

The Provident FRIEND September 10, 2024

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

MEETING CALENDAR

Sunday, Sept 15, Meeting for Worship: at Providence, 10:00 AM (Indoors and Zoom); at Saylesville, 10:30 AM (Indoors); at Conanicut (Weeden Lane, Jamestown), 9:30 AM (Indoors)

Thursday, Sept 19, 6:15 PM, Quaker Silence Workshop (Providence Meetinghouse)

Saturday, Sept 21, 10:00 AM to noon, Saylesville Book Swap (Saylesville Meetinghouse)

Saturday, Sept 21, 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM, Great Road Day (Saylesville Meetinghouse)

Sunday, Sept 22, Meeting for Worship: at Providence, 10:00 AM (Indoors and Zoom, Hybrid*); at Saylesville, 10:30 AM (Indoors); at Conanicut (Weeden Lane, Jamestown), 9:30 AM (Indoors)

Sunday, Sept 29, Meeting for Worship: at Providence, 10:00 AM (Indoors and Zoom); at Saylesville, 10:30 AM (Indoors); at Conanicut (Weeden Lane, Jamestown), 9:30 AM (Indoors)

Sunday, Oct 6, Meeting for Worship: at Providence, 10:00 AM (Indoors and Zoom); at Saylesville, 10:30 AM (Indoors); at Conanicut (Weeden Lane, Jamestown), 9:30 AM (Indoors)

Thursday, Oct 10, 6:15 PM, Quaker Silence Workshop (Providence Meetinghouse)

Sunday, Oct 13, Meeting for Worship: at Providence, 10:00 AM (Indoors and Zoom); at Saylesville, 10:30 AM (Indoors); at Conanicut (Weeden Lane, Jamestown), 9:30 AM (Indoors)

Sunday, Oct 13, noon, Meeting for Business (Indoors at Providence and Zoom)

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

**Providence Monthly Meeting for Worship
with a Concern for Business
8th of Ninth Month, 2024
Minutes**

Friends gathered at the Saylesville meetinghouse at noon with 12 present and 3 on Zoom. Presiding clerk Ariana Steele began the period of silent worship by reading the following queries taken from renofriends.org:

- *How do I strive to maintain the integrity of my inner and outer lives?*
- *Do I act on my principles even when this entails difficult consequences?*
- *Am I honest and truthful in all that I say and do, even when compromise might be easier or more popular?*
- *Do we, in our Meeting, hold ourselves accountable to one another, as do members of a healthy family?*

The clerk announced that our Saylesville meetinghouse will be open from 11:00 to 4:00 on Ninth month 21 as part of Great Road Day. Friends are invited to come visit or volunteer. The following items of business were brought forward:

1. Hospitality Committee reported on the many things that this committee does. They note that the committee has a small number of active members, that it can be difficult to get Friends to sign up for Providence coffee hour set-up, and also that not as many Friends bring food as was the case before the pandemic. There was discussion about the most effective method(s) of communication within the Meeting community and about the need for more participation. Further thoughts should be shared with Eugenia Marks or Judy Shaw.

2. Nursery and Child Care Committee reported that they have four students to staff the nursery in pairs as needed this year. All have passed appropriate background checks and three have CPR training. The availability of child care has been a significant benefit to Meeting families.

3. Treasurer Peter Swaszek brought a report for the first quarter of the fiscal year. Income is ahead of expense so far; however, the Nursery and Saylesville maintenance lines are running ahead of budget due to some unusual needs during the summer.

4. Nominating Committee requested that the following Friends be added to committees: Dan Potts to Finance, Mycah Hogan to Communications, Alex Leonard to Adult Religious Education. Friends approved.

5. Nominating Committee and Ministry & Counsel brought a request that Laura Landen be added to the Ministry and Counsel Committee to fill a vacancy. Friends approved.

6. Leila Shayegan and Jason Bartell have requested marriage under the care of our

Meeting. Although the two are not yet members of our Meeting, they have been active attenders for a considerable time and have had positive meetings with a clearness committee. Ministry & Counsel Committee supports their request, noting the 17th of next Fifth month as a possible date. Friends approved.

No further business appearing, we closed with a period of silent worship at 1:15 p.m., intending to meet next on the 13th of Tenth month at the Providence meetinghouse.

Respectfully submitted,
Ariana Steele, Clerk
Rebecca Smith, Recording Clerk

**Quaker Silence Workshop Continues
from Adult Religious Education Committee**

Have you ever wondered why sitting in silence is so central to Quaker worship? Maybe you are concerned that you aren't "doing it right," or that you just don't know what to do for a whole hour of silence. How do I know if I have a message to share? These are all great questions, ones which you are not alone in having. Even if you haven't attended it before, the Quaker Silence Workshop is continuing and you are welcome to come and learn about the role of silence in Quaker worship, how to do it, and why it is so important.

We meet at the Providence meetinghouse (99 Morris Avenue, Providence). Dates and time are 6:15 PM to 7:45 PM on the following Thursdays: September 19, October 10, and October 24.

For more information, and to sign up, contact Laura Landen (laura.landen@hotmail.com or 401-277-1649). There is no enrollment limit.

Great Road Day at the Saylesville Meetinghouse September 21

On Saturday September 21, from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM, our Saylesville meetinghouse will be open, along with a number of other historic sites, for Great Road Day. Friends are invited to come visit or volunteer. Admission to all sites is free that day. Contact Rebecca Smith or Ann Durant for more information.

Extended Worship on November 2; Call for Overnight Hospitality

Meeting has agreed to host a NEYM-sponsored extended worship session at the Providence meetinghouse on Saturday November 2 (more detailed information will be forthcoming soon). Providence Friends are encouraged to attend, but in addition there may be Friends coming from afar, and some will need overnight hospitality just for Friday night November 1, ideally on the East Side and not far from the meetinghouse. If you might be able to help, please contact Dan Lederer (dlederer1@verizon.net).

First Day School Curriculum *from Religious Education Committee*

First Day School is running a curriculum on Quakers and our relationships with native peoples this fall. We would like to ensure this curriculum presents a balanced and realistic view of this topic from cultural and historic perspectives. If you have anything to contribute, or would like to help run a session one First Day, please contact Wendy Virgadamo or any other member of the Religious Education Committee.



The Estate Sale Took Place June 8
from Rebecca Leuchak, clerk of the Fundraising Committee

Many Hands Make Light Work...

Gratitude and a Heartfelt Thank You for a Successful Estate Sale!

Before she died, Friend Carla Dowben and her daughter Susan Day initiated the idea of a Friends Meeting Estate and Yard Sale with a nucleus of contributions coming from Carla's lovely home. Their hope was that the profits from the sale could be used for causes of social justice and change. With the plan put into motion, many other Friends contributed beautiful items as they downsized or did spring cleaning. Others pitched in with help transporting items, unpacking, sorting, pricing, and then staffing the sale on June 8. It was a beautiful early summer day. Some Friends baked for the bake sale and musicians entertained the whole day under a canopy on the lawn outside the meetinghouse. A special treat was the last act of the day, the "Spice Boys."

Reflecting on the weeks of preparation and the wonderful day of the sale, I am overwhelmed with gratitude for the outpouring of support. The success of the sale surpassed our expectations, and it is all thanks to the enthusiasm and generosity of our community. We had hundreds of people coming to our meetinghouse to shop, not only on Saturday but in the week following. Quite a few people asked about the Meeting and about Quakerism while they were with us. We sold the majority of items that were in the sale. We worked together as a team and had fun in the process!

To each and every one of you who donated items for sale, prepared for, staffed, played music during, contributed backed goods, cleaned up afterward, and attended the sale, my sincerest thanks. Your participation not only enabled many material things to be upcycled and put to new use, but also allowed us as Friends an opportunity for outreach to the local neighborhood and wider community. And with many hands doing the work, we strengthened our Meeting community in significant ways.

The tally isn't in yet of our profits, we still have some very special items for sale on eBay, but once we have that information, as a Meeting we can discern the use of these funds in ways that put our Quaker testimonies into action.





A Few Requests Regarding Meeting for Worship

from Ministry and Counsel Committee

- >Friends are again reminded that Meeting for Worship begins when the first person sits down in the worship room, which may happen before 10:00 AM.
- >Some of us have less than optimal hearing, so it's helpful if messages are delivered in a loud, clear voice.
- >Friends are asked to silence their phones, and please no texting during Meeting for Worship.
- >And finally, please avoid wearing any powerful fragrances in the worship room; for some Friends this is a health issue.

Memorial Minute for Carla Lurie Dowben

January 18, 1932, to January 9, 2024

In January, we lost our valued member Carla Dowben. In April 2014, she had transferred her membership from Acton Friends Meeting (Concord, MA), where she had been a member since 1962. While at Providence she provided an important presence at online Meetings for Worship during COVID, and she served ably on Ministry and Counsel Committee until the time of her death. A memorial service for her was held at the Providence meetinghouse on February 24, 2024.

Carla's husband Robert had died in 2019, and losing him had shaken her faith, but she found renewed meaning and purpose at Meeting, plus an opportunity to serve, and she attributed her restored faith to the support of the Meeting community. In gratitude, she donated many of her household and personal possessions to Meeting for a yard sale that was held June 8, 2024.

Raised in a Jewish household, she began attending Friends meeting in Philadelphia while in law school at Temple University, where she was the only woman in her class.

Later, in Chicago, Carla's sense of social justice exemplified itself in the kinds of cases she took. She worked for the Cook County Legal Aid Society and made a living defending the poor and recent immigrants from Europe. She was particularly empathetic to women's roles in the social order of the day. In one case she obtained the release of a woman who had been wrongly incarcerated in a mental facility by demonstrating the false claims of the husband. Another case made it all the way to the Supreme Court.

In Dallas she was particularly interested in protecting people in the health care system, and she taught medical ethics in the medical school there. She was a champion of women's rights and access to healthcare for all marginalized individuals.

Carla was instrumental in starting Acton Friends Meeting. While there, she took on the role of defending the legal rights of patients confined to mental hospitals. Many in the Acton meeting provided aid to her cause, networking with legislators and others. She contributed to the closure of several institutions for developmentally delayed individuals in Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

Carla loved nature, especially flowering plants, which she shared generously from her "Monet" garden. Her generosity was legion with her caregivers and their families. She had a great sense of humor, and her close friends considered her "a hoot." Her attitude was to keep evolving and growing throughout her life, and this will continue to serve as an inspiration for us all.

Memorial Minute for Anne Willoughby DiMase

February 12, 1933, to October 11, 2023

On October 11, 2023, Providence Monthly Meeting of Friends lost a cherished member, Anne Willoughby DiMase, who passed away at the age of 90 years. Anne became a member of Meeting upon turning 70 years. She reflected with her membership Clearness Committee that she still had "a lot to offer" and wished to belong to our community. Indeed, over the last two decades, Anne has graced our Meeting with her kindness, warm embrace, and enduring optimism of humanity.

Anne had a presence, a warm smile and, as one member described it, "eyes that danced." She would often sit on the back bench of the meeting room, welcoming and, in her role as Membership Recorder, tallying those who entered the Meeting room. Another member recollected feeling a great sense of comfort seeing her in this familiar role, thinking "Anne is here. All is well. All she greets will be made to feel welcome." Her presence lent a steadiness, a valued constancy, to Meeting for Worship and to the broader life of the

Meeting.

Anne had Light. Quakers speak of "Inner Light" which Anne had in abundance. She also manifested "outer light," a smile that lit up and enlivened a conversation. Her genuine interest and concern for others served to lighten whatever burdens they might be carrying. One felt listened to, heartened, and affirmed in Anne's presence with her gentle approach and acceptance of all people. She could also be funny and was known for her witty quips. She was sought out for her natural gift of bringing meaningful life experiences to bear that offered guidance and reassurance to others. She was approachable and inviting during coffee hour, and balanced matters of a serious nature with a light touch.

Anne believed deeply in justice, compassion, and equality for all people, values informed by her deep faith and studies of Christianity, Buddhism, and Vedanta Hinduism. In keeping with her eclectic prism of perspectives and practices, Anne was a pacifist and supporter of the civil rights movement. For many years Anne served on the Peace and Social Concerns Committee making valuable contributions and staying abreast of current social justice issues.

Anne was often accompanied at Meeting on Mother's Day by her beloved daughter Sherrie and grandson Shane. They made a family tradition of attending the annual Christmas Eve candlelight service at Saylesville Meeting House. Anne enjoyed the fellowship and cookies afterwards, and she was always eager to catch up with young people home for Christmas holiday. One of her favorite holidays was Valentine's Day and she extended a warm invitation to her friends at Meeting to join at her home for cookies and hot chocolate. She wasn't a fussy entertainer, insisting that "store bought cookies are just fine." She placed the emphasis on connecting with people and relationships, rather than formalities, creating a home that was appreciated as a lively hub of joy in times of celebration, and a welcoming place of comfort in times of difficulty.

Born in Worcester, Massachusetts on February 12, 1933, Anne lived most of her life in New England. She graduated from the University of Rhode Island with a degree in Early Childhood Education. She then won a fellowship for graduate studies in Human Development and Human Relations at Merrill Palmer Institute in Michigan. A lifelong learner, Anne also studied Anthropology at Brown University and Social Work at Rhode Island College.

Anne's life spoke with her good works devoted to children. She was passionate about early childhood education and as one member noted, "She never seemed to age...she was forever young." True to her ideals, Anne spent years advocating for higher standards in this field, especially for disadvantaged students and those with special needs. During her early years she served as director of a school for disabled children in Springfield, MA and taught third grade in Dedham, MA and later in Cincinnati, OH.

After returning to Rhode Island, she taught at Meeting Street School in Providence. She went on to found and teach at the East Greenwich Cooperative Nursery School. Anne served on the East Greenwich School Committee, where she advocated for individualized

educational programs for students. Later, she taught at the John Hope Day Care Center, where she began a parents' group and practiced social work at the John Hope Settlement House. She also directed several Head Start programs and day care centers in Lima, OH and Glendale, CA. With remarkable energy, she established and directed a new infant-toddler center and preschool in Middletown, RI while directing day care programs at Child and Family Services of Newport County. Anne was a visionary and gifted educator who improved the lives of many.

When Anne reached standard retirement age, not one to be idle, she took a position at the American Automobile Association. There she continued in her diligent, calm, and cheerful manner to assist travelers in Providence. She finally (and reluctantly) settled into her well-deserved retirement at the age of 80. Wherever Anne worked and lived, she was a source of support and guidance, and she stayed in touch with many of her mentees throughout her life.

Anne loved poetry and history, particularly hearing the stories of those who came before her. She also loved music, particularly the jazz of her youth and the folk music of the 50s and 60s. Spending time in nature brought a special joy to her.

Anne is survived by one son, Daniel, three daughters, Debora, Laura, and Sherrie, and nine grandchildren. She was also blessed with dear friends that she cherished, many of whom spoke at her memorial service. Anne's good works and relationships live on, and our lives are enriched for having known her.

Art from Tom and Sally Marino

This kind of meditative drawing is called "ZenDoodling" and is wonderfully mindful and calming. Giving our drawings away makes for double joy, both for us and for whoever we give them to!

from Tom



from Sally



Quakers and the Upcoming Election *from Dan Lederer*

As a Quaker Meeting, we make it our practice not to endorse any candidates for election, although we are free to do so as individuals. The upcoming presidential election is an important one, possibly the most consequential in our lifetimes, and, if this is so, it behooves us to provide whatever time, energy, and money we can to support the candidates of our choice.

The future of our country is at stake, and we want to be able to look back and say that we did all we could to try to ensure a good outcome, which means we each need to ask ourselves, "What can I do to help?" And at the very least, please be sure to vote!

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