to make our voices heard, and so members of Providence Friends are organizing a meeting with his office that week to speak with Senator Reed. That appointment needs to be made as soon as possible (within the next week) before his schedule is filled up. We need to meet at a time when Friends can come, so we need responses as soon as possible to set that time.

Steps to take to meet with our representatives.

To meet Senator Reed with Providence Friends, contact Dede Carlsten or Steve Schwartz. If you would like to organize a separate visit with members of your community (the more constituents, the better), you can contact his district scheduler Patti Grandfield at <u>patti grandfield@reed.senate.gov</u>.

Meetings with our other representatives (Sen. Whitehouse, Rep's Cicilline and Langevin) are also important, and we can be guided by resources at FCNL. Contact Julia Neumann: <u>Julia@fcnl.org</u> 202-465-7510

More Follow Up On Prouty Garden from Elaine Meyer

Many people from the Meeting have reached out in support of trying to save the Prouty Garden. I thought people might enjoy this short film clip about the garden that links to the petition. Please go to <u>saveprouty.org</u> to view the clip that includes some wonderful historical film footage.

CLERK'S CORNER by Dan Lederer

Elusive Justice

Justice is a word with a variety of meanings. One dictionary defines it as "the process or result of using laws to fairly judge and punish crimes and criminals." But what if the laws themselves are discriminatory or outright malicious? A broader definition would be "just behavior or treatment", but who decides what is just, and using what criteria? How do evenhandedness, impartiality, honesty, righteousness, and morality come into play in deciding what is just?

These questions have deeply concerned a 55 year old attorney named Bryan Stevenson. He grew up in Delaware, attended college in Pennsylvania, and has degrees from Harvard Law School and the Harvard Kennedy School. As founder and director of the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI), he's devoted his career to helping persons entangled in the legal system who lack adequate legal counsel. This non-profit organization seeks to provide legal assistance to blacks, the poor, victims of racial bias, children who have been sentenced as adults, prisoners subjected to overcrowding and mistreatment, and inmates on death row.

Despite his being African American, and fully realizing the dangers that might pose for him, he chose to work in Alabama because he saw it as the place with the greatest need. For example, Alabama's prisons currently hold around 28,000 prisoners although they were designed for half that number. The EJI website details other disturbing features of Alabama's legal system: "Alabama spends only \$26 per day per prisoner; the national average is \$62. It spends the least of any state in the country on medical care for inmates. Alabama's prisons have the highest inmate to correctional officer ratio in the country. Alabama sentences more people to death per capita than any other state...." And the litany goes on.

Of course these kinds of problems are not confined to Alabama. Other facts: There are nearly 3000 children in this country who have been sentenced to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole, and around 10,000 children are held in adult jails and prisons, where they face an increased risk of sexual abuse and of suicide. Overall, the number of persons in jails and prisons in the U.S. has increased from 300,000 to 2.3 million over the last 40 years, with over 3000 of them languishing on death row.

Published last year, Stevenson's highly readable and edifying book "Just Mercy" describes his personal saga carrying out his mission to help the disenfranchised. While he's received recognition and numerous honors, including a MacArthur Fellowship, he's also been subjected to death threats, but he continues his work undeterred. Some quotes from the book:

"We are all implicated when we allow other people to be mistreated. An absence of compassion can corrupt the decency of a community, a state, a nation."

"...each of us is more than the worst thing we've ever done."

"...the death penalty is not about whether people deserve to die for the crimes they commit. The real question of capital punishment in this country is, *Do we deserve to kill?*"

"We are all broken by something. We have all hurt someone and have been hurt. We all share the condition of brokenness even if our brokenness is not equivalent....but our brokenness is also the source of our common humanity, the basis for our shared search for comfort, meaning, and healing. Our shared vulnerability and imperfection nurtures and sustains our capacity for compassion."

I strongly recommend Bryan Stevenson's book "Just Mercy", but if you don't have the time or inclination to read it, at least watch his 23 minute TED lecture on YouTube; I promise you, it is well worth it:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2tOp7OxyQ8

Hannah Monroe - Quaker Voluntary Service Update

Greetings Friends! I'm writing to share with you my experiences so far in Quaker Voluntary Service and my plans for the future. First of all, I'd like to thank everyone in the meeting for all the support you've given me during this year. It means a lot to me to have the support of our meeting in my work with Quaker Voluntary Service. I'm interning at Atlanta Legal Aid Society with their Disability Integration Project, which works to help people with disabilities gain access to services in the community. My work consists of talking to people who call us for help and connecting them with resources, either with the Disability Integration Project or by referring them to other organizations.

I've been enjoying living in Atlanta, living in an intentional community with the other Quaker Voluntary Service volunteers and making many wonderful friends. I am meeting people at Atlanta Friends Meeting as well, at dinners and workshops scheduled for us to get to know people at the meeting, and we were assigned spiritual nurturers to help us explore our spiritual beliefs this year. I'm also attending Quaker conferences. I went to Washington, D.C., in March for the FCNL Spring Lobby Weekend to lobby around climate change issues, and saw Friends from NEYM there. I'm also going to Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting, which meets at Warren Wilson College, where I went to school.

I've been busy making plans for graduate school next year. I will start my graduate studies at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario, in September to get an MA in Critical Sociology, with the goal of going on to a PhD program and then teaching. My research will be about feminist perspectives on animals and nature in society. I've been interested in this throughout college and I'm looking forward to continuing this work next year. I'm inspired by my work through my internship to learn more about disability studies as well. Quaker Voluntary Service is giving me the opportunity to reflect on how I can express my spirituality through my work this year and in graduate school.

I'll be home in August and I'm looking forward to seeing all of you then and sharing more about my experiences. Thanks again for your support and encouragement!

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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 (Middletown) 10:30 am (NBS/Mabel's Studio) 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. (<u>yaf@providencefriends.org</u>) 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. Call (508) 399-6699

(See p 1 Saylesville Ground Cleanup)



The Provident FRIEND

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