

MEETING CALENDAR

Saturday, Mar 16, 10:00 AM to noon, Saylesville Book Swap (Saylesville Meetinghouse)

Sunday, Mar 17, 9:30 AM, Southeast Quarterly Meeting (Worcester Friends Meetinghouse)

Sunday, Mar 17, Meeting for Worship: at Providence, 10:00 AM (Indoors and Zoom, Hybrid*); at Saylesville, 10:30 AM (Indoors); at Conanicut (Norman Bird Sanctuary), 10:30 AM (Indoors)

Sunday, Mar 24, Meeting for Worship: at Providence, 10:00 AM (Indoors and Zoom); at Saylesville, 10:30 AM (Indoors); at Conanicut (Norman Bird Sanctuary), 10:30 AM (Indoors)

Sunday, Mar 31, Meeting for Worship: at Providence, 10:00 AM (Indoors and Zoom, Hybrid*); at Saylesville, 10:30 AM (Indoors); at Conanicut (Norman Bird Sanctuary), 10:30 AM (Indoors)

Sunday, Apr 7, Meeting for Worship: at Providence, 10:00 AM (Indoors and Zoom); at Saylesville, 10:30 AM (Indoors); at Conanicut (Norman Bird Sanctuary), 10:30 AM (Indoors)

Sunday, Apr 14, Meeting for Worship: at Providence, 10:00 AM (Indoors and Zoom, Hybrid*); at Saylesville, 10:30 AM (Indoors); at Conanicut (Norman Bird Sanctuary), 10:30 AM (Indoors)

Sunday, Apr 14, Meeting for Business at Providence, Noon (Indoors and Zoom, Hybrid*)

*Hybrid = the in-person and online meetings are combined.

Providence Monthly Meeting for Worship
with a Concern for Business
10th of Third Month, 2024
Minutes

Friends gathered at the Providence meetinghouse at noon with 11 present and 3 on Zoom.

Presiding clerk Ariana Steele began the period of silent worship by reading the following queries taken from bethesdafriends.org

What in my present life most distracts me from God? What am I ready to release so that I can give my attention to what matters most? How do the ways in which I choose to use my time, my possessions, my money, and my energy reflect my most deeply held values? How do we support one another in our search for a simpler life?

The clerk reminded Friends that Quarterly Meeting will take place next week at 9:30 at Worcester and will be followed by worship at 10:30.

The following items of business were brought forward:

1. Nominating Committee brought a proposed slate of committee memberships for the coming fiscal year. Nominating also asks that Thia Lord be added to the Pastoral Care Committee. Friends approved the proposed committee memberships. There was some discussion of the fact that some nominal members of committees do not regularly participate in the work of their committees. It is not clear how or if committee lists should be edited to reflect that fact, and not clear whether responsibility for this should rest with Nominating Committee or with individual committee clerks. Concern was also raised that a relatively small number of Friends participate in Meeting for Business and that our fellowship and pot luck gatherings are less vibrant than in the past. Jules Burrowes offered to spend some fellowship time discussing Meeting structure with Friends. Friends asked the Presiding Clerk, Ministry and Counsel Committee, and Nominating Committee to consider possible ways of addressing these concerns and encouraged committee clerks to add their suggestions.

2. The members of Detroit Friends Meeting have sent a letter regarding their efforts to renovate their meetinghouse. Our attender Helen Grundman, who is a member of Detroit Friends, explained that the previous meetinghouse was taken by the local government for space to build a bridge and that the replacement building is in need of work. Detroit Friends have been working with Meetings in their area to raise needed funds. They would like to make a Zoom presentation about their meeting. Friends expressed willingness to listen to the presentation, but also questioned whether details could be made available more conveniently in written form. The Clerk is asked to arrange a Zoom meeting, possibly during fellowship time, and to request more information.

3. Peace and Social Action Committee brought a draft letter concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Committee asked the Meeting to approve the letter and to send copies to the members of the Rhode Island Congressional delegation. Friends approved the letter with some small changes and asked the Presiding Clerk to sign and send it on behalf of the Meeting.

No further business appearing, we closed with a period of silent worship at 1:49 p.m., intending to meet next on the 14th of Fourth month.

Respectfully submitted,

Ariana Steele, Clerk

Rebecca Smith, Recording Clerk

Southeast Quarterly Meeting March 17

The Southeast Quarter (Providence, Smithfield, Westerly, and Worcester) will meet at Worcester Friends Meeting (901 Pleasant Street, Worcester, MA) on Sunday March 17. Meeting for Business will begin at 9:30 AM and Meeting for Worship at 10:30 AM. It's a good opportunity to find out what other Friends in our Quarter are doing.

Saylesville Meetinghouse in the News



The broadcast premiere of Our Town: Lincoln, which has a segment on our Saylesville meetinghouse, was featured on WSBE Rhode Island PBS on March 6. However, it can be viewed again at 8:00 PM on March 14, at 9:30 PM on March 20, and at 2:00 PM on March 24. Ways to see it are Digital 36.1, DirecTV 36, Dish Network 36, Cox 08, Verizon FiOS 08 in RI and 18 in MA, and Comcast 819HD.

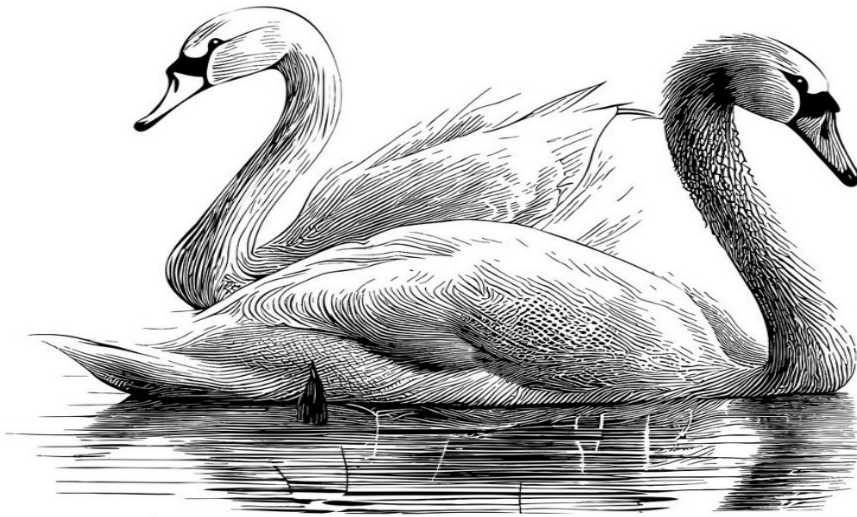
More Art from Meredith Stern

I created "Peace Talk" after reading "Paths To Quaker Parenting: Using Quaker Beliefs, Testimonies, and Practices." The book includes a step by step guide for families to use to manage conflict resolution in our family dialog.



Again, a Call for More Art

If you're one of the many folks at Meeting who are engaged in some sort of artistic expression, please consider sending a sample of your work to the newsletter (providentfriend@providencefriends.org) along with a short description of how it came about. If what you submit has a Quaker theme, so much the better, but that's not necessary. We're hoping to hear from you!



Nature Moves Us with Such Marvelous Messages!

from Rebecca Leuchak

[This article first appeared in The Provident Friend in May 2019. We have re-printed it with the author's permission.]

Consider the swan. What a great image of our meeting community!

Picture a summer's day, a lovely lake, lush flora surrounding its banks. A swan, this elegant bird, is part of the scene. It seems to effortlessly glide along, its image reflected in the still surface of the water. Yet what we know is that there is more than what is visible to our eye. Under the surface of the water that swan's webbed feet are paddling in a flurry of activity to move the swan forward.

So too in our meeting, what those who observe from the outside, or those who visit for the first time, may see is a community gathered in calm and in quiet. What remains invisible to them is the interior spiritual work that individual Friends do on their own that prepares them for coming together in graceful worship in our Meetinghouse. And they are most likely quite unaware of all the effort made by the many committee volunteers to keep the Meeting community afloat and moving forward.

I have shared the above metaphor with Friends before.

But this morning another truth came to me from these same feathered friends. We familiarly praise the duck and the swan and other aquatic birds for their ability to let water roll off of their back. We use this trait as a metaphor for being unflustered, for taking life lightly and not getting stressed, not letting our “feathers get ruffled”. This also, like the gliding swim, is deemed to be an effortless trait of the water bird. But the reality, just as with the paddling feet, is that what gives these birds their waterproof plumage is a very necessary, practical, and labor intensive activity.

We call it “preening.” It is essentially the bird’s labors to waterproof itself.

Preening is a bird's way of grooming its feathers to keep them in the best condition. While preening, birds remove dust, dirt, and parasites from their feathers. They align each feather in the optimum position relative to adjacent feathers and body shape for waterproofing and insulation. With their beaks they distribute the oily, waxy substance produced by the uropygial gland in their hind region to all the other areas of their body – thoroughly coating their feathers with a natural water barrier. This process is time consuming and is so important that most birds will preen several times a day to keep themselves healthy.

So we see that creating an unruffled and serene presence requires quite a bit of labor – for the swan it is by paddling and preening. I would ask what work, necessary, practical, labor-intensive is needed to create for Friends as individuals the centered condition for our own personal spiritual growth? And what work, necessary, practical and labor-intensive, is needed for Quakers to create the conditions for the unruffled and serene community that seemingly effortlessly heeds the call of the Spirit? What is the paddling and preening we need to do to create in ourselves and in our community a place of calm where reflection, deep listening, communion of Spirit can occur?

How can we, like the swans, ducks, geese, loons, cormorants, or any other of the 170 water bird species, practice our own Spirit-led paddling and preening to reach that place where we are gracefully gliding in the Light, effortlessly floating on the current of the divine?

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Address for Contributions:

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Kingston, RI 02881**

**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.**

The Provident FRIEND
Newsletter of
Providence Monthly Meeting of
the Religious Society of Friends
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Providence, RI 02906

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