

**Providence Monthly Meeting for Worship
with a Concern for Business
9th of Tenth Month, 2022
Minutes**

Friends gathered by Zoom technology at 12:15 with 18 present. Presiding clerk Victoria Ekk began the period of silent worship by reading the following queries taken from New England Yearly Meeting's *Faith and Practice 1985*.

Do we share each other's joys and burdens? When conflicts arise, do we seek in mutual forgiveness and tenderness to resolve them speedily? Do we walk cheerfully over the world answering that of God in everyone?

The following items were brought forward:

1. A hybrid worship-sharing meeting focused on Meeting for Worship format will be held at the meetinghouse on Tenth month 30 beginning at noon. All members and attenders are welcome and childcare will be provided.
2. Friends looking for ways to make a difference in the lives of our neighbors are referred to the article, "Ways We Can Help Our Neighborhood Community" in this month's newsletter.
3. The Religious Education Committee reported on First Day School plans for this fall. They are reading Bible stories and relating them to contemporary issues and Quaker values. There will be a Giving Tree to gather presents for families served by the East Bay Community Action Program.
4. For Ministry and Counsel Committee, Dan Lederer reported that Sally Freestone and Tom Marino have requested marriage under the care of Meeting, and that they have met with a clearness committee, which approved. Ministry and Counsel recommends that our Meeting agree to oversee Tom and Sally's wedding and give ongoing support to their marriage, and asks that an oversight committee be appointed to help plan the wedding, prepare the certificate, and ensure that all legal requirements are followed. Friends approved.
5. Following last month's discussion of uses for the balance of the Meeting's Covid Relief Fund, Ministry and Counsel Committee brought a proposal that the mission of the fund be broadened to include anyone from our Meeting community who is in financial need. Friends approved, with recommendations that we revisit the question in a year and that the availability of the fund be

CALENDAR

Sunday, Oct 16, 10:00 AM,
Meeting for Worship (Indoors and Zoom)

Sunday, Oct 23, 10:00 AM,
Meeting for Worship (Indoors and Zoom)

Sunday, Oct 30, 10:00 AM,
Meeting for Worship (Indoors and Zoom)

Sunday, Oct 30, Noon, Worship
Sharing Regarding Our Meeting for
Worship Format (Indoors and
Zoom)

Sunday, Nov 6, 10:00 AM, Meeting
for Worship (Indoors and Zoom)

Sunday, Nov 13, 10:00 AM,
Meeting for Worship (Indoors and
Zoom)

Sunday, Nov 13, 12:15 PM.
Meeting for Business (Zoom)

publicized again.

6. Ministry and Counsel Committee brought forward a proposed memorial minute for Judy Barrett Litoff. Friends approved.

7. Ministry and Counsel Committee brought forward a proposed memorial minute for Ken Lyon. Friends approved.

8. The Religious Education Committee brought a proposal to hold a gathering for refreshments and public caroling on a weekend afternoon during Twelfth month. Likely dates are the 17th or 18th of Twelfth month. First Day School will choose a date and publicize the event. Friends approved.

9. The Special Events Committee proposed holding our traditional Christmas Gathering on the 10th of Twelfth month from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., to be followed by a potluck dinner. John Lord has offered to coordinate it. Friends approved.

In approving both preceding items, we remind ourselves that the committees involved will work with the Providence Meetinghouse management committee to consider evolving health concerns and take what steps they consider appropriate.

No further business appearing, we closed with a period of silent worship at about 1:00 p.m., intending to meet next on the 13th of Eleventh month.

Respectfully submitted,
Victoria Ekk, Clerk
Rebecca Smith, Recording Clerk

Judy Barrett Litoff
December 23, 1944 - July 3, 2022

Judy Barrett Litoff was a valued member of Providence Monthly Meeting, especially during the period in the '70s and 80's when her daughters Alyssa and Nadja were in First Day School. She led the project in which the children made 1000 paper cranes in honor of Sadako Sasaki, a Japanese girl who died of leukemia following radiation from the atomic bomb. They sent the 1000 cranes, called a senbazuru, to the Children's Peace Monument in Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima. Judy directed the Christmas program for several years. During these programs, she had the children deck the benches with boughs of holly as they sang the song. She brought speakers to First Day School, such as a Hiroshima survivor and an activist who had been arrested for spray painting on a missile. Judy also served on the Property Committee and the Religious Education Committee.

Judy died unexpectedly at age 77 after a successful career as a historian and one of Bryant University's longest-serving faculty members. In addition to many academic papers, she wrote

14 books on midwifery and World War II with a focus on women's correspondence and their contribution to the war effort. Her scholarly work earned her numerous awards including the Honorary Chairs' Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Humanities from the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities.

Judy was also a loving mother and grandmother, leaving behind her two daughters Nadja Pisula-Litoff and Alyssa Barrett Litoff, her longtime partner Val Vlasov, her sons-in-law Jim Pisula and Joshua Gordon, and six grandchildren. A well-attended memorial service for Judy took place at Moses Brown School on August 6, 2022.

Ken Lyon 1941-2021

Many people consider Ken Lyon to be a musical legend, and in New England some refer to him as "the godfather of the blues". However, he was loved as much for the person that he was as for his music. Deeply spiritual but unpretentious, he had a way of personifying the credo of George Fox by walking cheerfully over the world. In this way he was a Quaker through and through even though he had influences from other spiritual traditions.

He lived a remarkable life in which he had his share of fame and fortune. Among some of the highlights were six major record label deals. He also opened for musicians such as Elton John, Queen, Janis Joplin, and Arlo Guthrie. He was friends with Richie Havens. He traveled nationwide and his music was heard on Dick Clark's American Bandstand. There was a sold out concert on his 66th birthday at a thousand seat hall. The event was entitled "An Evening with Ken Lyon: A Musical Retrospective". He was one of the first musicians to be inducted into the Rhode Island Music Hall of Fame. Needless to say, he had a major impact on many local musicians.

In spite of all this he was never overbearing or boastful. He had a true appreciation for the happiness that music brought into people's lives. That was his essence, elevating the spirits of those around him. He managed to do that even when he wasn't playing music. Or maybe he was just music personified, naturally exuding a quality of harmony.

Ken was truly a seeker and was open to new ideas and willing to consider a wide range of philosophies. Oddly enough, he felt at home in the Saylesville Meetinghouse even though it is small and simple, so different from being in the limelight. He also had a great appreciation for Native American spiritual practices. Like many other Quakers, he was disturbed by corporate greed and the variety of ways modern life was artificial and stunted. However, he never forced his opinions on anyone. It was as if he could gently reveal a better world, guiding people in a more positive manner to a more positive place.

Ken was not able to attend Meeting for Worship regularly. One reason was that he was playing music for the Episcopal church that met at the same time. It seemed as if he felt a little bit guilty about not being with us but we fully understood. His music was a gift that he needed to share and we didn't want to deprive other people of it either.

It was with a great amount of pain that we learned that he passed away during the pandemic. This has made it doubly hard for family and friends. We were truly blessed to know him and we consider him a great inspiration.

World Quaker Day

World Quaker Day took place on Sunday October 2 with the theme ***Becoming the Quakers the World Needs***. World Quaker Day is an annual event where we celebrate the diversity of Quakerism around the world and build connections to make our community stronger. This year, every Friends meeting was encouraged to send or receive visitors to or from another Quaker group, to bring greetings, build relationships, and share ideas.

Worship Sharing Sunday October 30

As we've dealt with COVID and other challenges over the last few years, Friends have expressed varying opinions on how we should conduct Meeting for Worship. One area of concern has been the "hybrid", or combined, format. In this, the in-person and online worship gatherings are connected, something that we've been doing every other week. Some Friends view the associated technology to be an intrusion, while others would like to see the technology enhanced. Friends have also been concerned about announcements and introductions that take place after worship ends, wondering whether these should be modified in some way. Worship Sharing, which will take place at noon (after Meeting for Worship) will provide an opportunity to listen carefully to each other on these topics and, we hope, help us find common ground.

Revised Meeting Directory *from Communications Committee*

Communications Committee will be publishing an updated edition of the Meeting Directory later this month. If you have had a change in contact information since the last edition, which was in April, or if you're not currently listed in the Directory but would like to be, please contact Dan Lederer (dlederer1@verizon.net).

In order to engage fully in the life of the Meeting, it's also helpful to be on the Meeting Email List, often referred to as "the listserve", which functions as our electronic bulletin board, providing upcoming event notices and other items of interest to Friends, including links to Zoom meetings. If you are not receiving these notices but would like to, contact Dan.

Ways We Can Help Our Neighborhood Community

from Peace and Social Action Committee

Our meeting is in the intersection of three neighborhoods: Mt. Hope, College Hill, and Blackstone. To implement the banner on our building (“Love Thy Neighbor”) we can be respectful and cheerful to our immediate neighbors, welcome students to our meetings for worship, and reach out with equity to disparate income levels within our neighborhood.

Several organizations coalesce to answer local needs. Camp Street Community Ministries provides a food pantry and clothing center (see article below). Mt. Hope Community Center offers job training, citizen response, support to pregnant women and children through the federal WIC program, and a weekly grocery delivery to shut-ins. Mount Hope Learning Center provides after-school academic help. Vincent Brown Recreation Center also has after-school programs, and, along with a spot in Billy Taylor Park, hosts gardens in a local food security project under the Community Health Initiatives of RI.

Volunteers from PMM have built a shed and other assists for the gardens. Our Meeting has joined the Mt. Hope Community Center, with our member Marcus Mitchell, to create Dinners for Eight at the Center to provide conversations across the Community. In addition, several of our Meeting members have delivered groceries to shut-ins, and several others have lent muscle and organizing skills to the Food Pantry and clothing room at Camp Street Community Ministries. We continue to collect food for this pantry in the foyer of our building.

And two public schools, Hope High School and Martin Luther King Elementary School, are just blocks away. There are opportunities to be a volunteer tutor at Martin Luther King (and many other Providence elementary schools) via the Inspiring Minds organization. And Hope High School has Hope Circle, an organization spearheaded by a local resident on Morris Avenue that helps at the school with volunteers for many things. There is tutoring, managing an in house used-clothing store and laundry for the many students who have very limited or no access to those things, helping with cleaning and fixing on the property, help with theater productions that restarted last year after a hiatus of many years, the reconstruction of the abandoned auditorium, helping the understaffed office, etc. No matter what your skills are, there is something you can help with.

Thanks for making reality of the Love Thy Neighbor banner on our building. To get involved, contact Steve Schwartz, clerk of Peace and Social Action Committee {steve@absteve.com , 401-273-7076 (home) 401-439-7281 (cell)}.

Helping Camp Street Community Ministries

Peace and Social Action reports a need for volunteers to help Camp Street Community Ministries with the packing and delivery of food for those in need. A primary goal of this work is for members of our Meeting community to forge relationships with people in other local communities. This activity is generally weekly, at the end of the week (Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday), and involves two separate activities; (1) packing food for delivery at the center on Camp Street, and (2) delivering it to those in need. Sherri Waldman manages this through a weekly email to a volunteer list that we encourage all to join. Please contact Peace and Social action for more information (Steve Schwartz, Eugenia Marks, or David Bourns), or send a request directly to Sherri to be put on the weekly notifications (snaprov@gmail.com). The weekly notices from Sherri let volunteers know what is needed, which can change weekly.

Our Worship Site in Jamestown *from Conanicut Friends Meeting*

Conanicut Friends continue to meet at the Old Meetinghouse on Weeden Lane in Jamestown at 9:30 AM through October this year. The small lane is often crowded with visitors justifiably interested in the cider donuts and cider offered in the fall at the nearby Windmist Farm (10:00 AM-4:00 PM).

We always welcome our distant Friends as well other visitors, and we often share worship outside. Just for Quakers, the adjacent Hodgkiss Farm has allowed us to park in the field DIRECTLY OPPOSITE Weeden Lane, in the field to the LEFT of the dirt road. Take care in crossing North Road.

On Sunday November 6, we will move our Sunday unprogrammed worship service to Mabel's Studio at Norman Bird Sanctuary, 583 Third Beach Rd., Middletown, RI 02842. Cars may be parked at their central lot, and the visitor's center staff will direct you to the Studio. The Studio is heated and handicapped accessible, and it has bathrooms as well. The building has south facing French doors that offer views of Rhode Island Sound. We meet at 10:30 AM through April 2023.

Conanicut Friends have been sharing hospitality and pot luck luncheon the first Sunday of each month through the summer, and we intend to do so through the winter as well.

For any questions, please phone 401-787-2730 or 401-423-1431.

Clerk's Corner: The Pathway to Truth

from Vicky Ekk

Queries for October from NEYM Faith and Practice 1985:

- *Do we share each other's joys and burdens?*
- *When conflicts arise, do we seek, in mutual forgiveness and tenderness, to resolve them speedily?*
- *Do we walk cheerfully over the world answering that of God in everyone?*

A few days ago at an evening gathering there was much talk about the fracturing of our society, especially focused on adult opinions as to what is appropriate to teach children at school about gender identity. The tone of that particular meeting changed from friendly optimism to a palpable negative energy, a kind of trembling in the room. One member of the group mentioned his experience of surprise and relief when his 9 year old son said, "It's okay, Dad, I get it. I don't mind calling N by a different name if they want it. They're just being themselves." Several of us confirmed similar experiences, wondering what happens to human beings to narrow what we are willing to accept in others and even in ourselves.

What about us as Friends? Do we answer that of God in everyone? I don't have all the answers to my own questions about gender identity, white privilege, the positive and negative influence of European culture and religious fervor in colonized areas, and so many other ideas that seem to divide our world into opposing camps. I know it's very likely that most of my questions will go unanswered even if I live to be a hundred years old. But I do know where many of us Friends can find common ground that helps us to move forward and trust that we will continually evolve. It's that willingness to seek for the Light of Truth and understand that the seeking itself is an open pathway, that we will never be "done" seeking.

Some of the lessons I've learned from the Alternatives to Violence Project focus on the importance of listening deeply to others, without comment or advice, with a heart open to that of God in them. It does not mean that I don't have opinions based on what I've learned, but it does mean that I am growing to respect other perspectives, allowing others to describe their own pathway towards Truth. Quakers have a special advantage to improve deep listening skills because we know the power of silence and time for reflection. How fortunate we are to have this gift!

Presiding Clerk: **Vicky Ekk** clerk@providentfriends.org

Newsletter: **Jen McFadden and Dan Lederer** providentfriend@providentfriends.org

Website: **Sam Schifman** webclerk@providentfriends.org

Questions and Information: **Steve Schwartz** info@providentfriends.org

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

**Current activities are listed
on the Calendar on page 1.**

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The Provident FRIEND
Newsletter of
Providence Monthly Meeting of
the
Religious Society of Friends
99 Morris Avenue
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