

Worcester Friends Newsletter

March 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

Stephen Aldrich Fund

The impact of contemporary economic change and the need of individuals and families is all around us. We sense the need, but often ask, "What can I do?"

Much as we ask this question today, Stephen Aldrich asked and responded in the 1800's by bequeathing a large portion of his estate to the [RI-Smithfield} Quarterly Meeting to provide emergency funding for Friends in need. This bequeath continues today as the Stephen Aldrich Fund and is available to all members of the Meeting community seeking one-time emergency financial assistance.

Individuals needing assistance or those who would like further information regarding the Fund should contact our Meeting's representative, **Paul Gallagher**. All contact is held strictly in confidence.

For more information about the Aldrich Fund, see page 3.

Mark your calendars for upcoming special events:

Saturday, April 7 REC Earth Day cleanup on Sat. morning April 7 from 8am- noon on Reservoir Rd. / lower end of Reservoir # 2 Sign up at <http://bit.ly/2E8mlYd>

Saturday, April 14 Portland, ME, All day, NEYM Living Faith Gathering, Worship, workshops, fellowship, sharing concerns with dynamic Friends, Pay as led, Registration at livingfaith@neym.org.

Saturday, April 21 Retreat to discern WFM's use of our current facility, 9am-2pm at Mary Bennett's house.

Sunday, April 25 Threshing Session for State of Society Report at 9 am.

Saturday, June 16 Market Day, 9am-3pm

Sunday, 7/1–Saturday, 7/7, Univ. of Toledo, OH, FGC Gathering.

Saturday, 8/4—Thursday, 8/9, Castleton University, Castleton, VT, NEYM Sessions.



Thousands of Worcester area residents, including quite a few Friends, attended the **March for Our Lives** on March 24, 2018. The student led gathering was heartening and peaceful. Friends are encouraged to join continuing vigils every Tuesday, 4:00–5:00 pm. at Lincoln Square, Vigil for Peace with Catholic Worker House and every Second Saturday, 12:30–1:30 pm. at The Gun Parlor, 170 Prescott St. Vigil to reverse a culture of guns with Catholic Workers and others. See **Clarence Burley** for more details.

Monthly Meeting for Business, Worcester Friends Meeting

Date: March 11, 2018

Present: Daron Barnard, Katharine Barnard, Tom Brenner, Clarence Burley, Lucy Candib, Mary Chenaille, Jane Cutting, Richard Schmitt, Matthew Shorten

Clerking: Matthew Shorten

The meeting opened with silent worship.

1. **Committee Reports:**

- a. **Practical.** The committee took up various buildings and grounds issues: Batteries have been replaced in all the smoke alarms and CO detectors. The committee is working to resolve lighting issues for the Meeting room. The signboards in front of the Meetinghouse need replacement, and the committee is pricing different options for the project. The Meeting needs a better solution for garbage disposal on a weekly basis and the committee will look into options. The treasurer will contact the snow plower to make arrangements for next year. Additionally, the committee has taken up finding a new ISP provider for the Meeting and also updating the Meeting's email address to make communication easier. The newsletter committee asks for a reliable means of getting mailing labels for the newsletter, as the mailing is at times delayed due to need for labels; Kevin Walsh can help Sheila with these logistics. Market Day has one vendor commitment thus far, and advertising could help attract others. Tom Brenner will help Karen Sargent with Market Day planning.
 - b. **Spiritual Life.** The committee met last week, taking up consideration of the Meeting Retreat to be held this Spring, preparation for State of Society, and programming for Quarterly Meeting to be held in Worcester on March 18. The committee also considered how to provide representation to NEYM Ministry and Counsel this year, and will explore with that committee whether we can rotate attendance among different Worcester Friends. Laura Sturgill will take place of Matt Shorten in representing Spiritual Life Committee on Gifts and Leadings from now through August 2018.
 - c. **Peace Social Concerns and Outreach.** The Meeting has agreed to support the Worcester event against gun violence on March 24. Committee members cooked and served dinner at the Grace Hotel, and had a very positive experience logistically, socially, and in connecting to Richie Gonzalez, the coordinator. Thanks to Mary and Lucy for food shopping, Richard and Tom for delivering and serving food, and others for cooking. It was recommended that when dates are known they can be announced at the rise of Meeting to seek additional volunteers, though as it is only known 4 days in advance if there is a need, coordination sometimes happens in a short timeframe. The Meeting as a whole is in support of this effort and covering the food costs, which can come out of the PSCO budget or other budget areas as needed. It is recognized that if we want to be more visible in the community, having Friends Meeting T-shirts to wear during such activities would be a help. First Day School will take up this item. The committee continues to plan our spot on Channel 3 news. PSCO will respond to FCNL, which has requested Meetings' input on priority areas for their lobbying efforts.
2. **Treasurer's Report.** The treasurer reports that we are running as anticipated with expenses and income, though in the balance we are less in deficit than budgeted. There was clarification that committees can spend up to \$500 without prior approval by business meeting. The treasurer clarified the amount and purpose of our Meeting's savings accounts and assets.

3. Upcoming Events

- a. Quarterly Meeting will be held next week, March 18. Mary Bennett will lead a mindful walk at the rise of potluck to connect us to the natural world and our Quaker priority on climate change. Tom Brenner will coordinate a brief presentation on our Meeting's activities against racism.
- b. The threshing session for forming our annual State of Society report will be held prior to worship on Sunday April 15.
- c. A Meeting Retreat is planned to allow for consideration of our Meeting's role in the community and how our physical location might be part of that. Noah Baker-Merrill is available to facilitate this reflective, worshipful discussion, which will be held Saturday, April 21, at Mary Bennett's home.
- d. Karen Sargent has announced a nonviolent action being planned by Prophetic Climate Action Witness Group to be held March 26 at the State House, protesting a planned natural gas pipeline for a luxury condo complex.
- e. Some Worcester Public Schools will participate in the national walk-out on March 14 to protest or reflect on school gun violence. The level of participation and the school's response will likely be variable between schools.
- f. Annual Meeting of the Center for Nonviolent Solutions will be held Tuesday March 13, from 5-7pm at the Worcester Public Library. This will include food, music, and a presentation by the peer mediation group at Claremont Academy. A Peacekeeping Citizen Award will be presented to the principal of Claremont.
- g. Spring Market Day will be held June 16 this year.

The meeting closed with silence.

Respectfully submitted,
Katharine Barnard

Rhode Island-Smithfield Stephen Aldrich Fund Summary (See front page)

Stephen Aldrich (ca 1772), bequeathed to the Smithfield Quarterly Meeting "one undivided half of his estate to hold in trust the proceeds to be applied to the support of the poor and needy of said Meeting..." These funds held in trust serve as an endowed fund with the interest typically made available for disbursement to support individual emergency requests such as for one-time medical, home heating, car, etc. and are not on-going. While it has been suggested that the funds purpose was for the support of women, there is no such language in the will; the will indicates "preferences to connections to the testator" and can support anyone in need, both men and women of the [RI-Smithfield Quarterly] Meeting.

Currently the Quarter provides oversight for carrying out the Aldrich bequest through the Aldrich Fund Committee which consists of one representative from each meeting of the Quarter. Representatives of each meeting are responsible for working with their meeting community to identify potential financial needs and convey any requests in writing to the Committee Clerk. Written requests typically outline the specific need and any factors that may be deemed relevant in helping the Committee to determine the appropriate use of the funds and amount of the grant. All requests are held in confidence. Disbursements are recorded, but do not include details. The financial records are maintained by the treasurer of the Quarter. Currently the funds are held with Equity Investments as part of the NEYM pooled funds. As of Dec 2017, the spendable income from the fund was \$5,999.92 with a principle of \$77,136.50. This investment strategy and decisions regarding the disbursement of the funds vary with market conditions and other relevant factors.

Once Friends reach unity concerning a request, the following steps are to be completed:

- Notify committee members that unity has been reached.
- Provide the Treasurer of the precise instructions including the amount, to whom the check is to be made out to, where to mail it and a cover letter to go with the bequest.



A Closer Look at Worcester Friends:

Jane Cutting

My spiritual journey:

I have been attending Worcester Friends Meeting for about four years.

I was raised in the Episcopal Church and attended an Episcopal girls' camp for 7 years where my religious formation occurred in an environment where I was encouraged to question and to develop a spiritual life. During the Vietnam War, my husband and I became active in the Unitarian Church which spoke more directly to our increasing anti war consciousness. In my twenties, I became interested in Quakers and their peace testimony. I read books about Quakers, the first being *Friends for 300 Years* by Howard Brinton, and a few times I attended Friends Meeting, Cambridge. A little more than 4 years ago I came to Worcester Friends and felt a positive spiritual presence that was inclusive, non hierarchical, and in sympathy with my belief in the sacramental nature of all of creation.

I am influenced by the Work of Joanna Macy, a Buddhist, by Martin Buber, by Christian and mystics of other faith traditions, and by the 'New Story' expressed in the writings of Brian Swimme, Thomas Berry, and others that we humans are not separate from but rather are at one with the universe and that we are a force for healing.

Local and global issues of concern to me:

I care about marginalized people, the environment, and our treatment of those in the animal kingdom.

What WFM is doing or can do in these areas:

Worcester Friends Meeting has started a Facing Race book discussion group which is a good beginning in responding to needs in the Worcester community and beyond. I believe it is important in our predominantly white meeting to address our white privilege and the insidious white supremacy that is embedded in our cultural DNA. Anything that Friends do to support DACA young people and the Sanctuary Movement is important.

Things that give me hope:

Small groups of people all over the planet who do care about each other and the earth, are doing things to effect change, and are willing to stand up for what's right, often at risk to themselves. The Alternatives to Violence Project, AVP, started by the Quakers, which provides workshops for the incarnated, for veterans, and for those affected by trauma gives me hope that people can change and heal. Outside of the meeting the things that give me pleasure are my grandchildren, being out doors, camping in the mountains, and reading.

3 books I would take if on a desert island:

That's not easy but I'll give it a go. Yes, I would take the *Bible*. The stories are all there; the stories of human relationships in Genesis, the Prophets, a story of human suffering in Job, the story of how the Jewish people understood their relationship to the Divine, and the teachings of the prophet and mystic, Jesus. *The Transcendentalists*, an anthology edited by Perry Miller, and *Awakening Universe, Emerging Personhood: The Power of Contemplation in an Emerging Universe* by Mary Coelho, a member of Friends Meeting Cambridge and the New Story Group, would also be included.

Peace and Social Concerns and Hotel Grace

Members of the Peace and Social Concerns Committee have recently been active in providing some delicious meals for overnight residents at the Hotel Grace in downtown Worcester. Hotel Grace is a makeshift shelter at St John's Church on Temple Street for people without homes. Three churches in Worcester coordinate efforts to provide a meal and shelter on nights when the temps go below freezing. The shelter, established by Pentecostal Minister and former homeless person, Richie Gonzales, is open from 5pm until 7 am throughout the winter. Lucy Candib, Thomas Brenner, Jane Cutting, Karen Sargent, Mary Chenaille and Richard Schmitt collectively took part in buying supplies, cooking and serving dinner at the Hotel this month. For three freezing nights in March, three households cooked enough food for 25 people to provide the 75 meals needed for one night at the shelter.

Recently, Worcester City Manager, Edward M Augustus Jr., established a task force to tackle the chronic homelessness problem in Worcester which increased by 46 percent from 2016 to 2017. During the same year, unsheltered homelessness increased by 97 percent. Until the task force reaches a plan to combat chronic homelessness in the city, the Grace Hotel remains a vital community service in which Worcester Friends are happily involved.

WAMS (Worcester Area Mission Society) invites all to lunch and conversation “Collaborating to Meet the Needs of the People in Our Communities” on Tuesday, **April 24, 2018** from 11:30 am until 1:00 pm at 6 Institute Rd. in Worcester. Various speakers will address topics such as “Opportunities to Help Families in Worcester” and will include the Central MA Housing Alliance Staff discussing what is and is not available in terms of housing support resources for families and individuals and how faith communities can best help someone in need of help with housing. Registration information can be found at <http://wamsworks.org/>

VAGABOND QUAKERS Book Review by **Clarence Burley**

A thrilling tale of faith and adventure recounts the true story of Mary Tomkins and Alice Ambrose, Quaker missionaries in 1662 Puritan New England. The novel, *Vagabond Quakers*, by Olga Morrill places these Friends with friends among settlers of several faiths, and foes among corrupt ministers and powerful magistrates. They are subjected to the *Whip and Cart Act* more gruesomely described than in Whittier's poem, *How the Women Went from Dover*.*

Alternating chapters tell the story of Richard Walderne, the Puritan magistrate whose warrant condemns the women to the whip and cart. His tale, beginning in 1635, recounts his immigration and rise to wealth and power, finally intersecting with the missionaries. He shows himself willing to go outside the law to protect the establishment against “the danger of these unnatural women.”

Caveat: The alternating chapters with over 400 pages and 90 characters make this a formidable read, but one well-worth the time and effort to understand life, domestic, commercial and religious, of 17th century New England.

This book speaks of being Book One of *The Vagabond Trilogy*. Let us thank the author for donating it to all NEYM meetings, and hope for Books Two and Three.

* John Greenleaf Whittier's poem can be found at <http://www.hampton.lib.nh.us/hampton/poetry/dover.htm>

Letter from the Permanent Board March 14, 2018

Dear Friends,

Permanent Board gathered on 17 February 2018 for a full day of worship and business, blessed by the warm hospitality of Concord Monthly Meeting in cold Canterbury, NH.

Coming out of our morning worship, gathered as we were at the same time as Cuba Yearly Meeting Friends, Permanent Board approved a joint NEYM-CYM minute to “support full and equitable diplomatic, commercial and socio-cultural relationships between our two nations; ... insist that freedom of religion includes our traveling ministries, as well as our social and justice ministries; ... promote peaceful relationships among citizens, encouraging peaceful international relations and exchanges of religion, culture and information ...[and] protesting actions by the United States government that disrupt the accords and the systems for improved interaction between Cubans and Americans.”

NEYM Presiding Clerk Fritz Weiss celebrated our long and loving relationship with Cuba Yearly Meeting as he traveled in ministry with several other Yearly Meeting Friends before the gathering and was honored to offer the message in closing worship at CYM Sessions.

Turning to business closer to home, and following long discernment since Sessions 2017, gathered Friends approved a revitalized Fund for Sufferings and the creation of the NEYM Faith in Action Committee, to support and connect the witness of Friends throughout New England. The Legacy Gift Committee has generously offered—and Permanent Board has redesignated—\$25,000 from its Witness and Ministry Fund to the Fund for Sufferings, to seed this ministry among Friends.

It is a sweet blessing to name, as with the Fund for Sufferings and Faith in Action Committee, where the life of the Spirit is vital and calls us to work in Truth, and where NEYM can support the ministry of local Friends. A piece of our work is also to name, and mourn, when a once living witness is no longer vital and to lay that work down. In that spirit, the Personnel Committee brought forward its discernment that NEYM’s non-compliance with the 1986 Federal Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) was no longer a living witness of the Yearly Meeting. The Personnel Committee named some of the increasingly numerous places where Friends are faithful witnesses to immigration concerns, outlined how the IRCA non-compliance witness arose, reported on the significant liabilities to our finances and personnel that non-compliance engendered, and described the inconsistency with which the non-compliance has been implemented. Permanent Board approved the Yearly Meeting coming into full compliance with IRCA regulations.

In addition, we heard many reports from Yearly Meeting committees and working groups, including updates during the day, on the good work of:

Permanent Board’s ad hoc Long-Term Financial Planning Committee as it begins to wrap up its work, and preparing, after four years of labor and informed by more than 40 years of committee work and discernment, to bring a proposed long-term strategic and financial plan (with the numbers!) to Sessions 2018;

Permanent Board’s ad hoc Challenging White Supremacy Working Group as it continues its work with monthly meetings, prepares workshops for the 14 April Living Faith Gathering, and as it shapes Listening Sessions, a workshop, and a presentation for Sessions 2018;

NEYM’s Archives and Historical Records Committee as it deepens our relationship with the Special Collections and University Archives of the W.E.B. Dubois Library of the University of Massachusetts (SCUA), further clarifying how the yearly, quarterly and monthly meetings can transfer archival records. Permanent Board approved the Memorandum of Understanding further clarifying our partnership with SCUA to care for the Archives.

The next meeting of Permanent Board will be on 12 May 2018 at Moses Brown School in Providence, RI. All meetings of Permanent Board are open. All Friends are welcome to join in our worship and discernment. Advance documents are available on the NEYM website. Please consider joining us as we worship and conduct some of the business of New England Yearly Meeting between Sessions.

Blessings to you as this season of renewal breaks forth,

Sarah Gant

Beacon Hill Monthly Meeting

Aaron's Friendly Fare:

Monthly Culinary Column

by Aaron Sakulich



You may know that I have temporarily moved to Namibia, or as the locals call it, the Land God Made in Anger. Namibian geography reminds me of Texas or Arizona. There is a lot of scrub brush, some deserts, and a lot of ranch country. I live in Windhoek, a city that was only founded a century ago, and which primarily served colonists. (As with everything that the German and South African occupations built here, but I digress.) There are a few high rise buildings, several American-style shopping malls, and even a laser tag and go-kart arena on the outside of town. It also has one of only two three-story KFC's that I have ever seen. One could make an argument for Windhoek being, on average, more cosmopolitan, and certainly more modern, of a city than Worcester. I don't know of any Angolan restaurants in Worcester!

The only meal that I've had that could be said to represent indigenous culture was a bowl of anchovies stewed with tomatoes and served with a corn porridge which I had in the restaurant atop the National Independence Museum. I was surprised to learn, while riding the museum's glass elevator to the top, that the structure was built by North Korean contractors. I also had some sort of fermented millet drink which I could describe in more detail, but... probably should not. As far as I can tell, the "common" food of Namibia is the steak barbecue, which is not surprising for ranch country like this. I am slowly working my way through the local game. They may sound exotic to us, but they are common here - I met a farmer who has to lock up his trash at night or else Giraffes rummage through it! Kudu is an antelope whose entire life energy seems to go into growing horns. It has the texture of pork, with a more red-meat flavor, like veal or lamb. Kudu, in my humble opinion, takes third place to Oryx, a type of gazelle with long, straight horns and tender, juicy meat. This one tastes even more like pork, but is remarkable for its texture. The toughest part of the gnarliest old Oryx that you could ever find could still be eaten with a spoon. Although many of my friends praise Oryx as the finest delicacy, I must reserve my accolades for zebra, which is as tender as Oryx, but is definitely a red meat. Juicy and with a little mineral funk, it reminds me a lot of horse meat, and I am a big fan. I'm told by an acquaintance here that the best zebra are black with white stripes; the ones that are white with black stripes are less flavorful.

I have heard it said that the waters off the coast of Namibia are chock full of the nutrients on which oysters feed, resulting in accelerated development. And yet, I was rather caught off guard to find that Namibian oysters are roughly the size of tennis balls, with little of the brine-y flavor that I adore. As with Oryx, the texture of Namibian oysters is shocking at first: biting into one feels like biting into a brick of cream cheese. For size and texture, vote Namibia, but for flavor, I will stick a little closer to Matunuck. I had them raw; I had them broiled with garlic and cheese, and I had them breaded and deep fried with hot chili pepper sauce. Finally, a type of seafood called Kingklip was recommended to me. It came grilled over charcoal and was absolutely delicious; I thought it to be some sort of fish with very firm, white flesh. Firmer than cod or haddock. I am glad that I didn't google "Kingklip" before eating - it is actually a creature also known as the Cusk Eel, a horror from the depths of the sea that would lead even the weightiest friend to consider that God may indeed have made the world in anger, and He may even have contracted the devil to finish up some of the details.

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



Scheduled Meetings

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business-----	Second Sunday, 9 AM
Spiritual Life Committee, Daron Barnard & Mary Bennett-----	Fourth Sunday, 9:30 AM
Practical Committee, Kevin Walsh-----	First Sunday, 9:30 AM
Peace/Social Concerns/Outreach, Tom Brenner-----	Fourth Saturday, 9:30 AM
Clerk of Worcester Friends Meeting-----	Matthew Shorten
Recording Clerk-----	Katharine Barnard
Corresponding Clerk-----	Clarence Burley
First Day School-----	Katharine Barnard, Sheila Brenner,
Tyler Green, Matt Shorten	
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 or dropped off at MeetingHouse.