

Worcester Friends Meeting

Religious Society of Friends (Quaker)

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February - March 2011

QUERIES

Do you respect the worth of every human being as a child of God? Do you uphold the right of all persons to justice and human dignity? Do you endeavor to create political, social, and economic institutions which will sustain and enrich the life of all? Do you fulfill all civic obligations which are not contrary to divine leadings? Do you give spiritual and material support to those who suffer for conscience's sake?

NEYM Faith and Practice Online

Clerk's Corner

by Clarence Burley

"As the Spirit of Darkness be stronger in the dark, so Good Spirits, which be Angels of Light, are augmented not only by the Divine light of the Sun, but also by our common Wood Fire: and as the Celestial Fire drives away dark spirits, so also this our fire of Wood doth the same."

John Greenleaf Whittier selected these words of the 16th century occult theologian Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa as the epigraph to the poem, *Snowbound*. It seems appropriate during these days to recall Whittier's 19th century hearth cheering his family until *"The chill embargo of the snow / Was melted in the genial glow, / Wide swung again our ice-locked door, / And all the world was ours once more."*

My dark spirits are driven away by our fireplace when my son-in-law kindles its genial glow. But the thought strikes me that Agrippa was not fully informed when he contrasts the divine light of the sun with our common wood fire. We now know that the energy of the big bang stored in the sun's hydrogen atoms is released when they fuse into helium atoms. That energy strikes chlorophyll molecules in the leaf of a tree to begin the growth that produces our firewood. The divine light of the sun is held in trust for me by the wood to cheer and warm me in the winter. The wood that has spent years in growing spends itself to provide a glowing warmth for a short while. Knowing this Thoreau said, "Every man has a certain affection for his woodpile." It may be that the woodpile has a certain affection for me. Does this teach me that my duty is to spend myself, my time, my talent, my treasure to provide light and warmth for others?

Building a Culture of Peace

Worcester Friends Meeting's Peace/Social Concerns/Outreach committee is a sponsor for Building a Culture of Peace: The Need of Our Times. This event will held on Thursday, March 24, 2011, 1-5 pm at Briarwood Continuing Care Retirement Center. The Meeting's sponsorship allows scholarship for two members to attend this event.

Join Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury and Virginia Swain, Founder and Director, Institute for Global Leadership, for the Worcester Life Leadership Award to Center for Nonviolent Solutions, Common Pathways, Lisa Laurel Weinberg, Esq and all the peace-makers interviewed for Imagine Worcester and the World TV show (wccatv.com/imagine) for lunch, reception and keynote address by Ambassador Chowdhury, Building a Culture of Peace: The Need of Our Times Sponsored by Briarwood, the Institute for Global Leadership, Fischer Institute at Nichols Col-

lege, and Worcester Friends Meeting's Peace/Social Concerns/Outreach..

Anwarul Karim Chowdhury is a Bangladeshi diplomat most noted for his work on development in the poorest nations, global peace and championing the rights of women and children. Mr. Chowdhury was appointed in March 2002 by the Secretary-General of the United Nations as Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. In his role as the leading UN Culture of Peace emissary, he said in May 2010 that peace efforts would continually fail until people embraced humanity's oneness.

Ambassador Chowdhury was awarded the first Life Leadership Award in 2007 at the Beechwood Hotel.

2012 Gathering of Friends General Conference to be in Rhode Island

We of Worcester Meeting, individually as members and attenders, have received an invitation to be part of the Gathering Committee for the 2012 Annual Gathering of Friends General Conference to be held at the University of Rhode Island in Kingston, July 1-7, 2012.

Nancy and David Haines, the co-clerks, will hold the first of three meetings of the Gathering Committee on April 29-30, 2011, at Wellesley Friends Meeting in Wellesley. There are several subcommittees to be formed to begin the planning. <http://www.fgcquaker.org/gathering/next-year>.

Quaker Chuckles

Kevin Lee tells a story from the times when he used to teach First Day School. One day a young boy's great grandmother came to pick up the child. The boy showed



her the picture that he had colored. His great grandmother asked, "And did you talk about God today?" "Oh no," the child answered, "We finished talking about God last week!"

The Minute of Sending Forth from the 2010 NEYM Sessions has provided Friends much opportunity for reflection and discernment. A number of Friends from our Meeting and others expressed concern about the language of the final minute presented at the final session at Bryant College last summer. Friends are encouraged to read the full text of the minute. It is available on the NEYM's web site: <http://sessions.neym.org/minute-sending-forth> The minute has encouraged many in the Worcester Meeting to give "sustained and disciplined attention" to the areas named in the minute: "the call to forgiveness; the call to strengthen our ability to love and to build our community; the call to name, cultivate, and exercise gifts of ministry, eldership, and leadership; and the call to undertake clear leadings for witness." To these ends, the following letter was sent:

2nd Mo. 14, 2011
Linda Jenkins, Clerk
New England Yearly Meeting
6 Chestnut Street
Boston, MA 02108

Dear Linda Jenkins,

At the Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business held yesterday, Worcester Friends Meeting approved sending the following letter with copies as noted:

Dear Linda Jenkins,

We, the members of Worcester Friends Monthly Meeting, Ministry and Counsel Committee, are writing to respond to the Minute of Sending Forth from the 2010 NEYM Sessions. Despite our concerns, we do appreciate all of your hard work, and that of all the anchor groups.

Our first issue with this Minute is that it lacks clarity. We are educated and seasoned Friends, yet we all required multiple readings of the text to try to comprehend its meaning, which remains elusive. This is not simplicity. Let us speak clearly and directly, with both our words and our example.

Secondly, we strongly object to the sentence "There is only one witness, and it is the body of Christ". Our understanding of the best of Quaker wisdom and insight is that anyone (even non-Christians and non-affiliated individuals) can share some part of the Light from disparate sources of inspiration. To limit ourselves to one pre-defined approach to witness is to proscribe the universality of our faith in sectarian exclusivity.

Third, instead of vague encouragement about "forgiveness", "leadership", and "gifts of ministry", the letter could have urged us to more concrete actions, such as speaking truth to power about America's imperial militarism, practicing the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, or opposing sexism, homophobia, ignorance and poverty in our society. To leave us all to our individual and various ministries may be useful in avoiding internal conflicts, but belies our powerful tradition of radicalism and contemporary call to relevance.

As we listen for that still, small voice of God to guide us, we also look forward to clear guidance from our monthly and yearly Meetings to help us discern more clearly how we might live out the meaning of our Friends' testimonies in the 21st century.

In faith,

The Ministry and Counsel Committee of Worcester Monthly Meeting

All members and attenders were given earlier opportunities to review the letter and its referenced Minute of Sending Forth.

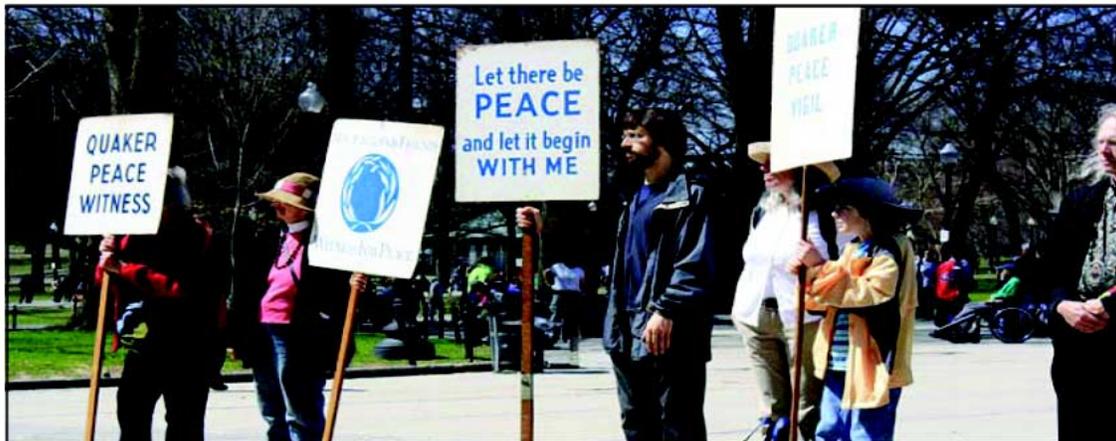
In Friendship,

Clarence Burley, Clerk

Cc: Yearly Meeting Secretary
Y M Communications Director
Y M Ministry & Counsel Committee Clerk
Y M Sessions Committee Clerk

Further, as a result of the Minute of Sending Forth from the 2010 NEYM Sessions "call to undertake clear leadings for witness", there will be a public witness and day of discernment in Boston on the weekend of April 22. The full page flyer is included in this newsletter. "Friends are encouraged....."

New England Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends



Call to Witness and Day of Discernment

April 22nd & April 23rd

Friday - Call to Witness
Good Friday and Earth Day

- **Good Friday Witness for Peace**
Beacon Hill and Boston Common 10-2:30pm
- **Awakening the Dreamer Program**
Beacon Hill Friends House 4-8:30

Saturday - Day of Discernment
Wellesley Friends Meeting House 8:30 - 3:30pm

- **Worship**
- **Small Group Sharing**
- **Whole Group Sharing**
- **Possible Meeting for Business**

What Are We Called to Do?

As an outgrowth of the 2010 Sessions Minute of Sending Forth, this weekend is a search for how God is leading New England Yearly Meeting to deepen our spirituality and its expression in our testimonies. It is an opportunity to stand with others in witness, to share our journeys and our differences and to discern "What are we called to do?"

Awakening the Dreamer on Friday night will be presented by Steve Chase from Putney Meeting. Through leading edge information, prayer and meditation, inspiring multimedia, and dynamic interactions with others, participants are moved to connect with their deep concern for our earth and find their unique contribution to creating a sustainable, fulfilling and just world.

Suggested donation is \$15/day or \$25 for the two days per adult. Equalization will be available for those in need. Light meals will be provided. Hospitality, childcare and travel information will be provided as needed.

Advance documents will be sent out to all those who register as to all the Monthly Meetings to aid in our discernment.

For more information and to register go to this link:
<http://www.neympeace.org/witness-discernment-inapril/>

Or if you do not have internet access, you can email Cliff Harrison at c.cliffharrison@comcast.net or call 781-397-1419. Please register before April 1st.

This weekend is sponsored by the Earthcare Ministry, Peace & Social Concerns, and Racial, Social and Economic Justice Committees of the New England Yearly Meeting.

Bible Study Group

The Bible Study group, facilitated by Geoff Knowlton, will meet on Sunday, March 19 at 9:30 AM. Geoff has been a frequent attender of the Worcester Meeting for quite a while. He was a member of the Indiana Friends Meeting, in Indiana, Pennsylvania.

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.

Spoken Word Series at the Worcester Friends Meetinghouse

Saturday, March 12 7:30 PM

Ralph Waldo Emerson (portrayed by Wendell Refior) will deliver the *Fugitive Slave Law Address*, originally read in Concord Massachusetts in May, 1851.

Ralph Waldo Emerson. Portrayed by Wendell Refior Suggested donation \$10

Wendell Refior is an Emerson scholar and re-enactor. For the past decade he has studied and taught the works of Ralph Waldo Emerson. His courses have received rave reviews for his insights and passion for the inspiring idealism in Emerson's great essays and addresses. Appearing in period costume, Mr. Refior has thrilled a wide array of audiences delivering Emerson's most famous orations and sermons.

The appearance of Ralph Waldo Emerson will be especially interesting for those who were present for Richard Smith's engaging portrayal of Henry David Thoreau at the Meetinghouse in February.



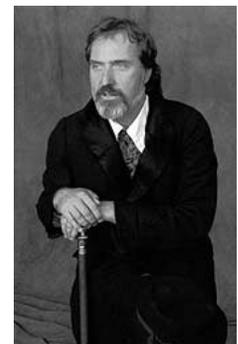
Saturday, April 9 7:30 PM

Valerie Tutson of Providence RI, will present a program of *Life for an African American Woman in Colonial America*.



Saturday, May 14 7:30 PM

Stephen 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*.



Upcoming Event

Immigration, the Church, and the Bible: A workshop for Clergy and Lay Leaders

Friday, March 11 at Wesley United Methodist Church

The language of the immigration debate is loaded. Terms like “illegal” and “alien” are thrown around. Scripture is quoted on both sides, more often used as weapon than a balm. Many among us have a deep sense of uneasiness about the tone of the debate.

Worcester Friends are invited to join Christians from across New England for a day of learning. Professor M. Daniel Carroll Rodas, from Denver Seminary, will speak on the complexities of the historical, cultural and economic dimensions of immigration. This day long workshop will be held at the Wesley United Methodist Church, 114 Main Street, Worcester on Friday, March 11 (from 9 AM until 4 PM) will include a call for our commitment to engage in the Sojourners study Strangers in the Land, based on Carroll’s book Christians at the Border: Immigration, the Church, and the Bible. Strangers in the Land is a 6-week devotional guide on immigration from the editors of Sojourners. The \$20 registration (scholarship available) includes a copy of Strangers in the Land.

Registration fee should be mailed to **Rhode Island Council of Churches, 100 Niantic Avenue #101, Providence I 02907**

Editor’s note: I welcome the opportunity that this workshop provides. Several years ago, NEYM Sessions had the theme of Who is My Neighbor and the story of the good Samaritan. I also think of my friend Shane (Pima Friends Meeting, AZ) and her Meeting’s work along the Mexican border. I am happy to notice that Linda Jenkins, Presiding Clerk, NEYM is one of the 4 church leaders issuing the invitation. Rev Don Anderson of the Rhode Island council of Churches told me that Professor Carroll will also be a workshop at Brown University on Saturday, March 12. For more information, call Don at 401-461-5558. - kt green



Woolman Hill Upcoming Event

<http://www.woolmanhill.org>

March 18-20

Paradoxical Phrase Or Doorway To Faithfulness? with Jennie Isbell

This retreat will explore issues around naming and nurturing gifts, nominating as a form of pastoral care, and tensions about authority and leadership in Quaker contexts. This will be very appropriate for **Nominating Committee members** as well as a wide variety of others. Jennie Isbell is a very engaging and lively facilitator.

More information about this workshop and about Woolman Hill can be found at: <http://www.woolmanhill.org>



As Friends, how can we build stronger spiritual communities by caring for one another more effectively? How can we empower our committees and enable every Friend in our meeting to find his or her own role in pastoral care?

When I read these Queries, I knew this workshop was for me. Yes, I did go to it, and I surprised myself when I walked into the house at Woolman Hill and greeted Margaret Cooley with, "Hi. I'm home." Through the years, I've gone to several workshops/retreats at Woolman Hill, and each one has nourished me and helped me to grow spiritually. My understanding of the Religious Society of Friends increases and my life (and hopefully the lives of those around me) is enriched by attending Quaker workshops and becoming part of the larger community of Friends.

The workshop on the weekend of February 18-20 was facilitated by **Beth Collea**, a member of Wellesley Meeting, and the Christian Education Coordinator of NEYM, **Kevin Lee**, a member of Westport (RI) Meeting, is the Junior Yearly Meeting Retreat coordinator for NEYM and is trained in pastoral counseling, and **Jonathan Vogel-Borne**, a member of Friends Meeting at Cambridge, is Yearly Meeting Secretary for NEYM. Helping to coordinate pastoral care of local meetings is a significant part of his work among New England Friends.

We talked a lot about pastoral care, and I learned that "pastoral care" means more than visiting homebound or infirm members. We discussed guidelines in offering pastoral care, and spent time discussing the differences between pastoral care and counseling. Language, we learned, must be inclusive and non-judgmental. Our choice of words needs to come from a vision of the sacredness of life, from an idea of purity. Pastoral care is the responsibility of the speaker as well as the listener.

We talked about giving and receiving help from our Quaker community. We were reminded that a little bit of help, a little bit of caring, can make a big difference. Ways to encourage Friends to recognize our gifts and to share them were named. While we realize that our beliefs may attract some broken people, we are reminded that we are all broken, and that we can help each other by listening and waiting. As Friends, we must respect confidentiality and recognize that information is power. It is not our responsibility to

change things, but rather to be able to "be there" with a person. As Jonathan Vogel-Borne said, "to be at that deep place with others is what's it's about."

Some of us met for a healing circle. I remember a long time ago, our meeting held some healing circles that I did not attend because of my own insecurities and lack of trust. During the workshop we talked about ministry and counsel, and we were encouraged to "get outside of secrecy" and into healing.

One of the things that I enjoy about being at Woolman Hill is the library there. Here is something I want to share with readers. It is from the British Friends' Faith and Practice, Chapter 12 *Caring for One Another*.

All of us in the meeting have needs. Sometimes the need will be for patient understanding, sometimes for practical help, sometimes for challenges and encouragement; but we cannot be aware of each other's needs unless we know each other. ... Every conversation with another Friend, every business meeting, every discussion group, and every meeting for worship can increase our loving and caring and our knowledge of each other.

Loving care is not something that those sound in mind and body "do" for others, but a process that binds us together. ... Careful listening is fundamental to helping each other;... Some would say that it is the single most useful thing we can do.

On Saturday evening, Jonathan passionately read from Revelations, Ch 1, after which he talked about angels. He said that every meeting has three angels: one angel is the angel of the present (who we are); one is the angel that is the vision (where all of us are loved); and one angel is the angel that is the shadow (the brokenness, despair, anger). These three can also be one angel. We all were asked to draw our meetings' angel/s. My drawing had many angels at our meeting: some outside (even mowing the lawn), some inside at meeting, and some upstairs.

Center for Nonviolent Solutions

The Annual Meeting of Center for Nonviolent Solutions will be held on Saturday, March 19, 2011 at the Worcester Public Library, from 9:30 to 11:30 AM. The keynote address will be delivered by David Adams, one of the key architects of the global Culture of Peace campaign. On behalf of UNESCO, Dr. Adams drafted the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, which has inspired countless educational and cultural activities by governments and civil society for a culture of peace.



Saturday, February 5 was the date for a mediation training held at the meetinghouse. Worcester Friends are blessed to have the Center for Nonviolent Solutions as a tenant. It is a joy to have our meetinghouse filled with people working to promote peace in our community.

Learning communication skills to use in mediating conflicts, 18 people from across the Worcester community took part in a mediation workshop sponsored by the Center for Nonviolent Solutions on Saturday,

February 5. Three experienced mediation instructors, Carol Baldarelli, Michael Langa and Leslie Saffer, led the group in communication exercises and role plays. Worcester organizations represented included Regional Environmental Council, Abby's House, Christian Community Church, Toxic Soil Busters,

Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Stone Soup, Worcester Youth Center, YOU Inc, and the Columbus Park Neighborhood Association.

Notes

Elliott Joslin, past clerk of Worcester Friends Meeting, passed away Saturday, January 15, 2011, in Petersham at home in the loving care of his family. He leaves his committed partner, Mary Anne Walker, member of Worcester Friends Meeting; his three children, Allen Joslin of Preston, CT, Rachel Whitehouse of Winchester, MA and David Joslin of East Hampton, CT; and five grandchildren.

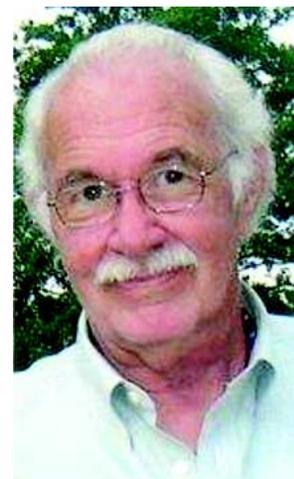
A humanist and a man of caring, in his work and life, Elliott shared freely of himself and his talents. He was involved with peace work, theatre and wood and metal crafts.

A memorial service will be held in the spring at the New England Peace Pagoda in Leverett, MA. In lieu of flowers donations in his honor can be made to the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102.

Please visit <http://elliott.joslin.net> for details and to share condolences.

"I want to say something to all of you who have become a part of the fabric of my life. The color and the texture which you have brought into my being has become a song and I want to sing it forever. There is an energy in us which makes things happen when the paths of other persons touch ours and we have to be there and let it happen. When the time of our particular sunset comes our thing, our accomplishment won't really matter a great deal, but the clarity and care with which we have loved will speak with the vitality of the great gift of life we have lead for each other."

Be at peace,-- Elliott Joslin 1936-2011



Elliott Joslin 1936-2011

Notes

Ann Humes, a former long time very active member of Worcester Meeting is currently living in a retirement community at Kendall at Longwood in Pennsylvania. She is doing well and continuing to be very active although struggling with macular degeneration. She is currently in her 26th consecutive year of spending 2 winter months working with the Choctaw Indian children at the Choctaw Friends Center in Alabama doing tutoring, working on crafts and finding ways of helping the Indian community. Ann also assists at a food bank, volunteers in a kindergarten class and at a detention center for teenagers. Ann is active in her local Friends Meeting and would like to stay in touch with Worcester Friends. Her address is 76 Kendal Drive, Kennett Square, PA 19348. Ann's telephone number is 610-388-1199.

The Poyntons are in Hilton Head, South Carolina for a couple of weeks for a vacation. They will be near the ocean, and plan to spend time playing tennis. They have offered to take over as editors of our newsletter.

Karen Sargent's mother was here from Florida to help out while Karen's husband Doug was recovering from some health problems. It is always a joy when Karen's mother attends our meeting. We wish Doug speedy recovery to his usual state of good health.

Phil Stone's mother passed away on January 27. Phil and Katie spent several days in Manhattan with Phil's Dad. Phil and Katie are very impressed with the pastoral care offered by the Stephen Wise Free Synagogue which has hired a full time social worker to help out with their congregation and school programs.

Virginia Swain has received a grant from the Trustees of Obadiah Brown Fund for her work with Samuel Onapa in The Sudan.

Brenda Woodside says Hello. Brenda has been spending weekends with her 86 year old great-aunt who has been living alone in Medford after Brenda's grandmother, who shared the house with her, passed away. Congratulations to Brenda's husband, Michael. His book of poetry was published last May. Friends may remember hearing Michael read some of his fine poetry at one of our Spoken Word events. Brenda says that she hopes to be able to return to Meeting for Worship if she is home for a weekend in the future. She appreciates receiving the email updates and the newsletter.

Scheduled Meetings

First Sunday 9:30 am	Trustees, Peace/Social Concerns
Second Sunday 9:00 am	Meeting for Business
Third Sunday 9:30 am	Discussion as scheduled
Fourth Sunday 9:30 am	Ministry and Counsel
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 known as "the Meeting for eating."

Set up for pot luck is voluntary. If you are unable to set-up on your scheduled day, Please contact Paul - 508-981-7285

03/06/11	Mikkelsen, Whitney	508-887-1061	whitneymikkelson@yahoo.com
03/13/11	Perry, Ellen	508-476-0169	ellenperry@charter.com
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03/27/11	Poynton, Brian		bribet@fastmail.fm
04/03/11	Sargent, Scott		karenegsargent@attglobal.net
04/10/11	Sargent, Karen		karenegsargent@attglobal.net

Editor of newsletter: Katie Green. Deadline for next issue: April 1, 2011. Send contributions to bapp311@yahoo.com (Brian and Betty Poynton)

Clerk: Clarence Burley 508-735-4353