

The Provident FRIEND

Feb 12, 2023

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

**Providence Monthly Meeting for Worship
with a Concern for Business
12th of Second Month, 2023
Minutes**

Friends gathered by Zoom technology at 12:15 with 17 present.

Presiding clerk Victoria Ekk began the period of silent worship by reading the following queries taken from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's Faith and Practice, 2017:

Do we help each other to live with integrity and contribute that integrity to the life of our meeting?

How does our meeting nurture members in all stages of life?

How does our meeting welcome those new to Friends and integrate them into our community?

The clerk read the following announcements:

- An email is being sent to all Friends on our email list with suggestions on how to provide information for the annual State of the Society Report to be filed with New England Yearly Meeting.
- Providence Friends continue to collect canned and packaged food for the Camp Street Ministry and Hope Street Neighborhood Center programs.
- The Nominating Committee is reaching out to members and attenders to make sure that our community's needs are met by our various committees. For more information, contact clerk@providencefriends.org.

The following items of business were brought forward:

1. The Presiding Clerk reported on the recent meeting of committee clerks and liaisons. A summary of the discussion was sent out to Friends. Many committee clerks participated, although not all were able to attend. Some committees will be seeking assistance and/or guidance from the Meeting. The clerk noted that the nursery committee is currently not active. Training in the use of our complicated lift will be scheduled later this month.

2. Ministry & Counsel Committee again brought the memorial minute for Jane Maguire which received conditional approval last month pending word from East Sandwich Monthly Meeting. Dan Lederer brought word that East Sandwich Meeting was invited to contribute to the minute but has declined. Friends approved the minute.

CALENDAR

Sunday, Feb 19, 10:00 AM,
Meeting for Worship (Indoors and Zoom)

Sunday, Feb 26, 10:00 AM,
Meeting for Worship (Indoors and Zoom)

Sunday, March 5, 10:00 AM,
Meeting for Worship (Indoors and Zoom)

Sunday, March 12, 10:00 AM,
Meeting for Worship (Indoors and Zoom)

Sunday, March 12 12, 12:15 PM,
Meeting for Business (Zoom)

Saturday, March 18, 11:00 AM,
Memorial Service for Dave McNab
(Indoors and Zoom)

3. Treasurer Peter Swaszek reported that bills for lawn maintenance at Saylesville Meetinghouse have exceeded the budgeted amount due to a combination of factors outside of our control. He requested permission to overspend that budget line by \$800.00. Friends approved.

No further business appearing, we closed with a period of silent worship at 12:45 p.m., intending to meet next on the 12th of Third month.

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

Memorial Minute

Jane Maguire

February 18, 1940 to October 24, 2022

“As we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same,” wrote Nelson Mandela. This is how our Friend Jane Maguire graced her way through life, before she died from Covid complications at Cape Cod Hospital on October 24, 2022.

Jane had been active in Quaker Meetings since her college days in Ohio. She and her first husband, Dan, a disillusioned Vietnam veteran, found support in the Quaker community there. Their lectures, protests, and help to those who fled toward Canada earned Jane a place on Nixon’s so-called “enemies list.”

As she later honed her skills as a social worker and psychotherapist in practices in Ohio, New York, and Massachusetts for 40 years, she found personal strength in Quaker traditions and its unprogrammed meetings. She also found a bulwark in Buddhism’s tenets of acceptance to help her manage 30 years of surgery and treatments to control her Hodgkin’s disease and non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma.

As she moved into retirement at the turn of 21st century, she and her second husband Joel found a home on Prudence Island in Narragansett Bay. While she kept active with her talents as a writer, artist, and yoga instructor, she helped found the Peace Flag Project, worshiped with Quaker meetings at Providence (PFM) and Jamestown (CFM), and helped with social outreach projects. She was on clearness committees for three new members at CFM.

After almost 20 years in Rhode Island, Joel and Jane moved back to the shared familiarity of the Barnstable area of Cape Cod . At that time, she did work with Martha Yager of AFSC on strengthening community involvement of local meetings. When not traveling, helping with her families, or caring for much-cherished pets and loved ones, Jane was pleased to share worship at East Sandwich Preparative Meeting, and she continued seasonal visits to CFM.

Two Friends expressed Jane's essence well:

- *Jane and I became friends through Conanicut Friends Meeting more than 20 years ago. She taught me many things: grace in accepting life's limitations, joy in the face of emotional hardship, unquenchable interest in all the world's people and their many manifestations, and a steadfast commitment to social justice. I will miss her Tinkerbell presence on this earth, although if I close my eyes, I can see her blinking out there.*
- *I loved Jane's gentle and soft spoken nature. She always had something sensitive and important to add to a conversation, as the spirit of kindness was her signature approach to being present. May that which we admired and loved most about her be what we nurture in ourselves and others. She was a true gift to our Meeting.*

Safety Precautions at the Meetinghouse

We continue to ask all who participate in worship at the meetinghouse to wear a mask in order to keep us all as safe as possible during the current wave of flu, COVID, and RSV. We also ask everyone in attendance to provide contact information for use in case there's an exposure.

Wedding of Tom Marino and Sally Freestone

The joyous marriage ceremony of Thomas Arnold Marino and Sally Newhall Freestone took place under the care of Meeting at the Providence meetinghouse on Saturday, January 14, with about 40 friends and family in attendance. It was a hybrid meeting, so those who couldn't attend were able to participate via Zoom. A reception followed in the social room, highlighted by a delicious lunch. The couple created the unique marriage certificate themselves (see below...for privacy purposes, the signatures have been blurred).

Memorial Service for Dave McNab

A memorial service for Dave McNab will take place at the Providence Friends meetinghouse (99 Morris Avenue) at 11:00 AM on Saturday, March 18. While all are welcome, the family needs to know how many people will attend and asks that you RSVP to Dave's son Allan (allanmcnab@rcn.com) no later than March 11.

The Work of Staffing Our Committees Begins

from Nominating Committee

It's never too early to get started, so Nominating Committee is now beginning its work of staffing our various committees for the upcoming fiscal year, which begins June 1. We are again focusing on Friends who are currently on no committees, so those of you in that category may be receiving a call.

As everyone is aware, Meeting has no paid staff. Instead, the task of maintaining Meeting's activities and infrastructure is the responsibility of our 18 committees, and participation on committees is essential to the life of our Meeting.

Nominating Committee's hope is that those of you who are already serving on one or more committees will agree to continue to do so during the upcoming fiscal year. **If you want to make a change**, such as adding a committee or switching to a different committee, please contact Dan Lederer (dlederer1@verizon.net) soon since the committee hopes to bring a report to Meeting for Business in March. If we don't hear from you, which is fine, we'll take that to mean that you are willing to continue on your present committee or committees.

If you're not currently on any committee but would consider joining one and would like to hear more about the many opportunities to serve Meeting that committees provide, please contact Dan so that he can go over the possible choices with you.

Friends Committee on National Legislation Advocacy Team

This year our Providence FCNL Advocacy Team joins more than 125 advocacy teams across the country to ask Congress to **Invest in Peace**. Whatever your availability or comfort level with advocacy is, we can find a role for you! If you would like to join us in this rewarding work or would like to know more about our team, contact Nancy Houston, Eugenia Marks, Steve Schwartz, or Bob Watt, or write to riadvocacyteam@gmail.com.

Contributions of Food

Please remember to bring canned and other non-perishable foods, especially cereal, peanut butter, jelly, and small bags of rice for Camp Street Community Ministries and Mount Hope Neighborhood Center. Contributions can be left in the foyer of our Meetinghouse at 99 Morris.

Books May Be Borrowed

from Library Committee

The Meeting Library Committee would like to remind Friends that books may be borrowed from the library in the Providence meetinghouse. Just remove the borrowing card from the pocket at the back of the book, write your name and telephone number on it, leave the card in the small basket provided on the top shelf, and enjoy the book! When you bring it back, place it in the larger basket and one of the library committee members will take care of it.

Some recently acquired books are *Native Providence* by Patricia Rubertone, *Maybe God is Like That Too* by Jennifer Grant, *A Procession of Friends* by Daisy Newman, *Children of God: A Storybook Bible* by Desmond Tutu, and *Be Still and Listen* by Amos Smith, *The Company of the Committed* by Elton Trueblood, *In and Out the Silence* by Elizabeth Brimelow, *God's Politics* by Jim Wallis, *Vagabond Quakers* by Olga R. Morrill, and *Rhode Island Quakers in the American Revolution 1775-1790*.

Choosing My Social Justice Advocacy

from Val Reishuk

When I was working full-time as a school teacher, I daydreamed about my retirement and the opportunity to be a social justice advocate. I think this is true for a lot of Friends. We want to help, but our family responsibilities and our jobs eat up much of our time. I remember being jealous of one retired Friend at Cleveland Monthly Meeting who worked with inmates facing Ohio's death penalty. Vicky was my hero. I learned from Vicky that I might prefer a single, focused advocacy instead of a collection of short-term donations of my time.

Finally, I retired. And, like most new retirees, I was overwhelmed by the cornucopia of choices for advocacy in Providence. So I focused on what might help school children, and the data revealed something startling.

Can you guess the three main causes of death for American children? (The CDC classifies "children" as those aged zero through nineteen years old.) Number one is gun violence. Sadly, this statistic includes suicide by firearm.

I chose to volunteer with Rhode Island Moms Demand Action, and that group has been pretty congruent with my Quaker peace testimony. In nine years, Moms Demand Action has supported the passage of eight gun bills at the RI State House. Last year, several Friends from PMM joined me for written testimony in the ratification of three gun-sense bills.

The number two cause of death in American children is traffic violence, both inside and outside of cars. A frightening number of American children are killed while riding bikes or walking. Cancer as a cause of death in children is a distant third; accidents like slips, falls and drowning are even further down the list.

I began volunteering with Providence Streets Coalition in 2020, and now I work for that non-profit part-time, advocating for street safety. As a foot traveler (I don't drive due to medical disability), I see first-hand that the Providence landscape is less than safe for people on foot of any age. One of our own beloved Friends was badly injured by traffic violence in November and is still recovering. When there's a "win", it's quite a feeling. PVD Streets has been a catalyst for the installation of new crosswalks in Fox Point, and bike lanes on Broad Street.

At times, it's a bit crazy juggling two advocacies at once. But it is also tremendously rewarding. Elder Friends and advocacy mentors remind me to take frequent "breaks" from the depressing aspects of my work: news stories about violence, survivor testimony, nonstop social media, frustrating political brick walls. If you see me at Meeting, please remind me to breathe! My Friend Vicky was correct about taking a deep dive into social justice and not skimming the surface.

Clerk's Corner: Lesson Learned!

from Vicky Ekk

Not a day goes by that I don't think about how grateful I am for being a Friend. As you know, the majority of my life has been spent learning, both as a student and as a teacher. I have always been curious about everything, or so my mother said. Question words like what and how were quickly followed by why, much to her frustration as she tried to answer me so I would not go on forever. Most days I find myself saying, "I learned something new today." (That's usually said with a smile.)

Last Sunday, a group of ten visitors from a nearby church joined us to experience Quaker worship. At the rise of meeting, the group stayed for coffee hour to discuss their experience and ask questions of the Friends gathered for fellowship. One visitor asked how Friends decided when to speak out of the silence. A couple of us described how we are led to still our shaking knees, stand and speak what is insisting to be shared. The visiting minister chuckled and said, "That's why they call you Quakers, right?" We smiled and nodded.

While we talked about the messages we heard that day, one of the visitors asked if we ever shared from the scriptures. We acknowledged that sometimes Friends share a passage from the Bible and their leadings from reflecting on it, but that messages can come from any of our experiences, because we learn from every experience, every action, every challenge, every reading. The young minister nodded and said, "You learn from everything. Everything helps you evolve."

We went on to discuss how everything that happens helps us understand life, ourselves, and find the path on how to be a better person, a better Friend. No experience is ever wasted if we take the time to reflect and be open to learning. All the time!

That does not mean that all the learning has been joyful, of course. For me, very often, there is discomfort as I realize that I have a long way to go to live a fully simple, peaceful, truthful life! During a phone conversation with one of my sons, he spoke about his work to let go of an addiction to technology. He's a webmaster, so that means that he has to wean himself from constantly checking emails or texts, or playing a game on his phone instead of focusing on being present to his family when he is not working.

That made me look at how I spend my own "down" time. Do I spend more time on my devices than on being present to friends and family? Before I became a Friend, I would have been stuck in my guilt for not doing the right thing. Now I know that I can learn from my son, one step at a time, and that is a joyful thought. Lesson learned!

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 Religious Society of Friends
99 Morris Avenue
Providence, RI 02906