

The Provident FRIEND

News from the Providence Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

February 19, 2017

Ringling in a New Phase of Peace Work: Notes from Our Community

Adele Bourne: A Media-Free Inauguration Day in the Meetinghouse

On January 20th, Inauguration Day, through Betsy Cazden's initiative, the Meeting House provided a television- and device-free zone from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Members, attenders, and neighbors came in a small but steady stream to use the Meeting room for meditation, the library for quiet reading, the community room for coffee, tea, snacks, and refreshing conversation. Members of the Meeting took turns as hosts, hostesses, and clean-up crew. During my stint from 2-4 pm, conversation included fly fishing, the environmental costs of current landfill practices, the pressing needs of Providence public schools, tutoring through Inspiring Minds, petitioning neighbors on a city council matter, reminiscences of a grandfather, a minister who worked with Martin Luther King, the uses of humor, and finding an agent once a manuscript is done. In a typical "Providence" encounter, I met a lovely neighbor of the Meeting who turned out to be the mother of one of my daughter's best friends. We went off together to the Women's March at the state capital the next day. Thank you, Betsy, for helping us over the collywobbles on Jan. 20!

Supporting Muslims, Immigrants, and Refugees

After the release of a White House executive order restricting travel from Muslim-majority countries and banning refugees from entering the US, PMM Friends gathered to show support at several events in Providence. Some joined a rally at the RI State House and marched to an overfilled town hall meeting hosted by Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse to air concerns about protecting vulnerable citizens and standing up to hate. Some attended a public information meeting arranged by the Rhode Island State Council of Churches to discuss how places of worship might work toward providing or supporting sanctuary for those facing deportation. (To hear a brief summary of that meeting, please attend the upcoming Peace and Social Concerns committee meeting on February 26.) On a Friday in early February, several Friends gathered to show support for Muslim neighbors at a downtown Providence mosque, offering homemade cookies, coffee, and smiles to those leaving Jumrah prayers. The impromptu event sparked interest in more sustained activities of this nature, and Friends will have a monthly opportunity to host similar pop-up fellowship events at mosques throughout RI. (For more information, please contact Jen McFadden at jenniferlamm@gmail.com.)

CALENDAR

Saturday, February 18

10 am-12:15, Saylesville Meetinghouse Bookswap

Sunday, February 19

11:45 am, Providence Meetinghouse
Courtney Cazden speaks about her 2016 Iran visit

Sunday, February 26

2-5 pm, Everett Dance Theater (9 Duncan Ave, Providence)
East Side Community Potluck

3 pm, Providence Meetinghouse
Shape Note Singing

Sunday, March 5

11 am, Providence Meetinghouse
Potluck

Thursday, March 9

6-8pm, Providence Meetinghouse
Bystander Intervention Training

Sunday, March 12

12 pm, Providence Meetinghouse
Meeting for Business

Saturday, April 8

9:30 am – 4 pm
Living Faith Gathering
Moses Brown School
(Registration begins early March)

Third Wednesdays (monthly)

6 pm, Saylesville Meetinghouse
Worship and singing

Seth Kolker: Reports from Central Falls Students' March in Washington

Seth Kolker, a teacher from Central Falls, organized an ambitious trip to bring a busload of his high schoolers to Washington, DC for the Women's March in January. For these diverse teens, the opportunity to engage in peaceful protest proved to be a profound experience. Their journey—supported in part by the PMM community—attracted national media attention. As Seth writes, “hopefully [this is] only the beginning of democratic engagement for these amazing kids from Central Falls. Please enjoy the following news stories - all of it made possible thanks to much help and support from this Meeting - and do be in touch if you've got ideas about future endeavors.”

<http://www.providencejournal.com/news/20170102/central-falls-teens-drawn-to-womens-march-on-washington-on-jan-21>

<http://ripr.org/post/central-falls-youth-rally-washington-after-trump-inauguration>

<http://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/we-re-there-human-rights-latino-students-travel-women-s-n710041>

<http://wpri.com/2017/01/20/central-falls-students-set-out-for-post-inauguration-dc-womens-march/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gCNvy-91LDw>

<http://nymag.com/thecut/2017/01/these-high-school-marchers-will-give-you-hope-for-the-future.html>

Debbie Block: Speaking Truth to Power in a New Blog

As we are all finding our voices in this challenging time - I've started a blog and would love to invite Friends to take a look at it - and if so moved, follow and share it. I started thinking about it shortly after going to the Women's March in Boston, mostly as a response to the overload of input from all directions. I hope that it will provide some ideas, resources, inspiration and some calm. I hope to post something once a week. You can find the blog here: <https://speakingtruthtopower.blog/> You can click the “Follow” button and add your email address to be notified anytime the blog is updated.

CLIMATE JUSTICE: A CALL FOR RESPONSES FROM WITHIN OUR MEETING *(Submitted on behalf of the Peace and Social Concerns Committee)*

Imagine the burgeoning of spring-- the wonder, the intriguing biology, the appreciation of creation-- as bright green grass emerges out of the brown duff or bouquets of pink and white burst from dormant branches. We are grateful not only for the beauty and lightness of heart these sights bring, but also for the fruit and grain that will follow the blossoms.

A healthy plant world depends on two crucial elements: temperature (both enough below-freezing hours to set buds, and enough warm ones to support the insects that will pollinate those blossoms) and moisture (not too wet and not too dry). Since plants can't move to a more hospitable location when the climate gets off kilter, we are concerned about what's happening to creation.

Furthermore, climate change will affect people in different ways, from displacement of island-dwellers and those in flood-prone areas, to illness from increased insect-borne disease, and even death from heat in cities among the poor and elderly without air conditioning.

With climate justice and creation change in mind, New England Yearly Meeting in 2016 supported two minutes, one recognizing the problem and the other a call to action.

"... Friends, gathered as a working group, will convene... for discernment of God's leading into ongoing nonviolent direct action for climate justice, rooted in the vision of faithfulness described movingly by Doug Gwyn in our Bible half-hours this week.

1. We will listen to how we will, as a Yearly Meeting, collaborate with and support the actions of this working group.
2. Building on the minute we have adopted on climate change this session, we ask each Monthly Meeting and constituent body of the Yearly Meeting to enter into an intentional process of discerning:
 - God's leading for each meeting and its members to take concrete action, and to commit to taking action before next sessions
 - what further steps God is calling us to take as a Yearly Meeting to address this issue."

Type into your browser "New England Yearly Meeting + Climate Change" for details.

Energy use and climate change may have such a connection to politics that readers and worshipers are turned off when those two concepts are uttered. We ask that Friends in and around Providence Meeting look to Quakerly values and discern what is God's leading for further steps.

Peace and Social Concerns Committee welcomes your thoughts.

AROUND THE MEETING

Please contact the clerk of Pastoral Care Committee, Adele Bourne, at briefcndle@aol.com or at 401-432-6721 if you are aware of someone in our community who could use a visit, a call or a card.

Communications Committee offers a reminder that we are available to set up computer training sessions for people who would like assistance with basic software, Internet use, or other concerns. Please contact Jen McFadden if you would like to participate.

Congratulations to Sam Schifman, PMM's newest member. Please welcome him and sign his copy of Faith and Practice at the Meeting's April 2 potluck!

Seth Thompson of the American University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates has completed his filming of the Saylesville meetinghouse for his "Sacred Spaces of New England" project. See it at <http://seththompson.info/sacredspacesne/saylesville-meetinghouse-lincoln-ri/>

Plans for Laying Down AFSC SENE

Martha Yager is in the process of planning for the closure of AFSC's Southeast New England program office, which will take place at the end of July, 2017. (For more on this, please see the January 2017 issue of the *Provident Friend*). The program support committee is helping to discern how aspects of Martha's work may be carried forward by local meetings and individuals. Key areas of current work include: (1) monitoring and acting on legislative concerns in RI and MA; (2) working to educate communities and organizations about Islamophobia; (3) providing bystander intervention trainings and processing new requests and inquiries; (4) working with Resist Hate RI and community stakeholders to support immigrant rights and advance the Sanctuary Everywhere movement; (5) supporting passage of the Community Safety Act, which is in its final stages; (6) advancing AFSC's national policy priorities such as ending solitary confinement and working for peace in Israel/Palestine. As clarity emerges on steps to be taken, the support committee will keep Peace and Social Concerns advised about opportunities for PMM and its community. In May, AFSC SENE will host a celebration of the many programs it has supported over the years. Stay tuned for details.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Courtney Cazden Speaks about Iran Visit: Sunday, 2/19, 11:45 am

Courtney Cazden (Betsy Cazden's mother, a member of Friends Meeting at Cambridge and long active in AFSC) will give a slide talk after coffee hour on Sunday, February 19, about her May 2016 educational trip to Iran. Come learn about some of the key sacred and patriotic sites in Iran, the challenges of abiding by Iran's strict dress codes and other customs, and getting to know ordinary Iranians. Sponsored by Providence Friends Meeting's Peace & Social Concerns Committee; all are welcome.

East Providence Peace Flag Project, Wednesday, 2/22, 6:30 pm

Weaver Library, 41 Grove Ave., East Providence

(Funded in part by the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities)

See the new East Providence Peace Banner crafted from the art of children, and learn what PEACE means to East Providence. Enjoy live music from Barry Brown and a special performance by Bill Harley. Free and open to all! Celebrate with us and choose peace. For more information, call 401-434-2453.

Finding Common Ground Discussion Group, "US Healthcare Crisis," Wednesday, 2/22, 6 pm

West Warwick Library, 1043 Main St., Nash Room.

This discussion group encourages attendees to read and report on a wide variety of sources on the topic. (You can also just come and listen.) In either case, our goal for every Finding Common Ground meeting is to know more at the end than we did at the beginning.

East Side Community Alliance Potluck, Sunday, 2/26, 2-5 pm

Everett Dance Theater, 9 Duncan Ave., Providence (Street-side parking)

Come meet your neighbors, share some good food, and get involved in the East Side Community Alliance that Marcus Mitchell has been helping to build. The afternoon ends with a dance party. For more information or to RSVP, please contact Antonia Soares at arsoares@aol.com

Bystander Training RESCHEDULED: Thursday, March 9, 6-8 pm

Learn how to defuse and de-escalate acts of intimidation, bullying, or discrimination. Our AFSC-led event (planned for 2/9) was rescheduled because of bad weather, so we'll be meeting instead on March 9 at the Providence Meetinghouse. Those who are interested in being trained as trainers can stay for an additional hour (8-9 pm). Space is limited to 30 attendees. If you'd like to RSVP, please contact Morgan Lord at mhlord2004@gmail.com.

Service Opportunity: NEYM Living Faith Gathering, Moses Brown School, Saturday, April 8 2017

The Moses Brown School will host NEYM's upcoming Living Faith Gathering this spring, and members of the PMM community are encouraged to mark their calendars for the all-day program on April 8. As NEYM reports on its website, "These semiannual, day-long gatherings include large group worship, fellowship and relationship-building, workshops led by dynamic Friends, an integrated youth program, and opportunities to connect on shared concerns. NEYM exists to support and nurture New England Quakers, and we hope the new Living Faith gatherings will equip individual Friends and local meetings with resources, tools, and connections to more fully live our faith." Proposals for workshops are still being accepted, and registration for the event begins in early March. (See <https://neym.org/living-faith-gatherings> for more information.) In addition, **the NEYM planning team for the event is seeking assistance for two important tasks: (1) Hosts are needed to house Friends traveling from afar; and (2) Two people are needed to provide childcare for the day at a rate of \$15/hr.** (Each person should be willing to complete a background check per NEYM policy.) If you're able to help with childcare or hospitality, please contact Kathleen Wooten, NEYM Events Coordinator, 781-640-1269 or events@neym.org.

**Providence Monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business
12th Day 2nd month, 2017
Minutes**

1. We gathered at 12:05 pm at the Providence meetinghouse, with 18 present. In the opening worship, the clerk read the second set of queries from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's *Faith & Practice*:

Is our meeting for business held in the spirit of a meeting for worship in which we seek divine guidance?

Are we careful to keep in the spirit of worship each of the concerns that emerge, whether of nurture, of Spirit, of social concerns, of property, or of finance?

Are Meeting decisions directed by prayerful consideration of all aspects of an issue and are difficult problems considered carefully with patient search for truth, unhurried by the pressures of time?

How do we respond if we notice the meeting has lost an understanding of the presence of God?
Do we recognize that we speak through our inaction as well as our action?

2. Announcements:

Friends at Saylesville invite all to join them for their Wednesday evening meetings, with a light potluck dinner and music from 6:00 to 7:00 followed by a half hour of worship. In a change of plan, this meeting will now be held on a monthly basis on the third Wednesday of each month, instead of weekly.

On Sunday, February 19, Courtney Cazden will give a slide talk at 11:45 about her May 2016 educational trip to Iran, sponsored by Peace & Social Concerns Committee.

3. Membership: For Ministry and Counsel, David Bourns brought a recommendation that Samuel Benjamin Schifman be accepted into membership in the meeting. Sam was born into a Quaker family

and has attended many meetings, but his membership had lapsed. We approve this recommendation and ask Kathi Lyons to arrange an appropriate welcome for him.

4. Term for Presiding Clerk: Ministry and Counsel also brought a recommendation that the term of office for the Presiding Clerk be considered as a three-year term, renewable for a second three-year term, rather than an annual appointment as has been our practice. Ministry and Counsel will continue to provide support for and review of the clerk's service, to ensure that continued service remains appropriate for the person and the meeting. We approve this change.

5. Peace and Social Concerns: On behalf of Peace and Social Concerns Committee, Steve Schwartz brought a proposal that we obtain a banner to hang on the north wall outside the meetinghouse. The proposed banner is one prepared by FCNL which reads "Love Thy Neighbor – No Exceptions." We approve, and ask Peace and Social Concerns to coordinate a bulk order of yard signs and bumper stickers with the same slogan for distribution in the meeting.

Peace and Social Concerns Committee would like to prepare a large version of the statement approved last month, to be hung in the entryway. We approve.

6. Finance Committee: Dan Lederer reported that the committee has begun work on the budget for the fiscal year beginning June 1, 2017 and hopes to have a preliminary draft for the meeting's review next month. Finance Committee has also begun working with the Meetinghouse Expansion Committee on how to finance the proposed expansion, including possible grants as well as fund-raising to reduce the potential draw on general reserves.

7. Ministry and Counsel: Ministry and Counsel reported that the current Presiding Clerk has asked to be released from his responsibility, for personal reasons, as of June 2018. With that in mind, Ministry and Counsel hopes to bring a name by June 2017 of a person to serve as Assistant Presiding Clerk as preparation for moving into the Presiding Clerk role the following year. Ministry and Counsel has considered a suggestion that the meeting hold a midweek meeting at the Providence meetinghouse, but recommends instead that Friends support the midweek meeting already under our care at the Saylesville meetinghouse.

8. Saylesville: Paul Klinkman reported that the preparative meeting has forwarded a proposal to apply for a NEYM Legacy Fund grant to install a solar heating system for the Saylesville meetinghouse, instead of replacing the gas furnace. They had hoped to have this meeting's approval so that an application could be submitted by the March 1 deadline. Friends were receptive to this possibility, but felt it needed more careful discernment before we can consider it. We ask the Property Committee to work with Saylesville meeting to further develop the proposal for this system, as well as ways of financing it.

9. In view of the inclement weather, the worship sharing on the State of Society planned for this meeting was deferred so Friends could travel home more safely. We closed with a period of grateful worship at 1:30 pm, intending to meet again the 12th of 3rd month at the Providence meetinghouse.

Mike Hirtle, presiding clerk
Elizabeth Cazden, recording clerk

Upcoming Programs for NEYM Junior Yearly Meeting

Children in our meeting ages seven and up may enjoy spending a weekend in the company of Gretchen Baker-Smith and other Friendly kids from around New England. These retreats offer great opportunities for fellowship, play, and Friendship. Visit <https://neym.org/jym/retreats> for more information on these upcoming programs:

What’s Going On? A Retreat Just for 6th & 7th Graders

Friday, March 31, 2017 - 6:00pm to Sunday, April 2, 2017 - 1:00pm
 Friends Meetinghouse, 57 Hunting Lodge Rd, Storrs, CT

This new retreat will give space and time for conversations about the physical and emotional changes happening in the bodies and hearts of our 6th and 7th graders. We’ll talk about what’s cool, what’s confusing, and what’s really stressful. Striving to live as a Friend is often in sharp contrast to our culture and media’s many conflicting and damaging messages around sexuality, gender, identity, and relationships. In our safe and loving community we’ll weave in a strong message about staying safe and taking care while also singing, playing games, eating delicious food and having a lot of fun.

There’s a Light in You, There’s a Light in Me (Grades 2-6)

Friday, May 19, 2017 - 5:00pm to Sunday, May 21, 2017 - 1:00pm
[Woolman Hill](#), 107 Keets Rd, Deerfield , MA

This Bill Harley song is a wonderful description of how we try to be in JYM. We discover we can be friends even if we don’t like or do the same things. Seeking and finding that of God in ourselves and each other, we find there is indeed more Light and love than we imagined and that our differences actually make us richer, wiser, and stronger. What have we learned from each other this year?

Providence Monthly Meeting Contact List

Presiding Clerk: **Mike Hirtle** clerk@providencefriends.org
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 Recording Clerk: **Betsy Cazden** recordingclerk@providencefriends.org
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 Email list moderator: **Dan Lederer** list@providencefriends.org
 Website: webclerk@providencefriends.org
 Moses Brown School Liaison: **Betsy Zimmerman** 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
 Adult Religious Education: **Zona Douthit** adulthood@providencefriends.org



Elizabeth Bonner Zimmerman

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(401) 331-4218 or <http://providencefriends.org>

Meeting for Worship each Sunday

Providence: 10:00 am Saylesville: 10:30 am

Conanicut: 10:30 am (Norman Bird Sanctuary, Middletown)

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

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

Sing-along, Saylesville – 11:30 am each First Sunday

Meeting for Business

Providence: Second Sunday of each month at 12:00pm

Saylesville: Second Sunday of each month at 9:30am

AFSC SENE Support Committee - Second Tuesday, 6:00-8:00 pm Call (508) 399-6699

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99 Morris Avenue

Providence, RI 02906