

# Worcester Friends Meeting

Religious Society of Friends (Quaker)

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April - May 2010

## QUERIES

- *Do we support measures to avoid pollution of air and water?*
- *Do we support measures to establish the conservation and right use of natural resources?*

NEYM Faith and Practice 1998

## Clerk's Corner

by Clarence Burley

Extended worship at Providence Meeting last Saturday struck me as a true old-fashioned Sabbath. Except for the pleasant hour-long drive in the morning, an entire day was devoted to matters of the Spirit by the twenty or so Pilgrims who attended. Unlike the 1620 pilgrims we had no starving time but were met by the Meeting's annual May Breakfast for the community, and well served later.

The first of two meetings for worship was scheduled for 11:00. I was the first to enter their wonderful meeting room, with its quadrangle of padded but still uncomfortable benches. It happened that others entered one by one, and the deepening worship gave me a feeling of community and harmony growing by degrees with each new worshipper. I was grateful for this vivid reinforcement of the value of the Quaker ethos of Friends meeting silently for worship.

The meeting rose after an hour and a half for refreshments. Then we broke out into three smaller groups, and later reassembled, to address the Query: "What stands in the way of giving ourselves wholly to God as individuals and as a society?" Some found the query inappropriate, too negative, a laying on of guilt, not recognizing that in our daily lives we are doing God's will. Others took it as a challenge to "brush away the cobwebs," to listen more, to give time, to share more, to avoid the us-them attitude. All agreed

we must answer the query for ourselves.

Our group and the whole day were blessed with the presence of a submariner from the Groton base who is going through the navy's C O process. Mike Izbicki found his objection to war at the U. S. Naval Academy of all places. He told them he could never give the order to fire a nuclear missile and so started his struggle with the system. Not a Friend, he is a Seeker and has found hospitality at the Westerly Meeting. Keep him in the Light.

At 3:30 the second meeting for worship began. Unlike the first there were several oral ministries. Most salient for me was the reflection on George Fox's iconic advice to "Walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one." The minister spoke on what the word "answer" meant to him and invited others to find their own "answer." As I invite you.

Five o'clock found me tired, but not too tired to enjoy a supper of vegetarian chili and corn bread provided by Providence (What a lovely word!)

There was a Quarterly Meeting after supper. It was all over about 7:20 P. M. which I deemed sundown. Therefore I did not break the Sabbath on the drive home after a long day spent with my closest attention to things of the Spirit. Let's keep thinking about - and then performing - our "answers."

## John Woolman

John Woolman (October 19, 1720 - October 7, 1772) came from a Quaker family in New Jersey. His father was a farmer. He gave up his retail business in order to practice a more simple life. He became a tailor and tended an orchard. Both occupations afforded him time to be an itinerant preacher. He was known to speak in a non-confrontational, yet persuasive, manner about controversial issues.

During Woolman's time, many Quakers were opposed to slavery. Some Quakers purchased slaves with the intention of providing a better life for them. Other Quakers apparently had no concerns about the moral issues of "owning" another person. Woolman visited Friends, speaking out for equality. When he stayed with Friends who owned slaves, he insisted on paying the slave for his work. He wore drab clothing because the dyes at that time were made by slaves.

Woolman embraced simplicity to such a degree that he refused to eat on or with silver utensils. He also refused to ride in stagecoaches because he believed that the practice was cruel to the horses. During the French-Indian War (1754-1763), Woolman spoke out for peace and refused to pay taxes to support the war.

In 1772, Woolman traveled to England to speak with Quakers there. On the ship, he stayed in steerage and spent time with the crew rather than staying in



John Woolman

better accommodations. He attended the London Yearly Meeting, and persuaded Friends there to write an Epistle opposing slavery. John Woolman went from London to York, where he died of small-pox.

There is a memorial to John Woolman in Mount Holly, New Jersey on the site of one of his orchards. Woolman's Journals have been continuously published since before the American Revolution, and are included in the Harvard Classics. The following excerpt is from one of his last journals.

### ***On Loving Our Neighbours as Ourselves*** - John Woolman

*When we love the lord with all our Hearts, and his Creatures in his Love, we are then preserved in Tenderness both toward Mankind and the Animal Creation; But if another Spirit gets Room in our Minds, and we follow it in our Proceedings, we are then in the Way of disordering the Affairs of Society.*

*People may have no Intention to oppress, yet by entering on expensive Ways of Life, their Minds may be so entangled therein, and so engag'd to support expensive Customs, as to be estranged from the pure sympathizing Spirit.*

## Discussion Group to Hold First Meeting Wednesday, May 5

The Peace and social concerns/outreach committee encourages Friends to read the book, *Fit for Freedom, Not for Friendship* by Donna McDaniel (Framingham Friends Meeting) and Vanessa Julye (Central Philadelphia Friends Meeting). Friends who attend New England Yearly Meeting are likely to have met Donna McDaniel. Vanessa Julye has published many articles on Quakers and racism. She is the coordinator of Friends General Conference's Committee for Ministry on Racism.

Wednesday evening, May 5th will be the first discussion group meeting as Friends read *Fit for Freedom, Not for Friendship*. The group will meet at 7:30 PM to discuss chapter one, with the assistance of the study guide that accompanies the book.

If you are interested in joining this monthly discussion group, contact Mary Chenaille at 508-873-5959 or email her at [mjchenaille@yahoo.com](mailto:mjchenaille@yahoo.com). It is anticipated that the group will meet every other Wednesday. The book may be ordered from Friends General Conference's bookstore at [www.quakerbooks.org](http://www.quakerbooks.org) (soft cover is \$28) or you can call Mary for a copy of a chapter.



Donna McDaniel and Vanessa Julye, authors of *Fit for Freedom, Not for Friendship: Quakers, African Americans, and the Myth of Racial Justice*.



### *A Tribute to Hermann Patt*

*We remember Hermann, salt of the earth.*

*Promoter of the community;*

*Long time Friend, urging communal living  
and cooperative farming.*

*Intrepid worker for the Friends Mission in Kenya.*

*Patriarch of a loving family: son, daughters,  
Grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and his  
Wife of 72 years.*

*A dancer and a singer celebrating the joy of life,  
Bringing asparagus to Pot Luck at the Quaker Meeting.*

*Testifying to his passion for a world of simplicity,  
Equality and peace.*

*Insisting that the government turn  
swords into plowshares.*

*In memoriam February 28, 2010, 94 years old.*

*With fond memories, Connie Riley  
Member, Worcester Friends Meeting*

Many Friends attended the service in celebration of the life of Friend Hermann Patt on March 20, 2010. We traveled to the First Congregational Church of West Brookfield on a beautiful spring day, and were part of the throng that completely filled the large church. The service was a thoughtful blending of speaking out of the silence and the Congregational church program.

Hermann always loved singing, and we raised our voices to sing some of his favorite hymns. We recited the 23rd psalm and adjourned to plentiful pot luck, hosted by members of the church. What a spread they provided!

Hermann lived at the Masonic Home in Charlton during the last months of his life. His health and memory had deteriorated, but shortly before his death, Herman was surrounded by his children and he spoke to each of them by name. His passing was a gentle blessing.

It is clear that Hermann Patt touched many, many people. We will miss him and we will remember his tenacity and his joy.



**What does the Lord require of you? To act justly, and to  
love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.**

**Micah 6:8**

## Spring Market Day

Worcester Friends Spring Market Day:  
Saturday, June 5 at 9 A.M.

Mark the date on your calendar! Our Spring Market Day is scheduled for Saturday, June 5, with a rain date the following Saturday. Please be thinking about how you can help out to make our market day successful. We are in need of new donations of books, good white elephant items, crafts, plants, and baked goods.

Space is available for vendors. Spaces cost \$20, and are approximately 12' x 20' in area. A limited number of tables are available for rent at \$5.00/table. Spaces are reserved on a first come, first served basis. To reserve your space, contact Betty Poynton at 508.434.2739.



Friends gather to prepare the traditional strawberry-rhubarb pies for the spring market day. Left to right: Betty Poynton, Mark Sullivan, Mary Chenaille, Karen Sargent, Barbara Mikkelsen, Fred Mikkelsen.

## Spoken Word Series

The Peace and Social Concerns/Outreach Committee sponsored a successful four month series of spoken word events.

We conclude the series on Saturday, May 8 with **Elisa Pearmain's** *Tales of Wit and Wisdom for the Spiritual Journey*. Elisa is the author of two award winning books: *Doorways to the Soul: 52 Wisdom Tales from around the World*, (1998), and *Once Upon a Time: Storytelling to Teach Character and Prevent Bullying* (2006). She is a licensed mental health counselor specializing in teaching forgiveness and mindfulness through story.

**Friends' Spoken Word Series** opened in February with *Poetry and Prose for Love, Peace and Justice*. Friends and friends of Friends read poetry that spoke to them of love, peace, justice. Some of the poems were political, some were romantic, some were praise poems for the natural world. It was a wonderful evening of sharing. Proceeds from this event were sent to AFSC's funds for recovery in Haiti.

**Walt Whitman**, portrayed by **Steven Collins**, joined us in March. We listened as Walt Whitman pondered his life and writing on the evening of his 70th birthday. Collins artfully transitioned from Walt Whitman talking to Walt Whitman speaking his poetry.

April brought Friends *A Fire in My Heart: A Storyteller's Journey among the Kurds*. **Diane Edgecomb** brought us along as she became interested in the Kurds' history and traveled to Turkey to collect and preserve their folktales. We left the meetinghouse charmed by Diane's storytelling talent, and admiring her courage and tenacity.

The series allowed the committee to work on the list for outreach. Friends and friends of Friends have requested that the meeting continue to present spoken word events. Watch for announcements in the fall, and while you wait, keep on telling your own stories!



Grace Blaber's memorial service was held on Saturday, April 10th at the Worcester Friends Meetinghouse. Friends and family came together for worship to celebrate Grace's life, her gifts and her contributions. Following a pot luck luncheon, many people traveled to the Friends Cemetery in Leicester for the interment of Grace's ashes. Her granddaughter sang the song Amazing Grace, and her clear voice floated and soared above the grave, sending the love of all into the heavens.

## Children at Worcester Friends Meeting

The children attending our First Day School and childcare bring great joy to the Older Adult Friends (OAFs). Last September, the First Day School children planted tulip bulbs along the ramp on the front of the meetinghouse. After planting the bulbs, the six children talked about what would happen to them. They pretended to be tulip bulbs under the ground through the winter, and then they sprouted and grew, pushing their way through the soil to the light. They joyfully bloomed in the sun and the warm breezes of April. They predicted what color they would be. Yellow? Red? Pink?



Malcolm and Zika check out the blooming tulips at the end of April. Wow! They're purple, and they all bloomed!

Our First Day School has anywhere from one to six children. Katie Green and Kathryn Barnard teach lessons based on Quaker beliefs. The children stay for the first 15 minutes of Meeting for Worship and are now returning for the last 5 minutes of worship sharing. During First Day School they have their own silent worship and are practicing listening to each other and taking turns talking.

Annalee Walsh is our capable childcare provider. Our younger children, JoAnna Mikkelsen and Aiden Mitchell happily accompany her to the nursery, and at this time, infant Daine Mitchell happily and soundly sleeps.

We are blessed to have such dear children. Their presence reminds us of Jesus's saying that a child shall lead them.



First Day School children play outside on the sunny September day after they plant tulip bulbs. Left to right: Xyzika Mikkelsen, Chloe Green, Addison Green, Malcolm and Lucy Barnard.



Connie Riley has a new address. Friends may wish to send her a note or visit her at The Highlands, 409 Nichols Drive, Fitchburg, MA 01420. Several Worcester Friends worship with her at the Highlands once a month; Connie reports that Friends also come once a month from Monadnock Meeting in New Hampshire. Connie maintains active communication about political events on the web.

## Don't Miss the Third Sunday Discussion May 16

Andy Grannell from the Portland Friends Meeting will lead our Third Sunday Discussion at 9:30 AM on May 16. Friends have a long and complex history that continues to challenge us as we become aware of differences between individuals and groups of Quakers. This is bound to happen in an organization that is not led by a top-down process and is made up of vibrant, intelligent human beings.

Andy Grannell will present Geoffrey Kaiser's 1991 detailed map of the branching entitled, "The Society of Friends in North America, 1661-1990". He proposes that we focus our session and the use of the map itself. Our discussion will look at how the branching and reuniting of Quaker groups has impacted New England Friends from 1845-1945 and from 1945-2010. In this light, Andy requests that Friends come to the discussion with some questions. Worcester Friends Meeting has its own story of branching and reuniting.

Here's some cues for those of us who may need a "kick-start": Evangelical Quaker, Liberal Quaker, Conservative Quaker, non-theist Quaker, Revival Quakers, Christian Quaker, Gurneyites, Hicksites, Wilberites ... Andy says, "The more focused the questions, the more likely that this session can aid Friends."

We are fortunate to have Andy Grannell join us on the 16th of May. He is familiar with our Meeting. He and his family lived in Worcester and attended the Meeting on Oxford Street. Andy was the Field Secretary for the New England Yearly Meeting before Jonathan Vogel-Borne. He also served as Dean of Students at Earlham College. He comes to us with much knowledge and insight of Quaker history.



17th century Quaker Meeting. Image taken from *The Quakers: A Very Short Introduction* by Pink Dandelion. Oxford University Press, 2008.

### QUAKER CHUCKLES

by Brian Poynton (lifted from an email to Andy Grannell)

The details of such groups as Gurneyites, Hicksites and Wilburites still mess up my mind. I remember a book of "Quaker Humor" that I got at NEYM. One item in it simplifies the diversity. From memory, it says - you may be an Orthodox Friend if your children are named John Paul and Sarah Ruth. You may be a Conservative Friend if your children are named Todd and Buffy and you may be a Liberal Friend if your children are named Summer Moonbeam and .....

HA! HA!



Friend Ida Stone celebrated her 92nd birthday in April. This photo of Ida dancing was taken in 2007 at her 90th birthday party, which many Worcester Friends attended!



Late in February, I was invited to speak to a “Diversity Class” at Quinsigamond Community College. Most of the 35-40 students were taking Lester Slater’s class in preparation to go into the field of law enforcement or nursing. Following a teaching method known as KWL (know, wonder, learn), first I wanted to find out what the class knew about Quakers (not much), and secondly what they would like to know (quite a bit).

I asked the class to brainstorm the word QUAKER. It took a couple of minutes for them to understand that whatever they said would not be evaluated or commented upon in a “brainstorm”. Here’s a list of what they came up with:

Pilgrims	William Penn	Amnesty International	strict
black hats	Pennsylvania	Revolutionary War	a quaker village near Pittsfield
oatmeal	Friends	old fashioned	Frederick (and Sarah?) Douglas (from the teacher)

We discussed these words and their relationship to Quakers.

I then asked them what they would like to know about Quakers. What do you wonder?

I wrote the questions on the board, so they could see them and be prompted to ask more. Here are the questions the class asked:

- Are Quakers different from Christians?
- Do Quakers celebrate holidays?
- Are Quaker and Amish the same?
- What is their ideology?
- WHO are they?
- What is the origin of the religion?
- What is the population?
- How many Quakers are there?
- Where are they located, geographically?
- Is there much diversity among Quakers?
- What is an average day like in a Quaker’s life?
- What about marriage traditions?
- Is there a dress code?
- Are they discriminated against?
- Can you join or convert?

I discussed each question once the class was finished asking them. You can see that the questions gave fine opportunities to speak about the Quaker testimonies, faith and practice. Naturally, I had a good idea about what information I wanted to cover. I was surprised that there were no questions about beliefs in life after death. I realized that I need to have a better grasp on our numbers, and locations.

I took the class via guided imagery to the Worcester Friends Meeting and to a short worship service, where Friends gathered for silent worship. I explained the purpose of silent worship and described a typical meeting for worship. We then had about 5 minutes of silence. I asked if they’d like to share anything that came up for them. “What was it like for you to sit in silence?” It was a new experience for just about everyone in the classroom. Some said they enjoyed it, others expressed impatience. I noticed two students texting during the silence. It is difficult for many to become still and open to feel the Spirit, however one may define it. Several students wished they could sit in silence more often, and said that they found it “restful” and “peaceful”.

Before I left, I asked the class what they would take away from the class. I did not write these responses down. These were a few responses.. “A respect for Quakers for standing up for what they believe.” “There are nice people in the world!” “Quakers don’t believe in war.” “A feeling of inner peace”

Talking about Quakers is a great experience. I encourage all Friends to talk about our beliefs and practices when the opportunity presents itself.

## An Invitation

Worcester Friends will remember Mohammed Salwaha, our guest last year. He and his son joined us for an afternoon and spoke about the Palestinian House of Friendship. He is the founder of this project and a professor of Linguistics at An Najah University in Nablus.

We are invited to come to Western Mass for a fund raising event for the Palestinian House of Friendship. Mohammed Salwaha will talk about the PHF and the current situation in the West Bank. The talk will take place in Northampton, Massachusetts on Friday, May 21 from 6 to 8 PM at 11 Kensington Avenue, Northampton, MA 01060. Please RSVP: 413-586-0215.

There will also be an additional benefit event: a Jazz Concert at 7:30 pm on Saturday, May 22nd at the Edwards Church, 219 Main Street I Northampton.

If you are unable to attend, please send us a contribution written to ICSEE-PHF

More information: [www.the-icsee.org/projects/](http://www.the-icsee.org/projects/)



## Quarterly Meeting

by Clarence Burley

On May 2nd the Smithfield Quarterly Meeting was held in Providence following the Extended Worship session. Because of decreased attendance, it had previously been decided that Quarterly Meetings would be focused on MM's committees. This decision was made with the intention of making the Quarterly Meetings more meaningful for the Monthly Meetings. The January Quarterly meeting was attended by the Clerks. Unfortunately communication was not clear, and one MM was under the impression that January's QM was only for Clerks of MMs. Friends regretted giving this impression and will clarify that all Friends are invited to attend QMs.

A memorial minute for Eleanor Butler Perry was read. Memorial minutes need to be sent to QM to be forwarded to NEYM.

Monthly Meetings are encouraged to be hospitable to the Spanish speakers. Smithfield provides Spanish Bibles and hymn sheets. It is noted that Email is not always reliable. A suggestion was made that some designation of "urgent" be put in the header.

Each Meeting reported on its latest joys and concerns, and a period of silent worship ended the meeting.

Smithfield  Friends



Worcester Friends Meeting

Meeting for Business

April 11, 2010

Present: Brian Poynton, Phil Stone, Darin Barnard, Betty Poynton, co-clerk, Katie Green, Betty Jones, Ida Stone, Mark Sullivan, Karen Sargent, Barbara Sullivan, Clarence Burley, presiding co-clerk.

04-11-2010-01 Meeting began with a period of silence and a reading from 1 Corinthians 14:24-33; Paul's letter to the Corinthians on the testimony of prophets.

04-11-2010-02 Ministry and Counsel reported that Brian Drayton will be joining them for a future meeting of the committee.

04-11-2010-03 The proposed State of Society report was presented. With a few changes, Friends approved and thank the committee for their work. The report will be forwarded to the Quarterly meeting.

04-11-2010-04 Building and Grounds met and compiled a list of needed projects; they will be getting estimates for these to bring to the business meeting.

04-11-2010-05 Trustees met on Easter. A quote was received to repair the handicapped railing and pull up the grate left when the garage was demolished. An e-mail policy was presented. Friends ask that the policy be distributed for discussion and revisited at the June business meeting.

04-11-2010-06 The annual letter of appeal will be going out in the near future.

04-11-2010-07 Peace & Social Concerns/Outreach notes that the Spoken Word program last night was a success with a number of new community folks attending. The next event will be May 8th-Elisa Pearmain.

04-11-2010-08 The committee asked about a monthly discussion group about the book "Fit for Freedom, not for Friendship". There are 2 copies and study guides in the library. Several Friends expressed interest; Wednesday, May 5 at 7 PM will be the first meeting. Those interested should contact Katie Green to get the reading material (1st chapter), prior to that date.

04-11-2010-09 It was suggested that for programs, it would be helpful to have available a written procedure for the projector.

04-11-2010-10 The committee plans to meet with B&G to discuss the possibility of a peace garden with a peace pole. Market Day committee will be included as the site may impact placement of tables for this.

04-11-2010-11 Religious Education notes that First Day School young friends are learning about meeting in silence. Friends expressed a concern that the day care room needs to be picked up after use.

04-11-2010-12 Cemetery committee notes there was a memorial service for Grace Blaber with an interment yesterday. Friends felt that the cemetery looked lovely. There is a need for some tree work that the committee will pursue.

04-11-2010-13 The treasurer reported donations to the meeting in memory of Hermann Patt. He asks the meeting for approval to meet with Rhod Harrison about taking money from the Harrison family cemetery fund for upkeep of the cemetery. Previously this had been taken from general meeting funds, but not replaced from the cemetery fund; it amounts to at least \$2,000 annually.

04-11-2010-14 Market Day committee has sent vendor letters out; Friends are asked to bring in books and goods for sale.

04-11-2010-15 Quaker Quest committee has met twice. They are gathering outreach materials. Quaker Quest will be held in the Fall.

04-12-2010-16 May 1st, Smithfield Quarterly Meeting is hosting a day of Fellowship and Prayer at Providence MM starting with breakfast at 8:00 AM.

04-11-2010-17 There will be a community safety meeting at St Luke's church on Tuesday April 20 at 7 pm in response to recent acts of violence in the Tatnuck area.

04-11-2010-18 Karen Sargent asks for the use of the meeting house on the evening of May 21 for a meeting of the Nashua River Green Rainbow Party. Friends approve.

04-11-2010-19 Opportunity having been given for questions and concerns, meeting ended with a period of silence, purposing to meet again, fifth month, ninth, or at the call of the clerks.

Submitted in the Light,

Barbara Sullivan, recording clerk

## Scheduled Meetings

Monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business meets on each 2nd Sunday at 9 AM

Co-Clerks: Clarence Burley and Betty Poynton

Recording Clerk: Barbara Sullivan

Recorder: Phil Stone

Treasurer: Mark Sullivan

Committees meet at 9:30 AM

Trustees meet on 1st Sunday. Clerk: Phil Stone

Peace and Social Concerns/Outreach meet 1st

Sunday: Mary Chenaille

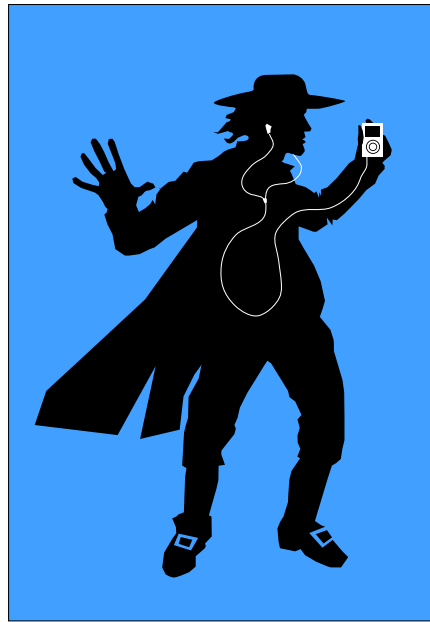
Ministry and Counsel meets on the 4th Sunday.

Co-Clerks: Karen Sargent and Ellen Perry

Library: Clerk: Clarence Burley

Building and Grounds: Clerk: Paul Gallagher

First Day School: Clerk: Katie Green



**Watch for Quaker Quest**

**Coming in September**

**It's Simple, Radical, and Contemporary.**

**A Spiritual Path for Our Time**