

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 2010 - January 2011

QUERIES

Do you welcome inquirers and visitors to your meeting? Do you encourage their continued attendance and participation? Do you seek to share and to interpret the faith of Friends and to cooperate with others in spreading the Christian message? Are you patterns, examples; do your lives preach among all sorts of people, and to them? Do you walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one?

Faith and Practice of NEYM, 1985

Clerk's Corner

by Clarence Burley

Our meeting has been asked by the good neighbors at St. Luke's Episcopal Church to hold Victoria Scanlon in the Light as she struggles with terminal cancer. Victoria, who lives in Virginia, is a friend of Mary Hicks, the wife of Rector Warren Hicks. She has Quaker connections, so they thought of us.

The request to "hold in the Light" seems particularly appropriate in these days of winter solstice. The natural light of the sun is at a minimum. The short days and the cloudy weather may cause the gloom that is called Seasonal Affective Disorder. But Friends know that there is a Light greater than the sun. It is the Light that God created on the first day, before creating the sun. It is the Light from the pillar of fire

that guided the Israelites in their Exodus. It is the Light that John the Evangelist tells us "shineth in the darkness and the darkness comprehended it not," and goes on to call it the "true Light that Lighteth every one who cometh into the world." It is the Light that the fathers at the Council of Nicaea codified as "Light from Light." It is the Light that blinded Dante as he ascended that final level of paradise, and the "infinite ocean of Light and Love which," George Fox saw "flow(ing) over the ocean of darkness." It is the perpetual Light that shines on us and those whom we commend.

Let us ask the divine Light to show us God's will and to help others find their way in their personal darkness.

*I saw also that there was an
ocean of darkness and death,
but an infinite ocean of light and love,
which flowed over the ocean of darkness:
and in that I saw the infinite love of God;
and I had great openings.*

George Fox, 1647

*May the God of hope
fill you with all joy
and peace in believing,
so that by the power of the Holy Spirit
you may abound in hope.*

Romans 15:13

Save Cancelled Postage Stamps



Did you know that nearly EIGHTY THOUSAND DOLLARS has been raised for Quaker and other worthy causes through the sale of cancelled stamps?

The Quaker stamp project was begun and run by Brad

Hathaway of Mattapoisett Meeting in Massachusetts for many years.

Recently it has been taken over by Earl Walker of Claremont Meeting in California.

Earl's Top Ten Tips for Saving Stamps

- Every stamp counts.
- Send all stamps in good condition - no tears or cuts in perforations.
- Foreign stamps are especially valuable.
- Do not soak off stamps.
- If possible, trim the stamps leaving 1/2" on all sides.
- Old envelopes are valuable - in this case, leave the stamps on the envelopes.
- Old stamp collections are great.
- Old postcards are welcome - do not remove stamps, do not block out the addresses
- Also, please save Box Tops for Education/UPC codes from products by General Mills, Progresso, Kleenex, Ziplock, Swanson & Campbell (& perhaps others)
- Remember Earl's "down-home wisdom" about stamps:

"Ya never know what people got stuck in drawers"

Bring your stamps to the Meetinghouse & put them in the box labeled

QUAKER STAMP PROJECT

or mail them directly to:

Earl Walker, 449 Alamosa Dr., Claremont CA 91711
909 445-1140 cell: 909 638-6764

Quaker Chuckles

For two years a Friend far in the gallery of the Meeting House, as London Yearly Meeting was being held, had risen and said something which was not generally understood. When this happened the third year, the curiosity of one Friend was so aroused that he asked, "Will the clerk please repeat what the Friend says?" "Our Friend remarks," replied the clerk, "that the purpose of speaking is to be heard, so he hopes Friends will raise their voices."



BE AT PEACE
by Connie Riley

So many things call to us:
Chatter, noise, blaring radio and TV;
The hustle, bustle all around.

Calling, calling.
Listen to the voice above.
Look to the light within.
Follow the way of Love.

Praying, praying,
words of praise
lighting up the world.

Guide me, guide me
to be on the path.
Hold us up.

I see us merging.
I envision a world of peace.
A quiet Voice whispers,
"Be still."

First Wednesday Bible Study Group

Friends are pleased to announce that Geoff Knowlton will be leading a Bible Study group for us. Geoff is a frequent attender of the Worcester Meeting. He was a member of the Indiana Friends Meeting, in Indiana, Pennsylvania.



Stained glass window of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. St. Mary's Church, Deerhurst, Gloucestershire, England

Some Friends are known to struggle with the Christian history of our religion, and others embrace Quakerism as a way of life separate from theology. The Bible provides many ancient and wonderful stories. Those Friends who have read the Minute of Sending Forth - from New England Yearly Meeting's 2010 Sessions will especially appreciate this opportunity for reflection and discussion. Studying the origins of our Quaker faith as a community is wonderful opportunity,

and we are grateful to Geoff for his offer.

Geoff grew up in the Friends. His family moved from his childhood home in Vermont to attend the

Hanover, New Hampshire Meeting. Later, in Western Pennsylvania, his father founded a Meeting for Worship. Geoff is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ. He has served parishes all over New England for about 27 years. His ministry now is as a mental health counselor working with children and adults.

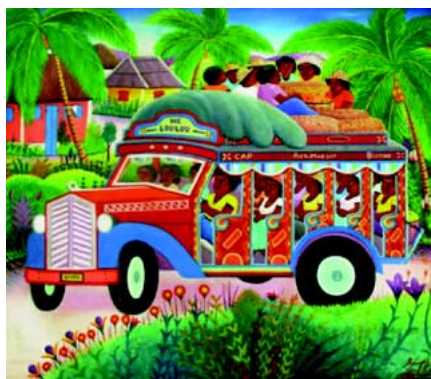
The Bible study group will convene at 7:00 PM on Wednesday, February 2 at the Worcester meeting-house. We will begin with a study of Genesis 2 and 3. Folks are welcome to bring Bibles, and Geoff will provide hand outs with the passages so we can all have a common translation to work from.

The study will focus on the second creation story found in the Bible, sometimes called the Adam and Eve story. Unfortunately the story has become trivialized by debates about science and history or even the skits of comedians. When studied with care, there is much to be found here about the Biblical view of God and Humanity, about Eco justice and a feminist perspective on our faith as well as the roots of Quaker pacifism.

We welcome this opportunity to expand our spiritual community.

First Day School

Our First Day School children have been participating in the Pennies for Peace Curriculum based on Greg Mortenson's book, Three Cups of Tea. They have learned about Pakistani culture and schools there. The first and second grade children can find Pakistan on a world map. All of the children have discussed reasons why it is important to have schools, and why education for girls is especially important. A "cultural quilt" will be shared by the children very soon. The children will count their pennies in January and write a note to Mike Flanagan, a local merchant who put out a "Pennies for Peace" container in his store. The Pennies for Peace lessons were taught by Betty Poynton,



Katherine Barnard, and Katie Green.

On January 16th the First Day School will commemorate the devastating earthquake in Haiti that happened last year on January 12. We will read the award winning book, Eight Days: A Story of Haiti, by Edwidge Danticat. The story is about a little boy who uses his imagination to keep his spirits up while waiting to be rescued. The children will talk about how they keep their spirits up through difficult times. Haitian culture will be celebrated with colorful paintings and a Haitian folk tale.

Our very young Friends are cared for by AnnaLee Walsh. Some Sundays we are blessed to have 5 children in First Day School and three very young children in the nursery.



Friends may remember Mohammed Sawalha, Director of the Palestinian House of Friendship in Nablus, Palestine. He and his son visited our Meeting some time ago when he was in the U.S.

Mohammed writes to us in December, 2010:

AN HOUSE OF FRIENDSHIP, P.O. BOX 669, NABLUS, WEST BANK, PALESTINE

December 2010

In my name personally and in the name of the members and children of the Palestinian House of Friendship, we convey to you a message of peace and love from Palestine. We also thank you for the generous support you have given to PHF and its programs. My visit to your great country last spring gave me an opportunity to gain more friends for PHF and for peace in the Middle East. You are great friends and made me feel that I was always at home with you.

In return, dear friends, I want every one of you to consider Palestine and PHF a home, and we welcome your visits to us.

This letter is a report to you about Smiling Faces Summer Camps, as well as other PHF activities, to which you have contributed this year: PHF successfully completed two summer camp sessions in 2010. The First Camp took place in Asera Al Shamalyia, a town near the city of Nablus, between July 3 and 25. Seventy-nine boys and girls between the ages of 8 and 14 participated in the camp. Sixteen of them were disabled. The campers participated in crafts, painting, Debka dancing (our national folk dance), reading and writing stories, theatrical works, visiting ancient and modern sites in the area in order to know our history and surroundings, sports, and trips.

The Second Camp started on July 25. Thirty-four children participated in this camp which we called, "Know your country, Know your people." The majority of the campers were from among the "Asadaqa" girl scouts group. The camp was involved in outdoor activities, ranging from visiting historic sites and organizations in the city of Nablus and surrounding areas, to visiting other cities and villages in the West Bank such as Ramallah, Jenin, Tulkarm, Qalqilia, Turmus Aia, and Al Bathan Conservation. The children learned a lot about the geography of their country. They became acquainted with new friends, learned different regional customs and habits, and even figured out differences in accents between one area and another. The visits and trips took place in cooperation with municipalities and local councils. Most of the activities in these places were videotaped.

In addition to your generous contributions, PHF received \$2,000 from a Palestinian friend who works in the Gulf. We also earned some income from language classes.

This past fall PHF participated in many craft and folkloric cultural activities with the Ministry of Culture. We welcomed foreign visitors from the United States and participated in volunteer work including cleaning and decorating walls in the city and surrounding villages and camps. Moreover, our girl scouts group participated actively in helping with the labor intensive harvesting of olives as a service to local farmers. On October 7 PHF, in cooperation with An Najah University, conducted a big exhibition of folkloric items accompanied by folkloric dancing.

Again I send you deep appreciation for your continuing support and warm wishes for the holiday season. I am looking forward to seeing you next May in the US.

Are there any grounds for hope? George Fox, struggling with his own despair, spoke of coming into the "covenant of peace, which was before wars and strifes were." That which was before wars and strifes - that was the love, which begot creation. We must never forget that "love was the first motion." Every human being that comes into the world is capable of that love, but how to give expression to that love has to be learned. ... The grounds for hope lie in recovering our understanding of the human capacity for love, coupled with the realization we cannot take it for granted. That capacity needs to be nurtured.

Elise Boulding, 2000

Spoken Word Series

Mike True will read *Poetry for Peacemaking: A Celebration* at the meeting house on Saturday, January 15. We are delighted and honored that Mike has agreed to “kick off” our spoken word series this year. He will be reading a selection of poems that has spoken to him, sharing a source of strength and hope.

Our spoken word series have been warmly received and appreciated by Friends and neighbors. This winter the Peace, Social Concerns/Outreach Committee has organized another exciting series in response to requests from members and attenders. Mark your calendar now. All events will begin at 7:30 PM.

Saturday, January 15: Our own Michael True will read *Poetry for Peacemaking: A Celebration*

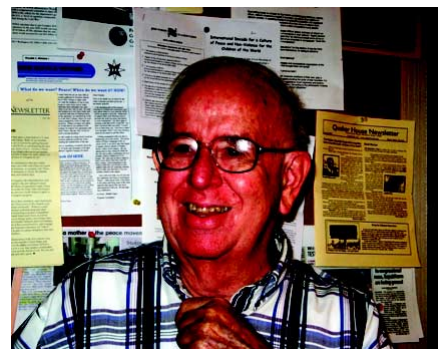
Saturday, February 12: Richard Smith, from Acton, will present *An Evening with Henry David Thoreau*

Saturday, March 12: Wendell Refior, of Belmont MA, will come as Ralph Waldo Emerson

Saturday, April 9: Valerie Tutson, from Providence RI, will present a program of life for an African American woman in Colonial America.

Saturday, May 14: Steven Collins, who appeared at our spoken word series last spring as Walt Whitman, will recite some of Robert Frost’s poetry and lead a discussion for us in *An Evening of Frost*. (Steven’s appearance is still being negotiated.)

In case of heavy snow, the event will be on the next day. Call Katie Green 774-368-0468 for more information.



Michael True



Henry David Thoreau, portrayed by Richard Smith, will visit Worcester Friends Meeting on Saturday evening, February 12.

TREES TELLING ABOUT GOD

- for Elliot

Listening, you hear them speak.

Swaying, bending,

 groaning under heavy winds,

they reveal what began in roots

down, down below. When it rises

to the occasion, they repeat the sound

over and over. Usually no one listens,

until someone

 quiet for a moment

notices leaves aflutter,

hears a sign, a whisper,

perhaps a melody - a rhythm

first, then a lyric.

A message consumes the trees,

 burning, burning.

Listening from within, we attend to it;

open to serendipity. We hear God speak.

Michael True

Previously printed in

November 2010 FRIENDS JOURNAL

By Lynn Fitz-Hugh Eastside Meeting in Bellevue, WA, Founder of WA State Alternatives to Violence Project. (She says she has broken each of these guidelines at least once!)

1. Nothing is gained in trying to decide whose version of what happened is true.
2. Blame is not a helpful concept.
3. Instead of saying, "It is his fault," (her, my) it is more helpful to say, "It is."
4. Running away from conflict does not solve it.
5. When people are very, very upset, they get flooded by adrenaline. (It takes 20 minutes or longer to get rid of all the adrenaline.) It is a bad idea for someone to try to talk, listen or make decisions while flooded with adrenaline. Rational thinking is impaired.
6. Timing of efforts to address a conflict is a two-party affair.
7. When in a conflict with another person, it is not helpful to keep going over in our mind (or with another person) how bad the other person is, or how bad his actions were, how upset he makes us, or how much we hate this person.
8. What is helpful is to focus on the good points of the person.
9. Making fun of the person you are in conflict with, or engaging in sarcasm or ridicule, is poison.
10. Each person has something to teach us.
11. Judging a person or deciding "who is wrong and who is right" is just another form of blaming.
12. People do not cause other people's feelings. (Feelings from childhood can be restimulated.)
13. When someone else is disappointed or angry with us, this does not mean that we are bad or unworthy.
14. Dragging other people in by trying to convince them of our point of view or trying to get others to choose sides just makes the conflict bigger and worse.
15. When we direct all of our actions towards trying to prevent another person from feeling a certain way (angry, disappointed, hurt), we find ourselves caught in co-dependent emotional caretaking.
16. When speaking to another person about our upsets, it is best to use "I" statements of our experience and reactions as our own, rather than blaming others or making them responsible for our feelings.
17. The use of drugs, alcohol, or violence during a conflict, or during an attempt to fix it, will make the conflict worse.
18. People who are very alike often have a great deal of conflict.
19. We are responsible at all times for choosing behavior that meets our highest moral/ethical standards - to truly live by the Golden Rule, to live in such a way that, if anything true we did was published somewhere for all to see, we would have no embarrassment, guilt, or shame about our action.
20. Culture does impact conflict.
21. When we have made a mistake, it is best to apologize immediately, rather than trying to justify, rationalize, diminish, or cover up the mistake we made.

Connie Riley reports that Betsy Sawyer, a teacher at Groton Dunstable Middle School, and her students are still collecting stories about peace. Friends are asked to send any of their writings to Connie Riley her email is createpeacenow@aol.com Connie will forward these to Betsy Sawyer. The students' goal is to create the biggest book about peace for the Guinness Book of Records.

Winter Stillness:***Listening in the Silence***

Kristna Evans

Dec 30, 2010 - Jan 2, 2011

A Ministry of the Whole:***Exploring Spiritual Accountability***

Marge Abbott & Noah Baker Merrill

January 21-23, 2011

Practicing Spiritual Accountability

Viv Hawkins & Jim Lyons

January 21-23 & on-line through April

Co-sponsored by Quaker Studies Program

and New England Yearly Ministry & Counsel

Caring for One Another***A Skill-Building Workshop***

Beth Collea, Kevin Lee &

Johathan Vogel-Borne

February 18-20, 2011

Rightly Ordered Financial***Management for Friends******Meetings & Organizations***

Connie Brookes, Jill Hoyenga,

Betsy Muench & Melissa Stoner

February 25-27, 2011

Woolman Hill is a Quaker retreat and conference center on 110 ridge-top acres in western Massachusetts. It is dedicated to fostering, developing and strengthening the testimonies of the Religious Society of Friends, and named for John Woolman, who was an 18th century Friends' minister and abolitionist. The facilities include a farmhouse, a Meeting House, a house-keeping cottage, and three small cabins - available for individual retreats.



Picture: Katie Green

Revision of NEYM Faith and Practice

The text of **Faith and Practice of New England Yearly Meeting of Friends** (Book of Discipline) was adopted and published in 1986 by New England Yearly Meeting of Friends. **Faith and Practice** attempts to communicate to members and inquirers the historic and continuing faith of Friends and to outline procedures to be followed by meetings regarding membership, organization, the conduct of their affairs, and the concerns of the Society.

Worcester Friends' Ministry and Council has been reviewing Chapter One, *Illustrative Experiences of Friends*, of the forthcoming NEYM Faith and Practice. Input from Friends is invited and encouraged. Please check the NEYM news. The working papers are posted on the web site. <http://www.neym.org/fandp/>

Betty Poynton writes: I loved reading Ch. 1 of the Faith and Practice Revision and was sometimes moved to tears by the description of experiences of awareness of feeling the Presence. I really liked the variety of experiences expressed during different time periods. It was especially heartwarming to read statements from people I know, such as Sue Reilly, Marybeth Toomey and our own Jonathan Vogelbourne.

Comments on the working paper for Chapter one are due February 1, 2011. Comments on Chapter 4: *The Meaning, Understanding, and Use of Testimonies*, and Chapter 11: *General Advices and Queries* are still welcome.

Worcester Friends Meeting

Meeting for Business

November 14, 2010

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

11-14-2010-01 Meeting began with a period of silence and a reading from Keeping Quiet, by Pablo Neruda.

11-14-2010-02 NEYM has sent requests for input on what Friends/meetings for worship would like from the Yearly Meeting. This information is passed to clerks of M&C, and PSC & Outreach.

11-14-2010-03 Ministry and Counsel states NEYM requests input on the sharing of membership lists, and suggestions for the website. The committee will ask NEYM for clarification of what information they are requesting and how it would be used. The committee will be working with Religious Ed committee to develop policies to insure child safety. Friends are asked to consider inter-visitation with other meetings within NEYM.

11-14-2010-04 The memorial minute for Grace Blaber was read. Friends approved.

11-14-2010-05 Trustees note that a worship group has been started at Fitchburg State College, meeting Sunday afternoons; the group asks for consideration of coming under the care of the meeting. Friends are enthusiastic about this new group, and ask Ministry and Counsel to consider the request and come back to business meeting with a recommendation.

11-14-2010-06 It was noted there are several projects that need to be addressed including painting the meeting room, refinishing the floors, signs at the entrance, removal and/or replacing the screen door, a new heating system, enlargement of the parking area; budgetary concerns were discussed regarding projects.

11-14-2010-07 Friends asked that the issue of re-keying the exterior doors and a lock-box be added to the above list (this was discussed at an earlier meeting).

11-14-2010-08 Expanding the parking area (which includes tree removal), was seen as the first step needed towards preparing for expansion of the meeting space. Friends note there are no estimates of costs; trustees would like direction from the meeting as to what priorities to focus on.

11-14-2010-09 The treasurer reported that this year the meeting has received approximately \$15,000 in memorial donations/bequests that cannot be expected annually. This helped the meeting meet several expensive projects including painting the meeting house, upgrading the electrical system and removing the garage, all of which were necessary, although several were not planned for and were done for safety reasons. The meeting can expect almost \$39,000 dollars in income from all sources next year. Given the projects we are interested in doing, we could be involved in a deficit. For at least the last 5 years the meeting has spent more than it has taken in. There was a discussion about stewardship, members and attenders supporting the meeting financially. Friends are reminded that for the meeting to support itself, reach out to the community, attract new attenders and members and also support good works, the meeting needs the contributions of time and money from members and attenders.

11-14-2010-10 The treasurer asks that any expected expenses for the next fiscal year be communicated to him for inclusion in next year's budget.

11-14-2010-11 Friends ask that trustees and building and grounds committees meet to discuss the financial issues and concerns and come back to the December business meeting.

11-14-2010-12 Peace and Social Concerns is pursuing advertising in college publications. They are looking into future 'spoken-word' events. On Thanksgiving Day there is a meeting for worship at the Uxbridge meeting house. Friends are asked to be more generous for potluck as we have had more attenders coming and staying.

11-14-2010-13 Religious Ed continues to collect 'Pennies for Peace' and studying the cultures who will be receiving the money for schools.

11-14-2010-14 Worcester Interfaith is planning a leadership training session this Tuesday from 7-9 pm at All Saints Episcopal Church.

11-14-2010-15 Opportunity having been given for questions and concerns, meeting ended with a period of silence purposing to meet again twelfth month, twelve, or at the call of the clerk.

Submitted in the Light,

Barbara Sullivan, recording clerk

Worcester Friends Meeting

Meeting for Business

December 12, 2010

Present: Betty Jones, Katy Green, Phil Stone, Mary Chenaille, Mark Sullivan, Barbara Sullivan, Matt Shorten, Betty Poynton, Brian Poynton, Clarence Burley, clerk.

12-12-2010-01 Meeting began with a period of silence and a reading from a proposed revision of NEYM Faith and Practice on Witness, by Phyllis Hoge.

12-12-2010-02 Ministry and Counsel recommends Mary Chenaille for membership in the meeting. Friends joyfully approve!

12-12-2010-03 A memorial minute for Hermann Patt was read; Friends approve. The minute will be forwarded to the April Quarterly meeting.

12-12-2010-04 The treasurer requests that any anticipated requests for money for the following year be submitted ASAP as the budget is being prepared. For this year, although we took in about \$15,000 more than usual due to several bequests/donations, we spent more than we took in. One large expense this month was the purchase and installation of new vinyl shutters on the meetinghouse.

12-12-2010-05 Trustees met and had a joint meeting with Building and Grounds that was productive. Unless there is an infusion of money, there is no money for the capital account at present. They are pursuing a plan so the meeting could accept stock as donations.

12-12-2010-06 Peace & Social Concerns/Outreach met and considered how/if the meeting addresses "answering the prophetic call". This discussion continues. The T&G has changed the manner of advertising churches; after discussion, Friends ask that our ad include the meeting's website and be placed both Saturday and Sunday.

12-12-2010-07 The committee is proposing a 5-part Spoken Word series for the coming year. The discussion of Fit for Friends, Not for Freedom, will continue in January. An offer to facilitate a Bible study group was received from Geoff Knowlton. Ministry and Counsel is asked to follow up with this and report back to business meeting.

12-12-2010-08 A 'Peace Pole', 8 feet tall in 4 languages, will be ordered. Cost with shipping will be \$160.

12-12-2010-09 A grant will be submitted to help pay for increased energy efficiency, such as a new storm door.

12-12-2010-10 There was a discussion regarding contacting those who sign the guest book. Ministry and Counsel is asked to consider this and report back to business meeting.

12-12-2010-11 Building and Grounds notes the heat does not reach the 3rd floor where the Center for NonViolent Solutions has their offices. A plumber has been called to look at the problem.

12-12-2010-12 The committee is researching requirements needed to extend the property in the back.

12-12-2010-13 Quotes are being obtained to paint the meeting room, and also to replace several electrical items.

12-12-2010-14 Opportunity having been given for questions and concerns, meeting ended with a period of silence, purposing to meet again first month, ninth, or at the call of the clerk.

Submitted in the Light,

Barbara Sullivan, recording clerk

Scheduled Meetings

Annual Meeting for Business 9:30 A.M. Sunday, January 9, 2011

Monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business

meets each 2nd Sunday at 9 AM

Clerk: Clarence Burley

Recording Clerk: Barbara Sullivan

Recorder: Phil Stone

Treasurer: Mark Sullivan

Trustees meet 1st Sunday Clerks: Ellen Perry and Karen Sargent