

The Provident FRIEND

June 2015

Providence Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

Quakers Supporting Providence Pride

Members and attendees of our meeting staffed a booth during RI's Pride festivities on June 20, 2015, sharing literature and offering free face painting. We are grateful to Wellesley Friends Meeting for their assistance in the form of affirmative literature and a parade-worthy banner ("Embrace Equality"), which later accompanied our small group on our march through the rainy streets to the cheers of thousands of onlookers. Many PrideFest attendees expressed their heartfelt appreciation for our participation, and it was a great pleasure to be involved in such a joyous occasion. Thanks to all of you who stopped by to wish us well and express your support for Pride. We hope to march again next year with an even bigger group! *[photos courtesy of Mike Hirtle, Jen McFadden and Steve Thomas].*



Summer Reminders

This is the last official newsletter until the September issue, so here is a prominent reminder list of summer events already described – have a great summer!

- July 5-11 Thurs: FGC Gathering, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, NC.
<http://www.fgcquaker.org/>
- July 9 Thurs, 7pm Movie Night - *The Sacred Place Where Life Begins* (see May p1)
- July 29 Wed, 7pm - Alice Rothchild, MD, Eyewitness Gaza - Bell St Chapel (May p1)
myager@afsc.org 508-399-6699
- August 1-6 - NEYM 2015 Annual Sessions, Castleton State College VT (May p1)
<https://neym.org/sessions> (508) 754-6760
- Encourage and thank Sen. Reed for his work relating to Iran (this is a suggestion from the editor - see p 7)

(Published June 30)

Calendar (also see p 4 Events)

June 30 Tues: 7pm AFSC film showing of "Voices Across the Divide", Providence Meeting House (May issue, p7)

July 5-11 Thurs: FGC Gathering, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, NC. (p1)

July 9 Thurs: 7pm Movie Night, Providence Meeting House (p1,2)

July 11-19 Sat-Sun: 10am Annual book fair, Westport Monthly Meeting. (p4)

July 18 Sat: 10am-12pm Saylesville Bookswap

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

July 29 Wed: 7pm AFSC Gaza talk, Bell Street Chapel, (p1)

Aug 1-6 Sat-Thurs: NEYM Annual Sessions (p1)

Aug 15 Sat: 10am-12pm Saylesville Bookswap

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

Sept 5 Sun: After meeting potluck welcomes 7 new members (p2)

Sept 13 Sun: 12:00 Meeting For Business, Saylesville Meeting House. (p3)

Sept 19 Sat: 10am-12pm Saylesville Bookswap

Sept 27 Sun: 3-6pm Sacred Harp Sing at Providence Meeting House

**Providence Monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business
Minutes – 14th Sixth Month, 2015**

1. We gathered at 12:00 noon at the Saylesville meetinghouse, with 20 present. In the opening worship the clerk read the following queries from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's *Faith and Practice*:

Does our Meeting encourage the ministry of both word and deed? How does our Meeting recognize, develop, and nurture the gifts of our members and attenders of all ages?

2. Announcements:

Communications Committee will be presenting its next Meeting Movie Night at 7:00 PM on Thursday, 9th Seventh Month, 2015 at the Providence Meetinghouse. This will be a departure from the usual format in that it will feature a 20-minute documentary film by Miho Aida entitled "The Sacred Place Where Life Begins," after which Miho will lead a discussion on preserving the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska.

Quarterly Meeting will be Sunday, 21st Sixth Month, 2015 at Worcester Friends Meeting following Meeting for Worship. All are invited.

3. Correspondence: We have received notice from New England Yearly Meeting that NEYM Sessions will take place August 1 – 6 at Castleton State College in Castleton, VT, with the theme being "Living into Covenant Community." It is open to all and more information can be found at www.neym.org/sessions.

4. Membership Requests: On behalf of Ministry and Counsel, David Bourns brought two recommendations for membership and a recommendation for junior membership. First, following the usual clearness process, it is recommended that Jill Frew be accepted as a member of the meeting. We approve. Second, following the usual clearness process, it was recommended that Beth Muhuri be accepted as a member of the meeting. We approve. Third, Beth and Manna Muhuri requested junior membership for their son, William. We approve.

Ministry and Counsel also recommended that we accept three transfers of membership. The first was that Ben Lamm's membership be transferred from Berea Friends Meeting, KY; second was that Mark Garrison's membership be transferred from Friendswood Friends Church, TX; and third that Galen McNamer Hamann's membership be transferred from Cambridge Friends Meeting, MA. We accept all three transfers of membership. Finally, Galen McNamer Hamann and Jayme Hamann requested junior membership for their son Jackson Orion McNemar Hamann. We approve.

A suitable welcome for all will be arranged at our potluck meal on 6th, Ninth Month.

5. Dede Carlsten presented the following letter to be given to Senator Reed regarding nuclear weapons negotiations with Iran during a meeting with him on 19th, Sixth Month. Dede relayed that FCNL requested that members of our meeting meet with Senator Reed and present him with the letter based on his position on the Armed Services Committee. We approved.

Providence Friends Meeting
99 Morris Avenue
Providence, RI 02906

June 19, 2015

Dear Senator Reed:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us.

We requested to meet with you to express the support of Providence Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) for moving the nuclear weapons-related negotiations between the United States and Iran forward, and to ask for your help with that. Specifically we are asking you to continue to work in support of that goal when it comes up for a vote, expected in late summer or early fall. In addition, we ask that you use your voice as the leading Democrat on the Armed Services Committee to influence other Senators to come on board. And finally we ask that

(cont p 3)

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

you make another public statement in support of the negotiations before June 30th.

This is the first time in decades that we have had the opportunity to engage Iran in a manner that could lead to that nation's becoming less of a threat to its neighbors, Israel, and the world at large. Engaging Iran in diplomacy is a chance to bring it back into the fold of responsible nations looking for peaceful solutions to complex questions.

The alternative to diplomacy could very well lead to Iran's return to a policy of pursuing nuclear armament. We consider this a real possibility, and it would be an existential threat not only to Israel, but to the entire region. The United States and Europe would inevitably be brought into any resulting confrontation. The chance of confrontation, and even another global conflict, should not be underestimated.

We hope you will continue your support for negotiations with Iran by voting in support of the Iran deal in late summer or early fall. We also hope that you will use your powerful voice in the Senate to influence other Senators to do the same, and we ask that you make another public statement about your support prior to June 30th.

(Signed by) Dede Carlsten, Nancy Houston, Dan Lederer, Steve Schwartz, Martha Yager

6. Reports

Finance Committee: Mike Hirtle reported that Finance Committee is comfortable with the investments our Meeting has made. They would also encourage Property Committee to present them with their 5-year plan regarding projected work to be done at Providence Meeting House and Saylesville Meeting House.

Treasurer: Peter Swaszek presented the year-end report FY ending 31st day, Fifth Month, 2015. A request was made to pay an additional \$235.00 to the website budget. We approved. We accept the Treasurer's report with deep thanks for the work put into it.

The treasurer also requested that the Meeting submit ideas to use the PMH Enhancement Fund, which needs to expend the \$3,126.80 remaining in the account.

The treasurer further requested that Meeting reconfirm the ability of the Treasurer in his sole discretion to pay invoices over budget by 5% or \$100 on any given budget line, or 10% in consultation with Finance Committee. We approve.

Ministry and Counsel had no further report.

Saylesville: Joanne Griffin reported that Saylesville has been successfully clearing the Meeting House of the excess books and other household items that have been accumulating. The addition of the wooden boxes, which can be kept under the pews, for the storage of hard covered books has been very helpful. Any books that cannot be stored in the wooden boxes will be removed from the Meeting House. Saylesville has been in discussions with Westerly Meeting on taking the excess books. The book swap will continue to be held on the third Saturday of the month, with the next event to be held Saturday, 20th day, Sixth Month. Members or attenders from Saylesville and Providence Meetings are encouraged to come and meet and greet visitors to any book swap from 10:00 to 12:00. There will be a summer event hosted by Saylesville Meeting, the date to be announced.

7. We closed at 1:30 pm with a period of grateful worship, intending to meet next on the 13th day of 9th month at the Saylesville meetinghouse.

Daniel Lederer, Clerk

Kathi Lyons, Recording Clerk

Around the Meeting

Forks and Supplies –17 thrift shop forks were added to our collection this week, but if you have stragglers that

need a new home, please bring them to the meeting.

Meeting Email List Reminder – Please limit

messages on the Meeting Email List to announcements of upcoming events or items of interest to Friends. If you want to respond to a

message, please do so to the person who sent the message rather than to the entire group.

Reminder – Meeting Network Project

We are still encouraging Friends who have not yet participated in the Meeting Network Project to do so. This is an initiative that the Communications Committee has launched in an effort to help Friends get to know each other a bit better. Friends are asked to submit written answers to two questions, which will be compiled and shared with the Providence Meeting community: (1) What kinds of work do you, or did you, do? (2) What are you most passionate about, and why? Please take the time to share a few words about yourself and help us build connections within our community, and send your responses to communications@providencefriends.org.

Providence Meeting Gains New Members

During the June 14 Meeting for Business, membership transfers were approved for Ben Lamm from Berea Friends Meeting, KY; Mark Garrison from Friendswood Friends Church, TX; and Galen McNamer Hamann from Cambridge Friends Meeting, MA. New memberships were approved for Jill Frew and Beth Muhuri, and junior memberships were approved for William Muhuri and Jackson Orion McNamer Hamann. We will have a welcoming potluck for our new members in September.



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]

- 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]
- Aug 1-6 - NEYM Sessions, at Castleton State College in Castleton, VT [May p2 Minute #3]
- August 7-9 and August 9-13 - Arts and Spirituality Workshops - Creative paper arts, poetry. Pendle Hill [Feb/Mar p7]

Conflict Transformation: Invitation Not Obligation *by Cindy Fanning*

Conflict Transformation is about listening and feeling heard. A joint workshop was held by the NYM Committee on Conflict Transformation and the NEYM Ministry & Counsel on January 9-11, 2015 at Woolman Hill. The process of Conflict Transformation is about listening to your own body and soul, acknowledging there are concerns that matter to you, even when no one else seems ruffled, and then finding someone else who will explore with you. Quaker gospel order offers a way to find those individuals. An adage states that you cannot change anyone except yourself. Conflict Transformation is not about changing anyone except oneself. Can we really change ourselves if we do not know what needs to be changed?

Some people think that Quakers have a tendency to accept because we confuse confidentiality with safety, conflict with war, and silence with compassion and love. We have Quaker process and witness, which do not always take into account changes in the process of life. Quakers are not exempt from any of the flaws of being human, and at times need to cope with difficult, offensive, and timely issues that can become legal matters. Like others before me I believe my body and soul are linked and communicate. When my body tells me something is wrong I am told by George Fox's witness to address the matter. Conflict Transformation seems to be a "Quakerly" process appropriate for the present.

The process is simple: if you have a concern with a member then you should address that particular issue with the member alone, listening to the other side of your concern. If you do not feel heard, the next step is to involve another Friend or two who first sit with the issue and discern their own prejudices, and then attend as mediators. If the results do not seem satisfactory, the concern is then brought to the entire meeting. The process requires that all parties have enough time to discern the matter, which requires disclosure of the facts to attendees before any discussion, speaking or listening. Matters of confidentiality may need to be made available to at least some of the meeting, which may itself require discernment, and matters of great concern require the time appropriate for great discernment. During the workshop a longtime convinced Friend held us in the light for our entire process.

Transformation happens while engaging with another person or persons over a concern. Transcendence happens when we are engaged with Spirit in those concerns. For both to happen at the same time is ideal, but as transcendence can be fleeting, transformation is the next best option. You have to ask yourself how willing you are to be brave in your self-discernment because that is where the process takes place: in you. Transformation is the result of being heard and listening closely. Sometimes that is all anyone needs.



Westport 54th Annual Book Fair - Saturday, July 11 – Sunday, July 19

Come find a great book (or a dozen) at Westport Monthly Meeting's annual book fair, which officially opens at 11 am on July 11, 858 Main Road, Westport MA. Before the official 11am opening on July 11, six-for-a-dollar bargains are available beginning at 10 am, and there will be a special kids-only preview of children's books beginning at 10:45. Food and drink will be available throughout opening day. Feel free to browse the aisles until dusk all week long! If any questions, please call Greg Marsello at 401-624-9840.

CLERK'S CORNER by Dan Lederer

A Peaceable Kingdom Here At Home

One of our cherished Quaker testimonies is peace, and Quakers have labored long and hard to achieve this end both locally and globally, but to what effect? It seems that, around the world and even here at home, bloodshed continues unabated as our nation remains in a perpetual state of war. With peace so elusive, it's easy to get discouraged as we ponder how to direct our efforts.

One approach is to say that peace must start with ourselves, which is more easily said than done. Being a peaceful person can be challenging because we each have unique personalities, and when personalities don't mesh well, the result may be conflict in one form or another. This can happen at home, in our workplace, and even in our place of worship. But conflict requires at least two participants, and one participant's commitment to peace can usually defuse any altercation.

One of the purposes of Friends Meeting is to bring us together, and, given that our Meeting has no paid staff, it's necessary for us to work together as well, which means that stresses and strains will inevitably arise. But if we're going to be advocates for a peaceful world, it behooves us to maintain a peaceful environment when we come together, which means that we all have to make a commitment to getting along with each other. This must be a high priority in the life of our Meeting if we are to avoid hypocrisy in our peace advocacy to the outside world.

So how do we get there from here? Certainly one can find inspiration to be a peacemaker in the Bible or other sacred writings. Personally, what's been most helpful to me is a book by the Zen Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh entitled "Peace Is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life" (Bantam Books, 1991), which can serve as a gentle "instruction manual" for being a peacemaker. I've read it several times, and, even though it's written from a Buddhist perspective, I find nothing in it that's incompatible with Quaker practice. After the Dalai Lama's foreword, the book is divided into three sections: the first deals primarily with meditation, the second with being peaceful, the third with reconciliation. Regardless of the topic, there is wisdom on every page. My recommendation would be to read it slowly over a period of weeks or even months, allowing plenty of time for reflection and meditation. If we all did this, I'm confident we would come closer to realizing a peaceable kingdom right here at home.

Matching Gift Challenge for New England Friends

Two New England Friends are challenging us to join them in supporting a vision for our Quaker communities in New England.

NEYM current topics of concern include engagement involving younger Friends, intergenerational activities, attention to structure and finances and a growing interest in Outreach, Welcome and Inclusion. This points to efforts for finding a spiritual home for more people with us, having a greater impact in our world, and passing our faith and practices on to our children.

If we are able to raise \$10,000 in new and increased gifts to the Yearly Meeting's annual fund by September 30, 2015, the Challenge Donors will match new and increased amounts at levels between 100 and 150%, including matching monthly donations for the entire year.

To learn more about the details and to learn how to contribute, please contact Sara Smith, Concord (NH) Friends Meeting, Clerk, NEYM Development Committee, at www.neym.org/donate.

Thanks For Help!

Editor Steve Schwartz encourages all to thank everyone who has helped with the newsletter. Especially to be thanked are Adele Bourne for her help all year with organizing materials, and Jen McFadden for editorial help with this issue.

Meeting With U.S. Senator Jack Reed – by Steve Schwartz

Five members of our community went to see RI Senator Jack Reed, representing our meeting as described in the June 14 minutes (page 2). Sen. Reed is the ranking member of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Accompanied by an aide, he spent a half hour giving us what I felt was a very well informed briefing on the situation, including a view of the complexity of the process. There is a history of broken agreements that has led to a strong mistrust of Iran's government globally, and there are at least five completely separate and sometimes conflicting narratives in the negotiations – Iran, the U.S., Europe, Russia, China and Israel. The dangers are great. The Iranian government has been successfully selling a peaceful nuclear capability to its population, and if there is no deal, there will be huge pressure from hard-liners to build a weapon. Current sanctions have limited Iran's support of terrorist activity, and the lifting of sanctions might make it easier for them to get involved in what they might consider beneficial regional destabilization.

Despite all that and his own mistrust and reservations, Sen. Reed agrees that the best outcome is for the current negotiations to succeed, as he stated in his April 2 announcement:

“High-stakes diplomacy can be long and painstaking work. But if it results in a successful outcome that would effectively prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons, it will be well worth the effort.”

The full statement is on Sen. Reed's site at:

<http://www.reed.senate.gov/news/releases/reed-statement-on-iran-nuclear-talks>

As RI residents, we can help Sen. Reed in various ways. One of the best is to let him know with a phone call, email or letter that you support his position on the matter:

Senator Jack Reed, 728 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510
(401) 528-5200 <http://www.reed.senate.gov/contact>

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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Website: webclerk@providencelfriends.org

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

Young Adult Friends: (To Be Named) yaf@providencelfriends.org

To schedule the Meetinghouse: Bruce Shaw scheduling@providencelfriends.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>

Meeting for Worship each Sunday

Providence: 10:00 am Saylesville: 10:30 am
Conanicut (Jamestown) 10:30 am Old Meetinghouse

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.
Call (508) 399-6699

What?

These stunning works marched near us in the PrideFest Parade. The lights might be fiber optics, but glowed with neon-like colors. The sticks were about 10 feet long, and were used by the operators to slowly flap the wings, adding an oddly realistic neon to these beautiful constructions. Thanks to Mike Hirtle for this photo.



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