

Dorcas International Brings First Syrian Refugees to RI

The Providence Journal reports that Rhode Island greeted its first Syrian refugees at TF Green Airport on Feb. 12. The family of five was met at the airport by a group of enthusiastic supporters, including representatives from Dorcas International Institute, members of the local Syrian community, Muslim and interfaith clergy, and other Providence residents. Hussein Ghazala, his wife, Bidur Diabkilli, and their three children (ages 8, 7, and 6) fled civil war in Syria and spent several years in Turkey before making their way to their new home in Rhode Island.

They are a few of the 2,234 Syrian refugees admitted to the US since the outbreak of the war there in 2011. Friends who wish to welcome them are encouraged to contact Dorcas International Institute. If you have goods or clothing you could offer to this family or other newly resettled refugees, you can contact DII's Lina Bravo at 401-784-8663. For more information on DII's refugee resettlement program or to find out how you can help, call Baha Sadr, Director of Refugee Resettlement, 401-784-8611.

Nominating Committee Seeking Volunteers

The Nominating Committee is in the process of contacting Friends about serving on PMM committees. In particular, the Committee is seeking volunteers to fill three open positions:

1. Co-membership recorder. Anne DiMase has been working with Elsie Morse on this but is stepping down. Please speak to Elsie if you're interested.
2. Representative to RI State Council of Churches. Dede Carlsten can tell you what this position entails.
3. Representative to NEYM Ministry and Counsel Committee. See Mark Conley to learn more about this position, which is handled through the NEYM Nominating Committee.

If any of these positions interest you, please contact Ruth Bourns, Clerk of Nominating Committee (ruthbourns@me.com), or Dan Lederer (dlederer1@verizon.net).

Second Intergenerational Worship Service Well Attended

Friends of all ages joined in worship at the Providence Meetinghouse on January 31, sharing music, story, and silent worship. Thanks to Galen McNemar Hamann and all who participated. Stay tuned for details on our next intergenerational worship, tentatively scheduled for April 24.

(Published Feb 21)

Calendar (also see p. 4 Events)

Feb 20 (Sat): 10am-12pm
Saylesville Bookswap

Feb 21 (Sun): 12pm Worship
sharing regarding the annual
State of the Society report,
Providence Meetinghouse

Feb 24 (Wed): 6pm
Islamophobia event/potluck
Providence Meetinghouse

Feb 25 (Thurs): 7pm Moses
Brown Middle School Musical,
MB Alumni Hall

Feb 28 (Sun): Coffee hour
(11:30-ish) Mayor Elorza talks
about sustainability,
Providence Meetinghouse

Feb 28 (Sun): 3-6pm Sacred
Harp Sing at Providence
Meetinghouse

Mar 13 (Sun): 11:45am
Meeting for Business,
Providence Meetinghouse

Mar 19 (Sat): 10am-12pm
Saylesville Bookswap

Mar 27 (Sun): 3-6pm Sacred
Harp Sing at Providence
Meetinghouse

Apr 10 (Sun): 11:45am
Meeting for Business,
Providence Meetinghouse

Providence Monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business Minutes – 14th Second Month, 2016

1. We gathered at 11:45 am at the Providence meetinghouse, with fifteen present. The clerk read the following queries from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting *Faith and Practice*:

Does our Meeting prepare all its members and children for worship and for a way of life consistent with the principles of the Religious Society of Friends? How do we teach about Quaker practices in business and worship and their importance to the functioning of our Meeting community?

2. Announcements:

Worship sharing will take place at noon on Sunday February 21 at the Providence meetinghouse in preparation for our annual State of the Society report.

Providence Mayor Jorge Elorza will speak at the Providence meetinghouse around 11:30 AM on Sunday Feb 28 about the City of Providence and sustainability.

3. Correspondence. Beth Collea and Melinda Wenner Bradley will be conducting a First Day School Workshop from March 18-20, 2016 at Woolman Hill, the Quaker retreat center in Deerfield, MA. More details are available at the NEYM website, www.neym.org.

4. Marriage request: Erin Hazlett reported that the meeting received a request for marriage under the care of the meeting from our member Michael Hirtle and Judith Coffey. Members of the Marriage Clearness committee met with them and found them clear for marriage. We approve taking this marriage under our care, and appoint a special meeting for worship for this purpose on Saturday, August 13, 2016, at a time to be set. The oversight committee will be appointed at a later meeting.

5. Application for NEYM Legacy Fund Grant. For the Peace and Social Concerns Committee, Steve Schwartz read a proposed letter to the Legacy Gift Committee of New England Yearly Meeting, supporting the grant application from our members Paul Klinkman and Liberty Goodwin for a solar greenhouse project. (See Minute 3, 1st mo. 2016.) A concern was raised to make sure that the meeting is not promising more technical expertise than we possess; the wording was edited to clarify this. If this project is approved by NEYM, the meeting would then need to formally name the ad hoc committee, define its responsibilities, and set a time frame for periodic reporting back. We approve this letter of support as edited.

6. Saylesville Preparative Meeting. Bruce Downing reported that the preparative meeting for business was unable to meet this morning due to the cold weather, and will be rescheduled.

7. The clerk provided an opportunity for the raising of concerns, which will be directed to the appropriate committees.

Daniel Lederer, clerk

Elizabeth Cazden, recording clerk

CLERK'S CORNER by *Dan Lederer*

On Becoming a Member

Several years ago Communications Committee produced a brochure, available in the foyer at the Providence Meetinghouse, asking "Are You Ready to Join Us?" I'd like to paraphrase what's in that brochure because I think it's helpful, from time to time, to encourage attenders to consider becoming Meeting members.

Membership provides a few privileges - serving on certain committees and being an officer such as Presiding Clerk - but at the same time it entails a lot of responsibility in that the expectation is that a member will do as much as he or she can for Meeting in terms of giving time, effort, and financial support, depending of course on his or her life circumstances (I found personally that there were times in my life when my participation at Meeting was minimal, at other times more). Before considering membership, you may want to ask yourself several questions: Do I feel a commitment to Friends principles and practice? Am I willing to participate in all aspects of the life of Meeting? Am I in harmony with the diversity of Friends, both locally and in the larger world? Have I attended Meeting for long enough to appreciate our form of worship and business? Has Meeting become an integral part of my life?

The procedure for becoming a member involves several steps, well described in the brochure: "As a prospective member, you would write a letter to the Presiding Clerk requesting consideration for membership and explaining your reasons for seeking to become a member. A Clearness Committee would meet with you to review the privileges and responsibilities of membership and discuss both your spiritual path to Friends and your reasons for seeking a deeper relationship with Meeting. Following a period of discernment, the Clearness Committee presents its recommendation to Ministry and Counsel, which then, in turn, presents its recommendation to Meeting for Business. Your membership is accepted upon the approval of Meeting for Business. Within a short time, you will be welcomed at a potluck lunch." This process is not arduous, and in fact is often seen as enjoyable. I invite anyone with questions about it to contact me or the clerk of Ministry and Counsel.

And for those readers who are already members: Do you know someone who perhaps is waiting to be invited to consider membership? Let's not let our traditional Quaker reserve get in the way of drawing new members into the fold and of thereby strengthening our Meeting community.

Anti-Islamophobia Working Group Meets Feb. 24

Several members and attenders of PMM have expressed a concern about Islamophobia and its effects on our Muslim neighbors. At 6 pm on Wednesday, Feb. 24, Friends are invited to join a small round-table discussion on this topic with Imam Farid Ansari and Dr. Umar Akbar, two members of the local Muslim community. We'll be brainstorming ideas for interfaith efforts to combat Islamophobia. If you'd like to attend, or if you'd like to receive a summary of the meeting, please contact Jen McFadden at jenniferlamm@gmail.com or by phone at 970-456-5642.

Around the Meeting

Editorship changes hands – After five years of serving the Meeting faithfully as Newsletter Editor, Steve Schwartz has decided to pass the torch.

Jen McFadden will attempt to fill his shoes, with Steve's ongoing mentorship and support. Newsletter content should still be mailed to the editor's address at: providentfriend@providencefriends.org. Thoughts, suggestions, and constructive feedback are always welcome, and if you

know of a program, event, or bit of news of relevance to Friends, please share it. Content deadline is the first of each month to make it into that month's issue.

Events, Exhibits, and Shows Involving Friends

Bill Munroe is playing with Matteo Casisi on Feb. 21 at the Parlour, 1119 N. Main St., Providence, 5:30-7:30 pm

Betsy Zimmerman's artwork is on display with the Printmakers' Network of Southern New England. The exhibit at URI's Main Art Gallery runs through Feb. 26, Mon-Fri, 12-4pm, or by appointment. Call Bob Dilworth at (401) 874-5821.

Providence Mayor Elorza to Speak on Sustainability and Our City - Sunday February 28, Coffee Hour

PMM's Committee for Peace and Social Concerns is bringing Mayor Jorge Elorza to our Meetinghouse on Feb. 28 to speak about sustainability in our city. Please invite others to join us! We hope for a full house for this important event. To learn more about the strides Mayor Elorza's Office of Sustainability has taken in the past year, you can visit the website of the SustainPVD initiative: <https://www.providenceri.com/sustainability>. Please come hear the Mayor speak on this critical topic and show support for his efforts to build a sustainable future for Providence!

First Day School Workshop at Woolman Hill, March 18-20

Join others from NEYM to discuss the needs of new and growing First Day Schools throughout New England. Friends are invited to Woolman Hill in Deerfield, MA, to share, learn, and problem-solve together with Beth Collea, Religious Education Outreach Coordinator for NEYM, and Melinda Wenner Bradley, member of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and author of some of the *Faith & Play* stories. Topics will include children's spirituality, creative programming beyond Sunday mornings, nurturing families, supporting parents, outreach and in-reach, anti-racism resources and community safety issues. For more details, please contact Beth Collea at 781-784-3471 or recoord@neym.org

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

[2016 unless noted, month in brackets indicates a recent issue that has an article about this event]

February – June (First Wednesdays) Beacon Hill Friends House Speaker Series on Refugee Voices [this issue]

March 12-15 FCNL Spring Lobby Weekend (Washington DC) [Dec p4]

March 18-20 Young Friends Retreats: Art, Creativity & the Joys of Childhood, Hartford Meeting, CT [Oct p5]

March 18-20 First Day School Workshop at Woolman Hill with Beth Collea and Melinda Wenner Bradley [this issue]

April 10 & 24 Conanicut Friends at Mabel's Studio – last two of the season [Oct p5]

April 15-17 Young Adult Friends Retreats: at Wellesley Meeting (MA) [Oct p5]

May 13-15 Young Friends Retreats: Community Service, Westport Meeting, MA [Oct p5]

June-July 2016 Paid part time FCNL Summer Internship Program (Washington DC) [Dec p4]

Aug 2016 – July 2017 – Paid part- and full-time FCNL Advocacy and Young Fellows Programs (Washington DC) [Dec p4]

Music in the Saylesville Meetinghouse *by Rosanne Cedroni*

At Saylesville we are making a brave attempt to keep our agenda on-line and accessible to all before Meeting for Business. Many people may already have noticed that "music" is a recurring theme, and it may be a permanent item on our agenda.

We are not pretending to be a concert hall, but our space is ideal for a small gathering of musicians. One of our goals would be community outreach—many friends (lower case "f") enjoy being in the historic building, and we want to be a good neighbor. Our other goal is to keep activities manageable for a small group. Music may be a great way to bring people together without overtaxing them with preparations.

One of my favorite ideas is hosting a "jam session", which wouldn't require people to commit to any specific performances. It could be held on a monthly basis, and perhaps best of all, it could be very informal. We could request that people attending bring an item for the food bank as a kind of "price of admission".

We would love to hear any and all ideas from Friends (upper case "F"). Naturally, it may take a few more business meetings to really pull things together. But on the bright side, spring and summer may be just the right time for people to get out and make music together!

Please feel free to forward any responses to: rcedroni@gmail.com. And as always, everyone is cordially invited to attend our business meeting, which happens the second Sunday of every month at 9:30 a.m. in the Saylesville Meetinghouse.

PMM Friends' Input Sought on FCNL Policy Priorities

Friends' Committee on National Legislation is "taking a fresh look" at the issues and priorities that will form the center of its lobbying efforts for the next legislative session of Congress (January 2017-December 2018). To that end, FCNL has asked members of individual meetings to consider which of the many policy issues in "The World We Seek" (FCNL's legislative policy statement) are most important. Nancy Houston has offered to organize an informal group of interested Friends at PMM to discuss these issues. If you are interested in participating in that conversation, please contact her at ndh_2@hotmail.com. For a summary of "The World We Seek," visit fcnl.org/about/govern/policy. You can also download a full-text version of the policy statement from that address.

Steve Chase to Speak at Westerly Meeting *from Penny Jackim*

Steve Chase, Director of Education at Pendle Hill, will be speaking at Westerly Meeting (57 Elm St., Westerly RI) on Sunday, March 6 at 11:45 following rise of Meeting. Steve has long been active with the Transition Movement, an important national movement that promotes community resilience in the face of challenges like peak oil and climate change. He has spoken on this issue during the keynote address at New England Yearly Meeting in 2011 and at several Quaker conferences, and he has been teaching on the topic at Pendle Hill. Friends are encouraged to attend Westerly's Meeting for Worship and stay on to hear Steve speak on this timely topic.

Friends' News from New England and Beyond

Beacon Hill Friends House in Boston is hosting a series of talks called "Refugee Stories." Talks take place from 7:30 to 9:00 pm every First Wednesday from February through June. Come hear refugees share their stories and perspectives! All events take place at Beacon Hill Friends House, 6-8 Chestnut St, Boston. Directions can be found at <http://bhfh.org>.

March 2 - "One Person at a Time, One Humanity Closer." Nadia Alawa, founder and president of NuDay Syria

April 6 - "Refugees & Revolution: Resettling in Massachusetts." Kuong Ly, activist, scholar, refugee, and public interest legal fellow at Health Law Advocates

May 4 - "Immigrants in the Shadows: Realities, Issues, and Struggles of the Workplace." Diego Low of MetroWest Worker Center

June 6 - "Refugee Stories: A Lecture/Demonstration." Sokeo Ros, Director of Case Closed!, performance artist, and director of the hip-hop dance program at Everett: Company Stage and School

FGC's annual Gathering is an opportunity for Friends across North America to network and share with one another, and to nurture individuals in their personal journeys. This year's Gathering, "be humble, be Faithful, BE BOLD," will take place in St. Joseph, Minnesota, July 3 – July 9. FGC offers aid in the form of scholarships and work grants. Registration begins on April 1; those applying for financial aid are especially encouraged to apply early. Visit FGC's website for more details at www.fgcquaker.org/connect/gathering

From Communications Committee: The Meeting Email List

PMM's electronic mailing list ("email list") is the most immediate means of communicating within our group. (At times it's referred to as "the listserve", but we've tried to get away from calling it that because Listserv is a proprietary name.) The Meeting set up the email list in 1999, and since then Friends have posted more than 4000 messages. The list currently has around 180 members, each of whom receives all posted messages and can in turn send out messages to the group.

The email list provides information about all events occurring in the life of the Meeting as well as various items of interest to Friends, examples being announcements from NEYM and AFSC. It also delivers our monthly newsletter, The Provident Friend. When necessary it 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.

The email list functions as the 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 complaints about individuals or committees. As stated in the Meeting Handbook, "No editing is done, so it is left to the individual's judgment to determine that a message will be of interest to Friends."

If you'd like to join the list, contact Dan Lederer (dlederer1@verizon.net) and he'll see that you receive an email invitation. When you open the invitation, click on "Join Mailing List", and that should be all you have to do. If you would prefer to receive only the newsletter and not all the other postings that appear on the email list, we have a separate group for that too; just let Dan know. Our email list is an essential part of Meeting's infrastructure. Let's all get on board!

The Peace of Wild Things

by Wendell Berry (b. 1934)

*When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.*

(reprinted from PoetryFoundation.org)

Providence Monthly Meeting - Contacts

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

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Email list moderator: Dan Lederer list@providencefriends.org

Website: webclerk@providencefriends.org

Moses Brown School Liaison: Mike Hirtle liaison@providencefriends.org



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)

Feb 28 Mar 13, 27

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

. (yaf@providencefriends.org)

Wednesday - 8:25am - Moses Brown Lower School

Wednesday - 9:40am - Moses Brown Middle School

The Provident FRIEND

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99 Morris Avenue
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