

Worcester Friends Meeting

Religious Society of Friends (Quaker)

901 Pleasant Street
Worcester, MA 01602
Tel. (508) 754-3887

e-mail: info@WorcesterFriendsMeeting.org
www.WorcesterFriendsMeeting.org



December 2011 - January 2012

QUERIES

- *Do you live with simplicity, moderation, and integrity?*
- *Are you punctual in keeping promises, careful in speech, just and compassionate in all your dealings with others?*
- *Do you take care that your spiritual growth is not sacrificed to busyness but instead integrates your life's activities?*
- *Are your recreations consistent with Quaker values; do they refresh your spirit and renew your body and mind?*

From Faith and Practice of New England Yearly Meeting of Friends, 1986

Clerk's Corner

by Clarence Burley

And now we are in Advent, the coming. The bible tells us of God's coming: first directly to the patriarchs from Adam to Moses, then indirectly through leaders like Moses, Joshua, the judges, then the prophets, down to my personal favorite, John the Baptist. A lot of words follow about the coming of Jesus, but strangely the bible ends with the plea, "...come, Lord Jesus." There's more to come?

I'm told George Fox didn't think so. He knew that we are living in the time of the Christ, in Gospel time. And he spent the rest of his life trying to convince us of this with more, or less, success.

A couple of his recent successes are in our library: Lloyd Wilson's *Essays on the Quaker Vision of Gospel Order* and Brian Drayton's *On Living with a Concern for Gospel Ministry*. These heralds are proclaiming Fox's idea that Christ is alive and well in our hearts and waiting to be born into the world. Our refrigerator quotes Gandhi (Another Christ?) telling us to "be the change you want to see in the world." So let us be the advent and the nativity we want to see in the world.



Friends Meeting House, Uxbridge, MA, 1770, Route 146A and Route 98;
National Register of Historic Places

Our Betty Jones signed, on behalf of Worcester Friends Meeting, the 1950-ish deed granting the 1740 meeting house and cemetery in South Uxbridge to the Uxbridge Meeting House Association. They have raised funds and taken good care of the property ever since.

They have taken care of it both for old fogies like me who like to live in past centuries and for those who make current use of it. The cemetery is well kept. New windows in the meeting house preserve the ambiance while keeping out the weather. A worship group is based there. Open houses are held for the curious. An occasional wedding takes place. And on Thanksgiving Day an ecumenical service is held.

This year both hearths cheered some fifty souls giving thanks in word, song and Quaker silence. Eight religious groups were listed on the program. The principle sermon, by the pastor of Uxbridge Congregational, cheered me by quoting my old teacher, Meister Eckhart: "If your only prayer is 'thank you,' that is enough."

And of course cider, coffee, doughnuts, and danish brought us back to century 21.

Ed: More information about the Uxbridge Meeting House can be found on line: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friends_Meetinghouse_\(Uxbridge,_Massachusetts\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friends_Meetinghouse_(Uxbridge,_Massachusetts))

RETREATS AT WOOLMAN HILL

Photographing from Within - Arthur Fink

February 17-19, 2012

This will be a weekend of photographing from within, with time for silent worship together, for creating pictures, and for sharing our work, our process, and our spiritual journey. Our goal is to broaden our vision, open our spiritual awareness, and, as we do this, learn how to take more expressive pictures. Note that this is NOT a workshop about photographic technique. It's about inward visual and outward expression, about how artistic work helps us both discover and celebrate our spiritual truths. You don't need lots of photographic experience to join this workshop, though you should feel passionate about taking and making pictures that speak from within.

Knitting for Others - Beth Gorton & Friends

February 17-19, 2012

Want to warm someone's heart? Knit for them! Knitting is one way of centering; if you don't know what needs you to knit it, centering and letting go of your preconceived ideas will let rise the person, cause or item that needs your energy. If you don't know how to knit, and want to learn, there will be plenty of support - and knitting needles and oodles of yarn to use. We do not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, religious creed, etc. etc. If you prefer another craft such as crocheting you are welcome to join us - although we might not be able to give as much help.

Tending the Seeds Within: A Reflective Writing Retreat - Becky Jones

March 16-18, 2012

This is a weekend in which you can journal, write poetry, fiction, or whatever else you are moved to write. Writers of all levels are welcome. Through our writing, we will explore where we've been and what new is trying to emerge in our lives. Becky will provide prompts to jump-start the writing, but we can choose to use or ignore the prompts given. Please bring a notebook, favored writing implements, art supplies (if you wish), and an object or objects that hold meaning for you to put into a center circle. If weather permits, we may spend some time out of doors.

More information and registration details are available at <http://www.woolmanhill.org>

The annual retreat of the New England Yearly Meeting's Ministry and Counsel Committee was held at the Meeting School in Rindge, New Hampshire on November 11 -13th. I am our Monthly Meeting's representative and attended on Friday night and Saturday. It was necessary for me to leave on Sunday for a family memorial service in New York City.

On Friday evening there was a meeting for worship for the Smithfield Meeting, as it has been experiencing a decline in membership. After worship and supper, we made concentric circles, and, changing partners with each question, we shared our thoughts.

On Saturday, Friends reflected on creating vibrant meetings that reflect our Spiritual life.

We asked how do we encourage and equip young people and others, too, to be active members of the Religious Society of Friends. While we celebrate the excellent leadership and commitment of the staff for our Young Friends retreats, our Youth is, for the most part, absent for meeting for worship when they reach junior high and high school. The retreats for Young Friends are well attended.

How to nurture and exercise spiritual gifts remains a problem for many of us. One Friend stated, "We are not benefiting from the gifts that we have." We are reminded that, "Where there's life, there's Light." Since attending the November Meeting of M&C, I have given some thought to the problems of increasing membership or attendance in a small religious group.

Perhaps because Quakers have silent worship, where we wait for the Spirit, one Friend at M&C said, "Sometimes we may become overly concerned with using the 'right' language." Another Friend said, "Silence is not the point. Openness is the thing." We were reminded that years ago, Friends traveled great distances to worship together for extended periods of time - four to

six hours at a time.

I think that perhaps we may become overly reticent about speaking - not only in meeting for worship - but also to one another. It is necessary for Friends not only to wait for the "still quiet voice", but also to practice our Faith. God, give us the Faith to practice our Faith.

Saturday morning, a Friend told this story:

"A man asked the Rabbi, 'I heard that God used to speak to people. He's not speaking anymore. Why?' The Rabbi answered, 'There's nobody around who can bow low enough.'"

Historically, Friends went into public spaces to proclaim God's way. During these times, Change is necessary. It was strongly believed by several Friends that Change will not come about only

through Listening. Other Friends encouraged us to keep the belief that what is happening is God's Will. We need to live our lives so that everything is in sync with our vision. We must wait, practice and focus.... Friends have a wonderful tradition of discernment - of waiting, focusing, praying with others, of seeking the divine experience in out hearts, rather than only in our heads. We can meet with a Clearness Committee or Elders in order to pray and reflect on our Leadings; in order to discern when an idea is a Leading, and not originating from fear or mistrust. A Leading is more than a human response to immediate events.

While at the Saturday afternoon meeting, I spoke about our Meeting's fellowship that comes with our weekly potluck at the rise of meeting for worship. I also expressed my gratefulness for having had the opportunity of attending Marjorie Larrivee's Pendle Hill workshop on Eldering.

I came to Quakers with the Belief that we can make a better world. I left this M&C retreat with the belief that we are part of a greater movement which is part of a greater story.



New England Yearly Meeting's Ministry & Counsel held their November meeting in the Bliss House at the Meeting School. This photo was taken in late October.



On December 18th, the First Day School children read selections of the Nativity Story, led singing of Christmas Carols, and placed Creche figures from Ecuador. Photo: Joanna Mikkelsen, Lucy Barnard, Katie Green, Xyzika Mikkelsen, Malcolm Barnard, and Kathryn Barnard.

First Day School

Worcester Friends' Spoken Word Series

All events begin at 8 PM, with refreshments and conversations following the performance. A \$10 donation is requested; all are welcome.



On Saturday, January 7, Laretta Phillips from New Hampshire performed her program, *My Gal Sal and Other Tales*. Laretta brought us an evening of simple, down-home humor. Those who came to this program warmed up and enjoyed some good chuckles with friends.



Saturday, February 4 *Everybody Says Freedom*

Bob Reiser brings the Civil Rights era to life, telling some personal stories and stories of the people and the spirit that made the Civil Rights Movement possible. Bob is a storyteller from Western Massachusetts, via way of New York.

Book Review

by Michael True

The Future of Faith, which Karen Armstrong rightly regards as “a timely and prophetic book.” was published in 2009. I highly recommend this book to Friends. And please bring blue books for a pop quiz prior to Meeting for Worship on First Day, that is, February 5.

A readable, informed, and positive take on religious culture in the U.S. at the present time, Professor Cox, Harvard Divinity School, responds to the question: “What does the future hold for religion, and for Christianity in particular.”

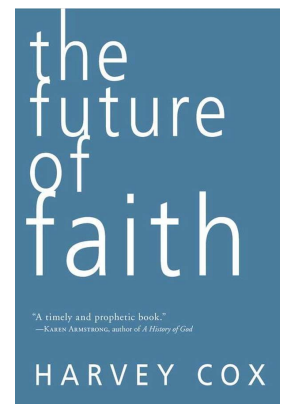
Internationally famous four decades ago, as the author of “The Secular City,” he brings all of his talent as a writer and theologian, knowledgeable about world religions, to reflect on resemblances between religious culture during the time of Jesus and the present. In doing so, he provides insightful reflections on how the Christian church got off the track by about the fifth century, in a devolution from faith to belief that continues to haunt us.

Once the church allied itself with the Holy Roman Empire, its focus shifted from one of awe, wonder, and mystery, to a focus on belief, that is, from the concrete to the abstract. Greek thought affected this devolution, through Augustine and others, increasingly preoccupied with law and doctrine, rather

than faith and practice. Governed increasingly by a clerical caste complicit with a domination system, the faithful were often disciplined as “heretics,” and condemned, even burned at the stake. Eventually, the faithful rebelled leading up to the Reformation and the secular age.

In this brief summary, I have probably oversimplified his argument, which never glosses over historical events or theological arguments. At the same time, he acknowledges important contributions to religious history and theological writings, while focusing on people’s history and the influence of modern reform movements. He makes a special place for liberation theology-- a movement that, like early Christianity, arose from the poor and disenfranchised,

Having emphasized how the primal impetus of faith “was nearly suffocated by creeds, hierarchies, and the disastrous merger of church and empire,” he highlights “how a newly global Christianity, enlightened by a multiplicity of cultures and yearning for the realization of God’s reign of shalom, is finding its soul again.”



In Memoriam



Friends will hold a Memorial Service for **Connie Riley** at 10 AM on Fifth Sunday, January 29, 2012. The original date for the Memorial, October 30th, was cancelled due to the early snow storm. Connie passed away on September 23, 2011 in the Highlands Nursing Home in Fitchburg. Worcester Friends treasured her work for peace, literacy, and her poetry.

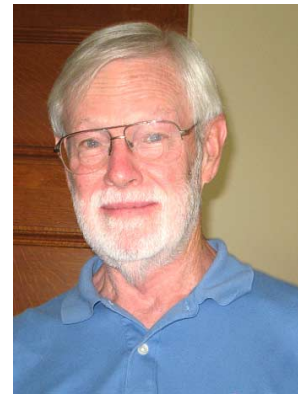
Friendly News about Worcester Friends

- After a year and a half of living and working near Santa Rosa, California, **Karina Shorten** (now 28) and husband **Alan Boyer** just returned to Massachusetts. The couple met while both were doing work on the same theatre show in Boston - Karina as Stage Manager and Alan as Set Builder. Karina earned her B.F.A. from Boston University and M.A. from University of Edinburgh, where she studied the anthropology of the genocide in Rwanda.

Karina recalls fond memories of First Day School classes here, Stella's pot lucks, playing flute to our Christmas caroling, and numerous Young Friend retreats. Having visited parents and family over the holidays, they'll be house-sitting for a friend in Princeton over the winter. Karina and Alan hope to scrape together enough savings to eventually buy a homestead in Maine.

- **Josie Brown** is teaching a course at Clark University and continuing her doctoral work at Boston University.

- **Paul Gallagher** will be leaving for Guyana on January 29. Paul will be traveling with his Rotary group to bring equipment for teaching a select group of highly trained nurses to teach first responder emergency medical skills. Paul will return on February 6. We will look forward to hearing his stories.



Paul Gallagher

- **Michael True** is completing a four-year term on the AFSC Nobel Peace Prize Committee, which sent the Oslo Committee Nobel Peace Prize nominations for Gene Sharp, Father Roy Bourgeois and SOA Watch, and the Hebakisha - Japanese Peacemakers and Survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Many Thanks for Hard Work



Our Meetinghouse continues to be spruced up with fresh coats of paint applied by Friends Mary Chenaille and Maryanne Walker. Wow! Maryanne made new curtains too! The back hallway looks fantastic. Buckets of thanks go to these two amazing women.

Special thanks go to Brian Poynton, Building and Grounds Committee. Brian arranged the painting of the large room we use for Meeting for Worship. It was necessary to remove half of the old canvas ceiling; it was rebuilt with new plasterboard.

A Message from Ministry and Counsel on the State of Society

Dear Friends,

Over the past two years, New England Yearly Meeting's Committee on Ministry & Counsel (M&C) has been exploring the purpose and process of the Yearly Meeting State of Society report.

Throughout our considerations, we have uncovered more questions than answers.

What does "society" mean in the context of the yearly meeting? Is there a difference between the spiritual health of the Yearly Meeting and the collective health of its constituent local meetings? Should the Yearly Meeting structure - its committees, staff, and volunteers - be an integral part of a State of Society report? How is the report relevant to Friends who do not participate at the Yearly Meeting level as well as to Friends who are active in the Yearly Meeting's activities and committee structure? How can the process be a meaningful one that identifies the underlying spiritual realities of the community it examines? Should it be the same year to year, or vary?

What time frame is most useful to review - the calendar year, the year between annual sessions, or some other period? How can a written report effectively capture how the Spirit is moving amongst us?

Over the past several M&C meetings, it has become clear that the exploration of our approach to the State of Society has not come to a final resolution, but continues to be a live issue for us.

Again and again, we have affirmed that the process is just as, if not more, important than the document that is produced.

In addition to reviewing state of society reports submitted by monthly meetings, this year M&C set up working groups to interview clerks of NEYM committees, NEYM staff, and those working with youth programming. Out of worship, at our September 17, 2011 meeting, the committee considered the summaries of these working groups, worshipful discussions over the past year and a half, and the experience of August 2010 and August 2011 Annual Sessions (extending the period of the report beyond the normal calendar year). Recognizing that our priority is the spiritual examination itself rather than the resulting document, M&C came to unity on the following written summary. While it may not be perfect, we hope it is "good enough."

State of Society of New England Yearly Meeting for January 2010 through August 2011

We sense a hunger, a yearning to love and to be loved, to listen and to be heard in the language of our hearts, and to participate in communities that sustain us. We hunger to deepen our experience of God, and to faithfully carry that experience into the world. We feel a tension within us between comfort with the way things are and a yearning to step into the uncomfortable and unknown. We recognize the fear and the hope that exist in staying the same and in trying something new. We are called to live into the acceptance of what is and the hope of what can be. Having seen the beginning of a movement from woundedness to healing in our Yearly Meeting, we wonder what it will lead to if we continue in that direction. There is nourishment in our tradition and in being transparent with one another about our journeys. It can be exciting and terrifying to pull back the veil that separates us from each other and from God. How do we encourage joy and growth as we come to better know one another in that which is eternal?

Ed: The above NEYM's State of Society (SoS) report for January 2010 through August 2011 is generating discussion in our meeting. The Worcester Friends Meeting has been one of a few of the monthly meetings that has written and submitted a State of Society report each year. We find the process of writing is an opportunity for our community to gather and reflect on our strengths, weaknesses, needs and accomplishments. The Worcester Meeting has written to NEYM's Ministry and Council expressing our belief that the State of Society report should have content that is meaningful to Friends who were not present at Sessions and that content should name the challenges with which Friends struggle.

NEYM's Committee on Ministry and Counsel encourages all meetings to submit a SoS report to the Quarter and to the Yearly Meeting office by April 30.

I am now in my third year of a five year appointment as a member of New England Yearly Meeting's Permanent Board. The Permanent Board is comprised of 45 Friends from monthly meetings across New England. It meets four times a year, as well as just before and at the end of the annual Sessions held in August. Members are nominated and approved by the gathered body at Sessions. The Permanent Board has authority to conduct business for the Yearly Meeting when the Yearly Meeting is not in sessions. Edward Baker currently serves as Clerk of the Permanent Board; John Humphries is the Recording Clerk.

(Are you wondering why it is called the "Permanent Board"? When it was originally created in 1945, following the merger of the Gurneyite and Wilberite Meetings in New England, members were appointed to life-time terms.)

At the meeting held in Hartford, CT, on November 19, 2011, we heard the report from Jonathan Vogel-Borne, the Yearly Meeting Secretary. Jonathan discussed the proposed Priorities Budget, gave a staff update, and reported on significant events at several monthly meetings.

Much of his report was devoted to the New England Friends Home in Hingham, MA. After operating at a loss for many years, having been subsidized by income from endowed funds (now exhausted), it was decided at Sessions in August, 2011, to close the Home.

Originally established to provide a retirement home for retired spinster Quaker teachers, the home had evolved into an 18 bed assisted living facility. When the decision to close the Home was made, none of the residents, or staff, were Quakers. The residents were primarily Hingham citizens who appreciated an opportunity to

reside in an assisted living facility which charged significantly less than comparable nearby facilities. All of the residents have now found other living accommodations, the staff has found new jobs, and the Yearly Meeting has a caretaker residing at the Home who is performing maintenance services.

Friends stated at Sessions that a preference would be given to a buyer who would operate the facility to provide elder services. Five interested parties have already expressed interest; proposed uses include a hospice and an Alzheimer's unit. A commercial real estate broker is expected to be engaged by the end of November.

The next major agenda item was a discussion and recommendation about the Search Committee and process for hiring the next Yearly Meeting Secretary. Jonathan has announced his intention to retire at the end of December, 2012, by which time he will have served for twenty years. A committee of seven members will be created, with consideration given to geographic location, gender, age, and spiritual beliefs. In addition, the committee will include one past Presiding Clerk of the Yearly Meeting, and a member of the Coordinating and Advisory Committee. Donn Weinholtz, Deanna Chase, and Bruce Neumann have agreed to serve; four other Friends are in the process of discernment.

After hearing reports from NEYM's Treasurer and Finance Committee, we heard a report from Jackie Stillwell, the new Presiding Clerk of NEYM, about the planning for August, 2012, Sessions; the theme will be "Choose Integrity!" We also heard a report and discussed plans for a mid year gathering, which will be held in Wellesley on March 31st through April 1st. The theme will be The Environment and Sustainable Living.

Going On...



This is Where We Take Our Stand, the film about the Iraq Veterans Against the War Winter Soldier/Iraq & Afghanistan Investigation, has now been distributed to every PBS station in the country for broadcast in January and February. Funded by the Independent Television Service (ITVS) and distributed by the National Educational Television Association (NETA), people finally have the opportunity to see this film.

WGBH's World Channel (digital 44.2) will be airing this film on Tuesday, January 17th at 10 AM, 4 PM, 6 PM and 9 PM. The full series is also available on line: <http://thisiswherewetakeourstand.com>

**Worcester Friends Meeting
Meeting for Business
November 13, 2011**

Present: Mark Sullivan, Betty Poynton, Karen Sargent, Brian Poynton, Paul Gallagher, Michael True, Betty Jones, Matthew Shorten, Barbara Sullivan, Clarence Burley, clerk.

11-13-2011-1 Meeting began with a period of silence and a reading of the NEYM State of Society Report September 2010-August 2011. A Friend expressed concern regarding this statement not addressing Friends work to right the many injustices and needs in the world. Friends ask that Ministry & Counsel consider this statement as a 3rd Sunday discussion.

11-13-2011-2 Ministry & Counsel has been reaching out to F(f)riends who have not recently attended meeting. The memorial service for Connie Riley was postponed due to weather; date to be announced.

11-13-2011-3 FWCC is sponsoring a program called " Being Salt & Light" in Kenya in April; this is their triennial. NEYM will sponsor interested Friends, but there is only limited financial assistance available.

11-13-2011-4 FGC Gathering in July will be held in Rhode Island. They are still looking for volunteers.

11-13-2011-5 The committee recommends a sign for the Center for Nonviolent Solutions be added to the sign near the ramp. Friends agree; the Center will be asked about covering the cost.

11-13-2011-6 The treasurer reports that with one month left in the fiscal year, it appears there will be approximately \$7,000 surplus. Friends ask the trustees to bring back to business meeting a recommendation for distribution of this money to include reimbursing money borrowed from savings in the past and amounts to be used as donations to outside organizations. Peace & Social Concerns/Outreach is asked to bring a list of organizations to which they would like the meeting to donate to the December business meeting.

11-13-2011-7 Trustees noted there was damage from the recent snow storm. A work day was held yesterday and many branches were removed, a neighbor helped cut up large branches.

11-13-2011-8 Building and Grounds has received 3 bids to paint the meeting room. They recommend we accept the bid from Dave Gefvert for \$1400; meeting approves. One storm window was put up yesterday. There is one other missing from the 2nd floor. It's noted that the gutter along the back of the house is in bad shape and falling in one place. Friends ask that Mr. Gefvert be asked to remove this gutter.

11-13-2011-9 Michael True reported that the Center for Nonviolent Solutions completed the first course on teaching non-violence in the schools; feedback was very positive from the teachers who participated.

11-13-2011-10 Opportunity having been given for questions and concerns, meeting ended with a period of silence, purposing to meet again, twelfth month, eleventh, or at the call of the clerk.

Submitted in the Light,

Barbara Sullivan, recording clerk.

**Worcester Friends Meeting
Meeting for Business
December 11, 2011**

Present: Betty Jones, Phil Stone, Mark Sullivan, Brian Poynton, Betty Poynton, Michael True, Matthew Shorten, Karen Sargent, Barbara Sullivan, Paul Gallagher, Mary Chenaille, Clarence Burley, clerk.

12-11-2011-1 Meeting began with a period of silence and a reading from Getting Rooted, by Brian Drayton.

12-11-2011-2 Friends are interested in holding a Christmas cookie swap next week after potluck. Friends can bring cookies and exchange them for others.

12-11-2011-3 Ministry & Counsel has tentatively rescheduled the memorial service for Connie Riley to Sunday, January 29, 2012.

12-11-2011-4 The committee has been in contact with a number of absent Friends regarding their membership in the meeting. Their status has been updated. Others are still pending.

12-11-2011-5 The committee is pursuing a relationship with Jamaica Yearly Meeting.

12-11-2011-6 A response to the NEYM State of Society report was drafted by one Friend, and the committee is also drafting a response which will be brought to the next business meeting. The meeting chooses to do this rather than have a third Sunday discussion on the matter.

12-11-2011-7 Matthew Shorten's body movement group has requested occasional use of the meeting room on a weekday evening. Meeting approves.

12-11-2011-8 The treasurer's report is the last this year. Income for the year is \$39,058.69. Expenses will include additional child care costs for the month and some Building and Grounds expenses-painting and rug for the Center for Nonviolent Solutions. The phone service was recently changed which will cut the cost in half. After expenses, there will be approximately \$3800 surplus at the end of the year.

12-11-2011-9 Trustees discussed the budget for next year. In 2006 the meeting borrowed \$9000 from savings. The trustees would like to repay some of that money with some of the surplus funds. Peace & Social Concerns suggested 8 groups for donated funds from whatever was left. Trustees recommend repaying \$3000 to savings, and using the remainder for donations to be divided evenly among the groups (\$800). Friends approve.

12-11-2011-10 There will be a third Sunday discussion January 15, on 'maintaining a self-sustaining meeting including the management of invested funds and their income.'

12-11-2011-11 Peace and Social Concerns/Outreach discussed the disbursements of available funds.

Outreach to Occupy Worcester was discussed. There will be a bowling outing planned Jan.29 in the afternoon. The cookie swap was planned. There are three more Spoken Word events coming up. The committee asks for a floodlight on the signs outside, especially to highlight upcoming events. The meeting asks Building and Grounds to get estimates for running electricity out, floodlights to all 3 signs and an outlet to use for market day and bring a proposal to business meeting.

12-11-2011-12 Building & Grounds notes the meeting room has been painted. Before refinishing the wood floors, the committee wants to have sliding feet on all the chairs. A rug will be installed on the 3rd floor to encapsulate the old linoleum.

12-11-2011-13 Friends ask that a bulletin board be put on the wall behind the podium; Friends approve; they also ask that P&SC/Outreach take charge of the board by the stairs, M&C the one over the radiator and Religious Ed. the one by the door. Those committees are asked to keep them updated.

12-11-2011-14 NEYM Sessions committee is planning a mid-year gathering at Wellesley MM March 31, April 1, 2012. Our meeting is one of those being asked if we would support this with housing and hospitality for two nights. Friends approve.

12-11-2011-15 The cemetery committee notes they have been informed that a 'Geo cache' box was installed there in 2005. Friends ask that the committee contact the site and ask this be removed ASAP.

12-11-2011-16 Opportunity having been given for questions and concerns, meeting closed with a period of silence, purposing to meet again first month, eighth, or at the call of the clerk.

Friends are reminded that that is also the date of the annual meeting.

Submitted in the Light,

Barbara Sullivan, recording clerk.

Alternatives to Violence Program and Our Prison Neighbors

Nancy Shippen (Fresh Pond Meeting) wishes us a wonderful holiday season and hopes that our celebrations are filled with joy, peace and deep spiritual connection. Nancy reminds us what an amazing gift Quakers have given the world in the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) and its power of reaching beyond our usual circles to bring this program where it is most needed. Nancy left her teaching job to follow her leading of prison ministry, and she founded Our Prison Neighbors (OPN) in 2004.

Nancy is always seeking opportunities to present her work and she invites others to explore becoming involved. The Worcester Meeting's Peace/Social Concerns/Outreach Committee has discussed hosting an AVP training for the community. OPN supports programs in MCI Shirley and Concord and other prisons. The inmates have workshops not only in AVP, but also in Money Smart Financial Literacy, book discussions, and Toastmasters, to name a few. This past year OPN also supported the development of a Conflict Transformation program for the Department of Correction staff.

More information about AVP and OPN is available at <http://www.avp.org> and <http://www.ourprisonneighbors.org>
Nancy Shippen can be reached at 978-621-9213.

Donations to AVP-MA can be mailed to AVP-MA P. O. Box 333 Concord, MA 01742.

Friends may send contributions to support Nancy's work as the Executive Director of OPN to Our Prison Neighbors, P.O. Box 3036, Acton, MA 01720. The OPN budget covers salary, some program materials, office supplies, postage and mileage.



Photo from Alternatives to Violence Website

Scheduled Meetings

First Sunday 9:30 am	Trustees and Peace/Social Concerns
Second Sunday 9:00 am	Meeting for Worship w/ Attention to Business
Third Sunday 9:30 am	Discussion as scheduled
Fourth Sunday 9:30 am	Ministry and Counsel
Fifth Sunday 11:00 am	Intergenerational Worship
Worship Groups:	1st Wednesday, 3:30 PM at Overlook in Charlton and 4th Monday, 12:30 PM, at the Highlands in Fitchburg

Worcester Friends Meeting is the "Meeting for eating." We hold a pot-luck lunch every week after the rise of the Meeting for Worship.

Voluntary Set-up before Meeting for Pot Luck Lunch If you are unable to set-up on your scheduled day, make arrangements or tell one of the committee members. Thank you for your understanding and your help.

01/01/12	Mary Chenaille	03/04/12	Ellen Perry	05/06/12	Mark Sullivan
01/08/12	Carolyn Erskine	03/11/12	Elizabeth Poynton	05/13/12	Virginia Swain
01/15/12	Paul Gallagher	03/18/12	Brian Poynton	05/20/12	Michael True
01/22/11	Carol Goodenow	03/25/12	Scott Sargent	05/27/12	Maryann Walker
01/29/11	Katie Green	04/01/12	Karen Sargent	06/03/12	Mary Bennett
02/05/12	Sandra Kocher	04/08/12	Matthew Shorten	06/10/12	Daron Barnard
02/12/12	Fred Mikkelsen	04/15/12	Ida Stone	06/17/12	Katherine Barnard
02/19/12	Bruce Mitchell	04/22/12	Philip Stone	06/24/12	Clarence Burley
02/26/12	Whitney Mikkelsen	04/29/12	Barbara Sullivan	07/01/12	Geoff Knowlton

This is a voluntary responsibility. If you would like to be added to or removed from the list, please tell a committee member. If you have suggestions to add or remove anyone, your input is needed. Please contact Paul - 508-981-7285 - paulgallagherG@gmail.com

Editor of Newsletter: Katie Green. Deadline for next issue: February 28. Send contributions to katie@katiegreenstories.com

Clerk: Clarence Burley 508-735-4353. Watch your email for Weekly Friendly Reminders, or check our website:

<http://worcesterfriendsmeeting.org/calendar.htm>