

Worcester Friends Newsletter

Dec. 2017/Jan. 2018



Calendar

Sunday Meeting for Worship: 11 A.M.

Children's Program: 11 A.M. (childcare year-round, First Day School program during school year)

Potluck Lunch: 12.15 P.M. every Sunday. Stay for fellowship.

Business Meeting: 2nd Sunday each month at 9 A.M.

The Meetinghouse is Handicapped Accessible

Winter Headgear by **Sandra Kocher**

I stop to get gas.

The man who comes out to pump gas is suitably

dressed for the super cold

January temperature in a

black snowmobile outfit

and fur cap. I tell him

“I like your hat.”

Then when I'm paying,

the young man says

“I like your ‘hoodie’ “

I'm wearing a warm orange

cap a friend knit for me.

Now I can tell her. “Your

hoodie sure came in handy

on those frigid days.”

On December 7 **Clarence Burley** attended the dedication of a replica of the long-lost monument honoring men and women of color who served World War II. Erected in 1943 by the African-American Community on land donated by Belmont St. A. M. E. Zion Church, it was removed in 1959 to permit the construction of I290 through neighborhoods that Mayor Petty described as “the poorest, most vibrant and diverse.” Promises by the state to relocate the memorial were not kept, and only after years of effort by activist William S. Coleman III was its replacement approved by Worcester City Council who are now congratulating themselves.

The program, in a comfortably warm tent, prior to the unveiling gave much credit to the Worcester County Labor Council for fund raising and to the students of Worcester Technical High School who designed and constructed the replica. Many of the students attended as did the Junior ROTC color guard providing the patriotic exercises.

Clarence recalls his segregated barracks at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, during World War II as being much more substantial and attractive than the tar paper covered facilities for the Black soldiers. He remarks that the only contact of any kind between the two groups was in the boxing program. His most moving take-away from the dedication exercises are the words sung by a soprano—joined by a spontaneous rising of the crowd—of the hymn, and Black Anthem, *Lift Every Voice and Sing*.

“Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us.”

Monthly Meeting for Business, Worcester Friends Meeting

Date: December 10, 2017

Present: Daron Barnard, Katharine Barnard, Clarence Burley, Tom Brenner, Karen Sargent, Matthew Shorten, Mark Sullivan

Clerking: Daron Barnard

The meeting opened with silent worship and reading of queries from the NEYM *Faith and Practice* Revision Committee on the theme of membership, welcome, and community.

1. Business Items:

- a. The Meeting held a Third Sunday Discussion on November 19, 2017, to help discern our Meeting's priorities regarding our building and expenditures. Complete minutes of that discussion are appended below. Subsequent to the Third Sunday Discussion, Elliot and Kevin Walsh used three different methods to examine the environmental impact of the building. Their finding is that the carbon footprint is very low, partly because of the part-time use of the building, so there is little room for improvement in our energy expenditure even with modifications to the building's design or infrastructure.
- b. We express gratitude to Rachel Carey Harper for her gift of \$2000 to spend in accordance with our mission. At this time, \$1000 has been donated to Student Immigrant Movement, \$500 to Oxfam for Hurricane Maria relief, and the remaining \$500 will go to a local church with links to Puerto Rico also for hurricane relief. Daron will write a thank you letter to Friend Rachel.

2. Treasurers Report:

- a. The treasurer presented the finances through November 30. Donations are lower than anticipated. Plowing has been more expensive due to a rise in rate. Next year's budget will reflect the new rate. There have been no other major unanticipated expenses.
- b. Overall, we are running a \$8700 deficit, though money is still coming in from the Annual Appeal, which may help to balance the budget. It is noted with concern that not everyone present received an Annual Appeal letter, and the treasurer will look into this. There was a brief discussion about the way in which we always seem to run a deficit budget, which again raised the question of whether to dip into our savings (or the interest on our savings) to balance the budget.

3. Committee Reports:

- a. **Practical.** Committee reports that the windows on the first floor and some of the second floor have been replaced and painted and window trimming complete. There are additional windows, in particular in the upper stairwell, that will need to be covered for the winter and receive more permanent attention in the coming year.
- b. **Spiritual Life.**
 - i. Gifts and Leadings is on track with a slate of nominations to present at the Annual Meeting.
 - ii. Clarence Burley continues to manage the schedule of Meetinghouse use by outside groups, but may seek backup help for this task. He would like to make a contact list for those groups as well in case they need to be contacted.
 - iii. The committee brings an interest in supporting our spiritual selves. Nurturing our Quaker community feels like a means to helping our Meeting's discussions and decision-making. For example, much of the recent financial discussion ties in with our mission and sense of purpose. Perhaps a future retreat could help us come together as a spiritual community.

- c. **Peace Social Concerns and Outreach.** The “Facing Race” reading and discussion group held its first meeting and was well attended; the group will next meet in January. Lucy Candib and Richard Schmitt continue to coordinate the group. SURJ Worcester has been coordinating with Student Immigrant Movement, but has been less active after the local Black Lives Matter coordinator left Worcester.

2. Announcements:

- a. Bible Study will be facilitated by Geoff Knowlton at 9:30am on December 17 on the theme of finding joy in the scriptures.
- b. The Central YMCA is hosting the NAACP’s holiday potluck at 5:30pm tomorrow.
- c. The “Longest Night” vigil for the homeless will be held on December 21 from 5-7pm at City Hall.
- d. Tomorrow, December 11, at 8:30pm, Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) Advocacy Teams will host an informational conference call to help build lobbying and advocacy skills for those interested in making social and political change.
- e. The Ashburnham Conservation Trust, which is a volunteer land trust in which Karen Sargent is involved, may use the Meetinghouse in early January for a retreat. If Karen can’t be present, she will orient them to use of the space.
- f. There is a proposed First Day School sleepover tentatively scheduled for January 6. As in the past, we have discussed preparing and bring a dinner to the Friendly House shelter.
- g. New Day Syria continues to collect warm clothes for refugees; donations may be left in the bin in the library.

The next Business Meeting to be held on January 14, to include the Annual Meeting. Committee clerks are requested to prepare a summary of their committee’s work this year, and forward these reports to Daron Barnard in advance of the Annual Meeting.

The meeting closed with silence.

Respectfully submitted,
Katharine Barnard

ADDENDUM: Minutes from Third Sunday Discussion on building and finances
Worcester Friends Meeting
November 19, 2017

Present: Mary Chenaille, Tom Brenner, Richard Schmitt, Paul Gallagher, Mary Bennett, Clarence Burley, Matt Shorten, Daron Barnard, Katharine Barnard, Jane Cutting, Elliot Walsh, Jessica Seem, Mark Sullivan, Karen Sargent

Clerking: Daron Barnard

Recorder: Katharine Barnard

After the meeting opened with silence, the Clerk opened with a reminder that a discussion of our financial priorities means considering our Meeting’s mission and place in the community. The sense of who we are - or wish to be - informs our financial, spiritual, and outreach discussions. The Clerk raised the query: Why does the question of our financial priorities continue to surface? In what way do we feel unsettled with the matter? Do we have questions about our mission or about the role we want to play in the community, or how to best achieve this?

It is brought forward that we chronically have difficulty balancing our budget, and that difficulty stems from the fact that we consistently wish to spend more than we receive in donations. Our main expenses are building maintenance and mission-related work (outreach activities, supporting Quaker organizations, etc). The Treasurer has reviewed our balance sheets dating back 10 years, and observed that we consistently have lower income than expenses. Annual Appeals have not been a solution to the difference. Historically, we used the interest income from our savings (\$5-6,000 annually) to balance the budget, but we stopped that practice in 2012 and since then have only broken even when we have not significantly invested in building maintenance projects or if an unique donation has been received.

A Friend suggests that we might raise funds via outreach to the community (to attract members) and to groups (who might make use of the building for meetings, at a cost). It is noted that we do very little outreach. Friends would like to see more people in Worcester aware of the Meeting and excited about our work. Friends shared ideas about innovative outreach efforts. Friends feel that if we openly show the ways in which we are living our spirituality (in particular around the issues of racial and environmental justice), Quakerism will be attractive to the community.

It is noted that as a Meeting, we are in the habit of financially supporting outside organizations. It is suggested that our funds might be better spent to support the direct work of the Meeting in the community.

One contributor to the Meeting's unrest about finances has been lack of clarity about our commitment to our current building. The lack of clarity creates inefficiencies in our decision-making. In the absence of clear direction, we have defaulted to an intermediate level of commitment to building projects - enough to keep the building useable but not taking on high-level renovations or improvements. Various possibilities have been considered over the years, ranging from moving to a different building, rehabbing or renovating our current building, or maintaining our building as-is. Additionally, a Friend has suggested that we ought to be putting money aside for future large building repairs, in addition to spending on ongoing maintenance. Treasurer reports that the Meeting has a dedicated savings fund (currently valued at about \$17K) established about 15 years ago for funding renovations to the building. Some question whether it would be permissible to use those funds for other building improvement purposes, as there are certainly other projects which could improve the usability of the building for the Meeting and the community. If we were to redirect the savings, we would need, as best as is possible, to check with the donors to ascertain their feeling on this plan.

There has been a longstanding conversation about whether to expand the building. The goal of expansion would be to have a truly usable space for vibrant, inclusive community gatherings. An architect made plans for us about 15 years ago. Those plans were put on hold because of (1) need to use of nearly all of our savings to finance the project, (2) additionally, need to take out a mortgage, which the Meeting was not in favor of, (3) need for significant landscaping which would effect loss of the property's trees and cause other issues, and (4) regulations that felt onerous. The Meeting continues to debate whether this building is truly the one we want to put such a significant investment into. With our mission of social justice and desire for outreach, would we be better located in Worcester's downtown?

We have considered how to best live our commitment to environmental justice. It has been proposed that an important element would be “greening” the building. Some feel that is very important, philosophically and symbolically (so as to set an example within the community). These projects would be expensive, however, and may actually not improve the building’s energy use in a significant way. Because the building is used part-time, the actual energy consumption is quite low. Maybe we can find more effective environmental projects that we can engage in that would benefit the broader community.

The themes (outreach and fundraising, building expansion versus maintenance, and environmental activism) become tangled because the physical building and its visibility and usability relate to our desire to outreach and involve the community. This discussion clarified that there is a sense that our current building in its current configuration impedes our ability to fulfill our mission.

Next steps:

- It is suggested that to move this conversation forward, we would need more information than those gathered can provide. To this end, we may wish to engage an outside consultant with knowledge of real estate options and finances. We would need this consultant to deeply listen to our concerns.
- Some Friends feel that determining the carbon footprint of our current building would help inform our discussion and priorities.
- We need to clearly articulate our priorities. We also could benefit from a subcommittee that would take on this mandate. The essential questions are: What is our mission? Where [in Worcester] should we do our work? and How are we going to pay for it?
- The questions (above) will next be taken up by Practical Committee and then brought to a Meeting for Business.

The minutes from today’s session will be sent to all present for review and editing prior to Meeting for Business.

Respectfully,
Katharine Barnard

Letter to *Worcester Telegram* from **Richard Schmitt**

I am troubled by your report Wednesday Oct. 25 on historian David McCullough’s visit to the Rutland home of General Putnam who, after fighting in the French and Indian and the Revolutionary wars, in 1788 took a group of people to Ohio to establish a settlement there. According to your story Ohio was then “a new wilderness where nobody’s been before.” But in 1753 George Washington had visited an Indian chief in Logstown, Ohio. Native American tribes were all over the area. General Putnam and his band did not move into Ohio to civilize a wilderness. They went there to claim land already inhabited by Native Americans.

You report that Mr. McCullough considers the exploits of Gen. Putnam an example of “who we are, what we stand for, how we got to where we are.” That seems to be true in light of the many wars we have fought to gain control of other peoples’ land. Your story suggests that we should be proud of these wars. Really? Proud of robbing and killing?

Your article tells us to be grateful to Gen. Putnam. Instead, we owe many apologies and generous reparations to the Native Americans whose way of life and very lives we destroyed.

Letter to *Friend's Journal* from **Clarence Burley**

Your excellent November issue brought to mind a quotation attributed to George Fox by Daniel J. Boorstein in the epigraph to *The Americans: the Colonial Experience*:

Have but few books, but let them be well chosen and well read whether of Religious or Civil Subjects... reading many Books is but a taking off the Mind too much from Meditation. Reading yourselves and Nature, in the Dealings and Conduct of Men, is the truest human wisdom. The Spirit of a Man knows the things of Man, and more true Knowledge comes from Meditation and just Reflection than from Reading; for much Reading is an Oppression of the Mind and extinguishes the natural Candle; which is the Reason of so many senseless Scholars in the World.

This is echoed by Fox's contemporary, John Milton, in *Paradise Regained*, Book IV, Line 322 et seq:

Who reads
Incessantly, and to his reading brings not
A spirit and judgment equal or superior,
(And what he brings what needs he elsewhere seek?)
Unsettled and uncertain still remains,
Deep versed in books, and shallow in himself.

Ralph Waldo Emerson had the same idea in his lecture, *The American Scholar*.

"Books are for the scholar's idle times. When he can read God directly, the hour is too precious to be wasted in other men's transcripts of their readings."

Three pretty smart men with similar ideas.



Katie Green (left) and **Fred and Olivia Mikkelsen** (right) are enjoying the warmer climate in FL. We miss them (and **Phil Stone** and **Whitney** and **JoAnna**)



Aaron's Friendly Fare:
Monthly Culinary Column
by Aaron Sakulich



Many people incorrectly assume that Ben Franklin was a Quaker. He was not, so far as we know, although he did seem to embody that combination of wisdom and eccentricity that so frequently graces our meetinghouses. For instance, he once said he'd provide a pulpit if the Mufti of Constantinople wanted to send a preacher to the U.S.; he also invented a chair that turns into a ladder, for some unknowable reason. But what truly endears me to Ben Franklin, among all his other great and Quakerly traits, is his detailed understanding of, if not preoccupation with, flatulence.

One of his letters to the Royal Academy in Brussels begins "...It is universally well known, That in digesting our common Food, there is created or produced in the Bowels of human Creatures, a great Quantity of Wind." He goes on to write "He that dines on stale Flesh, especially with much Addition of Onions, shall be able to afford a Stink that no Company can tolerate; while he that has lived for some Time on Vegetables only, shall have that Breath so pure as to be insensible to the most delicate Noses; and if he can manage so as to avoid the Report, he may any where give Vent to his Grievs, unnoticed."

This month's recipe is thus dedicated to Benjamin Franklin, and contains no stale Flesh whatsoever. Mash two bulbs of garlic and ten chili peppers in a mortar and pestle. Mix with two cups of washed basil leaves, and add this mixture to one cup of hot oil in a frying pan. As the basil leaves crisp, move them to the side of the pan, and continue frying the garlic and peppers until fragrant. When done, drain all but one tablespoon of the oil (while removing as little garlic and pepper as possible); add one tablespoon of sugar and one of soy sauce. Mix together with the crispy basil leaves, cook for a moment, and serve.

I can't imagine that you'd be able to live for some Time on this, but, it makes a delightful accompaniment to a variety of dishes. I personally like to omit the sugar and soy sauce, and pour it over dressed pasta. Oh, incidentally - I should mention that the letter that I quoted earlier was just an elaborate setup for what was probably Franklin's greatest punchline: "... the Science of the Philosophers above-mentioned..., are, all together, scarcely worth a FART-HING."

Note from the Editor:

The Worcester Friends Newsletter can be accessed at our website <http://worcesterfriendsmeeting.org/>

If you don't want to miss an issue, Friends may also subscribe to the monthly Newsletter on the above site (which saves the Meeting both printing and postage costs). Please let us know if you know longer wish to receive individual postal mailings.

Leadings, comments, ideas, artwork and photos are always welcome to help make the Newsletter truly representative of the WFM community. Share your voice through written contributions to brennerfamily@gmail.com or mail/drop off at the Meetinghouse.

Worcester Friends Meeting
 Religious Society of Friends
 (Quakers)
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 Worcester, MA 01602



Scheduled Meetings

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business	-----	Second Sunday, 9 AM
Spiritual Life Committee, convener, Matthew Shorten	-----	Fourth Sunday, 9:30 AM
Practical Committee,	-----	First Sunday, 9:30 AM
Peace/Social Concerns/Outreach, convener Karen Sargent	-----	Fourth Saturday, 9:30 AM
Clerk of Worcester Friends Meeting	-----	Daron Barnard
Recording Clerk	-----	Katharine Barnard
Corresponding Clerk	-----	Clarence Burley
First Day School	-----	Katie Green, Katharine Barnard
Newsletter	-----	Sheila Brenner

Please send general correspondence to info@worcesterfriendsmeeting.org. Items of note for the next Newsletter may also be sent to brennerfamily@gmail.com.