

Worcester Friends Newsletter



May 2016

QUERIES

Do you welcome inquirers and visitors to your meeting?
Do you encourage their continued attendance and participation?
Do you seek to share and to interpret the faith of Friends and to cooperate with others in spreading the Christian message?

-NEYM Faith and Practice, Query 5, Outreach

Calendar

Sunday Meeting for Worship: 11 A.M.

Childrens' Program: 11 A.M.
(childcare year-round, program during school year)

Mid-week Meeting for Worship: Wednesdays 7 P.M.

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

Potluck Lunch: 12.15 P.M. every Sunday

The Meetinghouse is Handicapped Accessible



Young Friends spruce up around the Meetinghouse to welcome

Spring 2016 Market Day is Saturday, June 4.

Worcester Friends will hold its annual Market Day on Saturday June 4th from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Members/attenders are urged to come help with setting up and selling. Donations of plants and baked goods are also welcome. Please email Zika Mikkelsen xyzika@yahoo.com to sign up online or sign up at the Meetinghouse for shifts 7-9am, 9am-3pm or clean up 3-5pm.

In addition, Karen Sargent will be leading the preparation of rhubarb pies on Friday evening, June 3rd from 4-8p.m. at the Meetinghouse. Additional fresh rhubarb welcome. Come help bake the pies which will be sold at the Saturday fundraiser. Contact Karen at KEGS_Mail@verizon.net.

Upcoming Gatherings

2016 FGC Gathering, "be humble, Be Faithful, BE BOLD"
7/3-7/9 at the College of St. Benedict, St. Joseph, MN

NEYM Annual Sessions, "Being the Hand of God: A Call to Radical Faithfulness" 8/6-8/11 at Carleton University, Castleton, VT

Letter from the Islamic Society of Greater Worcester

April 4, 2016

Dear Daron Barnard,

Peace and Blessings of the Creator be upon you and the people of Worcester Quaker community, from Islamic Society of Greater Worcester.

On behalf of the ISGW Board of Trustees and my team, I would like to thank you for your kind letter and words. This kind of support is not only encouraging, rather a proof that humanity always prevails. We are still in the process of acquiring a burial ground in Dudley. We hope that this process will go through, despite all these difficulties we have encountered thus far!

Sincerely,

Amjad Bhattie

President, Islamic Society of Greater Worcester

*Editor's note: Things are looking up for a peaceful resolution of the burial ground discussion according to latest reports.

Successful FCNL Spring Lobby

John Calvi Request

John Calvi of Putney, VT Meeting continues in his work of healing through teaching, massage and energy work. The founder of QUIT!, The Quaker Initiative to End Torture, John has sent a letter to our Meeting asking for support in his travels. He writes, "There really aren't words for that moment of grace when someone's pain passes from their body, to mine and out—to our mutual relief...This is all possible because your support makes it so." More information about John and his work can be found at www.johncalvi.com. Donations can be sent through Paypal or to P.O. Box 301, Putney, VT 05346

Ascentria Care Alliance seeks donations for families coming to America with little or nothing from their homelands. The Refugee Resettlement Program can use furniture, linens, kitchen dishes and utensils, cleaning supplies and toiletries. Contact Beth Singley at [774-243-3027](tel:774-243-3027) / esingley@ascentria.org for more

Friends Committee On National Legislation's (FCNL) spring lobby weekend concentrated on criminal

justice. Nearly 400 college students participated as part of their spring break during these times of bipartisan concern for criminal justice reform bills. This past March, 397 young advocates made 158 lobby visits to tell Congress to support the Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act. Fifty-nine Quaker Meetings were represented, along with 39 states. Worcester Friends may remember Shannon Palmer, a Clark student, who attended our Meeting while she was in Worcester. Shannon completed an internship for FCNL a couple of years ago, and we have enjoyed seeing her and her family when they come up to Worcester.

FCNL employs twelve lobbyists who lobby on specific concerns. The issues are domestic policy (2 people), foreign policy, nuclear disarmament, sustainable energy (2 people), Middle East policy, human rights/civil policy, liberties, peace building policy, prevention of violent conflict, and immigration.

Worcester Friends may support FCNL's good work by subscribing to their newsletter, by writing to your legislators, and by making a financial contribution to FCNL. More information is available at FCNL.ORG



Did You Know?

Paul Gallagher is back in town from his annual winter trip to Florida.

Mary Chenaille is having knee surgery on June 1. Holding you in the Light!

Andreana Brenner recently danced at the Hanover Theater as part of the Burncoat High School Magnet Arts program in *Seussical*. She also performed with the WAIT team at the annual *Walk against Homelessness* in Elm Park. **Marrie Brenner** plays softball with the Pink Ladies team of the Jesse Burkett Little League.

Another YF athlete, **Addison Green**, is playing baseball this summer.

Karen Sargent 's son, **Scott**, is home from U Mass Lowell for summer break. Son **Brian** is working for Central MA Mosquito Control, compiling information for their Global Information System.

Katherine Barnard played with the Seven Hills Symphony at U Mass this month and joined her children, **Lucy** and **Malcolm Bernard**, at a recent *Joy of Music* recital. (See photo above). **Lucy** auditioned and was selected to participate in the Massachusetts Central District Band.

The **Mikkelsens** continue their active pursuits. **JoAnna** is busy with gymnastics competitions while **Zika** lobs her racquet at tennis competitions. (See proud Papa below)

Katie Green shared Train stories with Bob Reiser in *Hear That Whistle Blow* At 1PM on Saturday, May 21, at Chester on Track in Chester, MA and at the Sprinkler Factory in Worcester at 2:30 PM on Sunday, May 22.

Casey Seem and **Elliot Walsh** display their musical talents with the Worcester Folk Orchestra. Find their schedule of events at <http://www.worcesterfolkorchestra.com/>

Please send contributions to "Did You Know" to the editors at info@worcesterfriendsmeeting.org so we can spread the news to the Friends community!



Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business-4th Month

Date: April 10, 2016

Present: Daron Barnard, Katharine Barnard, Clarence Burley, Mary Chenaille, Matthew Shorten, Phil Stone, Aaron Sakulich, Mark Sullivan, Kevin Walsh
Clerking: Daron Barnard

The meeting opened with silence and reading from NEYM Faith and Practice, Query 4: The Meeting community: how we care for each other and experience the divine in our community.

Directory of members & attenders: There is support for the idea of maintaining contact information for Meeting members and attenders, and distributing this, with care, so that members and regular attenders can have ability to contact one another outside of First Day. Having a directory is a practical concern as well as a way to build community. It is acknowledged that there are different types of contact information and different distribution lists needed for different purposes. We have data that is in need of updating and organizing. Phil Stone (PSCO), Kevin Walsh (Practical), Clarence Burley (recorder, Spiritual Life), and Daron Barnard (Clerk) will comprise a working group with the goal of creating a directory as well as organizing lists for mailings, email, and membership roles. It is noted that the directory would be intended to include people who are active in the life of the Meeting. The working group can address a system to keep information up to date. In the meantime, members and attenders will be encouraged to note their emergency contact information on the reverse side of their nametags.

Lighting in the Meeting room: Practical committee will take up the issue of the

lighting in the Meeting room.

Considerations include dimming during the daytime but maintaining adequate lighting for evening activities. Practical committee is also asked to consider hallway lighting which may remain lit overnight.

Treasurer's report: Report is presented through the month of March 2016, showing no unexpected income or expenses. We are running behind budget as is usual this time of year, due to annualization of budgeted expenses which are actually paid disproportionately in the winter months. The treasurer will prepare a report of the Meeting's savings to share at an upcoming Business Meeting.

Committee Reports:

Practical Committee presented an estimate for grounds maintenance and tree removal. Consideration was given to sorting and removal of accumulated items in the basement, especially as there is no planned "white elephant" table for Market Day. Both of these items are referred back to the committee for further discussion. It is noted that the Meeting contributed items to WPI's recent electronics disposal. Spiritual Life Committee meeting focused on contact and communications - with members, attenders, and visitors. In addition to the concerns about a directory (above), the committee discussed sharing responsibility for sending followup notes to visitors and contacting people not recently in attendance. Daron and Katharine Barnard will work on collecting committee and Business Meeting minutes for our archives.

PSCO reported on recent events including And Still We Rise, the stories of people with history of incarceration; the Meeting was a co-sponsor of the event.

Announcements:

Support for muslim community: Updates were shared regarding the proposed muslim cemetery in Dudley MA, and the controversy surrounding this request. The Meeting has sent letters of support to the Islamic Society of Greater Worcester and the Worcester Islamic Center, and those letters have been shared as well with Worcester Interfaith and public media.

Quarterly Meeting: Daron Barnard reported back from Quarterly Meeting held in March in Smithfield RI. Business included the name and the role of the Quarter, and reports from NEYM Permanent Board. Our State of Society report was submitted to the Quarter, who will pass it on to the Yearly Meeting. Five members of Worcester Friends Meeting attended worship, three of those staying for the business.

Beacon Hill Friends House: Phil Stone continues to serve as the Quarter’s representative to the board. It is noted that this is a unique intentional Quaker community, and that it is doing well.

NEYM Archives: Clarence Burley reported that next week the NEYM archives will undergo its planned move to facilities at UMass Amherst, where it will be co-managed by NEYM and UMass Amherst.

Upcoming events:

-Coinciding with tax day on April 18, 2016, there will be a Witness for Peace held at noon at Worcester City Hall, co-sponsored by our PSCO committee and AFSC.

-Also on April 18, there will be a 4pm potluck dinner and general meeting of “SAGE: Solidarity and Green Economy” held at Stone Soup on King St, Worcester.

-An all-day workshop entitled “Money and Spirit: Faith, Finances and our Future” will be held at Concord (NH) Meeting on Saturday, May 7, 2016.

-All who are interested in pastoral care, religious education, and ministry and

council are invited to attend a “Day-treat” at Smithfield (RI) Friends Meeting also on May 7.

**Meeting for Worship with
Attention to Business-5th Month**

Date: May 8, 2016

Present: Daron Barnard, Katherine Barnard, Clarence Burley, Mary Bennett, Paul Gallagher, Fred Mikkelson, Whitney Mikkelson, Karen Sargent, Mark Sullivan
Clerking: Daron Barnard

The meeting opened with silence and reading from NEYM Faith and Practice, Query 5: Outreach.

Summer business meeting schedule: It is noted that attendance can be low in the summer due to travel and NEYM Sessions. There is a precedence with other Monthly Meetings that do not hold scheduled business meetings in the summer months, but use called business meetings as needed. The business items that we anticipate during the summer are (1) Fall Market Day and (2) formation of the next cycle of Gifts and Leadings. The group feels that these could be addressed through announcements and committees. A business meeting could also be called if indicated. The decision is made to suspend June and August Business Meetings (keeping July). At the Clerk’s discretion, July could also be suspended and committee reports circulated electronically.

Cemetery vandalism: It was discovered that there is graffiti on the informational sign outside the cemetery, as well as several gravestones which were disturbed and broken from their bases. A police

report has been filed by the Meeting. The Meeting is responsible for repairs; our cemetery fund would cover the cost. Mark Sullivan will look into the insurance policy to see if we should forward this to insurance versus paying from our funds. We will need to hire workers with heavy equipment to carry out the repairs, and Daron will make these arrangements. Clarence has communicated to the Southwick and Harrison families that we will be making repairs. We considered the larger question of whether we are, in general, are caretaking the cemetery in the way that we wish, and that consideration will be forwarded to Spiritual Life and Practical committees for consideration.

Treasurer's report:

Working budget. Revenue is ahead of budget, mainly due to contributions from community groups who made use of the Meetinghouse. Expenses are less than anticipated. As usual at this time of year, we are running behind budget due to winter utility expenses.

Report of Worcester Friends Meeting assets as held in savings. Our trial balance shows we have over \$900,000 in assets.

Committee Reports:

Practical

We note with joy that the tree planted in honor of Betty Jones is in bloom. Karen Sargent's friend will prune the tree to facilitate growth especially in face of the damage sustained to the bark over the winter. The spruce tree at the border of our property will be taken down tomorrow, and we will notify our neighbor of these plans. We continue to make progress with window replacements and repair of the wallpaper in the foyer. The committee continues to work on lighting issues for the Meetingroom. Practical committee is asked

to consider how to install ceiling fans in the Meetingroom.

Spiritual Life

A Memorial Minute for Betty Jones will be written for NEYM. Katie is leading this effort, and will consult with Dorothy Grinnell, Jan Hoffman and Betty Poynton for input on Betty's role in Yearly Meeting's Ministry and Counsel.

A traveling minute was provided for Katie Green's visit to Clearwater Meeting in Florida.

We recommended Mary Bennett to attend a conference later in May in Pennsylvania on Religion and Psychology, and she will be able to attend.

PSCO

Communication and Outreach: An ad-hoc committee is working on culling the mailing lists, and will request input from the Meeting as needed. Work on improving the website continues, and the committee expresses appreciation to Elliot Walsh for his critiques.

Social Concerns The Tax Day demonstration at City Hall was successful and involved several Meeting members. Karen Sargent continues attending meetings of the Pipeline project and bring information on the project to the Meeting. "And Still We Rise" was held as planned, co-sponsored by the Meeting, and was of value in raising awareness about issues of mass incarceration. Meeting members attended the recent rally at City Hall in favor of the \$15 minimum wage. The committee requests recommendations for upcoming film showings. Please specify what audience your recommended film would be appropriate for.

Announcements:

-We received a letter of appreciation from the Islamic Society of Greater Worcester for our support of their efforts to have a cemetery in Dudley. (printed elsewhere in this Newsletter)

-John Calvi (Putney VT Meeting) requests financial support for his traveling ministry of healing from trauma. Further information will be included in the newsletter for individuals who may wish to contribute.

-NEYM has sent a letter detailing the projects that will be supported by their Legacy Gift Committee's "Future Funds" grants. These are the funds which were generated through sale of the Friends Home and are available to support the work of Friends. The letter will be posted in the foyer for those who wish to read about these ongoing projects of New England Friends.

-Stone Soup announces the "Resilience, Resistance, and Regional Equity Convergence" to be held on June 11 in Boston focusing on issues of renewable energy.

-Film "The Sacred Run: The Lotus and the Feather" about ending nuclear proliferation will be shown at the Sprinkler Factory on Friday May 13, at 7pm.

-Market Day is upcoming on Saturday June 4. Needs: (1) pie-making Friday night June 3, (2) set-up and break-down assistance and (3) donations of plants and baked goods. Karen Sargent is coordinating and will appreciate help. On-line and paper signups for help will be made available.
-The Young Friends are again planning a sleepover at the Meetinghouse, and they are actively engaged in helping to plan the schedule and activities.

Friends Camp

Friends Camp in South China, ME has been welcoming Quaker youth, ages 7-17, since 1953. Registration is now open for the 2016 sessions and can be found at <http://friendscamp.org/>. Brochures can be found in the Meetinghouse vestibule.

FirstDay School News

Young Friends have a plan to visit churches in the area to observe other types of worship. On March 6, they attended a service at All Saints Episcopal Church in Worcester. Other planned trips include visiting the Catholic Worker, St. Joseph's Abbey in Spencer, MA and the First Unitarian Church in Worcester. FDS hopes to extend the visits to non Christian houses of worship in the Fall.

Young Friends are also planning a fun filled weekend at the end of May. They will be visiting Dismas Farm (<http://dismashouse.org/programs/dismasfarm/>) to observe and work. Their work day will end with dinner, possible talent show, and sleepover at the Meetinghouse.

Many thanks to our adult leaders, Katie Green and Katherine Barnard, for lovingly planning and generously executing the First Day School activities.



Traveling to Viet Nam with Veterans for Peace:

The Legacy of War After 40 Years

By Phil Stone

One day when I was ten years old, my mother came home. Her coat was dirty, and she had an odd look on her face. “It was a good demonstration,” she said. “We had 500 people there.” It was 1964 and she had just returned from a demonstration at the military recruiting station in Times Square organized by Women Strike for Peace. Hecklers had thrown eggs at the women who were protesting the U.S. war in Viet Nam.

Four years later I began what has been nearly 50 years of grassroots-based organizing when I approached strangers in Riverside Park, and asked them to sign petitions against the war. By 1968, 200 Americans were dying weekly. U.S. Marines were encircled at Khe Sahn. The Vietnamese launched their Tet offensive, and Walter Cronkite told the American people that the war was not winnable. The war continued until 1975, when the Vietnamese army launched a major offensive that ended with tanks battering down the gates of the Presidential Palace in Saigon, and the remaining Americans fleeing in helicopters from the roof of the U.S. Embassy.

In March of this year my wife Kate and I were part of a 12-member group who traveled to Viet Nam to participate in a tour organized by Chapter 160 of Veterans for Peace, which is based in Viet Nam. Half of the tour participants were veterans who served in the military during the war in Viet Nam, and half were activists.

Our trip began in Hanoi, now a city of 8 million people and 6 million motorcycles, with stops in Hue, Dong Ha, A Luoi, Da Nang, and Nha Trang, and ended in Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon). We were warmly welcomed everywhere we went. In each city we met with the local Friendship Society, with veterans association members, and with people working in different programs to assist victims of Agent Orange.

We visited the Friendship Village in Hanoi, orphanages, hospitals, local schools, and military cemeteries, such as Truong Son. We witnessed the destruction of unexploded ordinance, traveled to a small village on the Laotian border, visited families with Agent Orange victims, and toured battle sites such as the tunnels of Vihn Moc and Cu Chi, Khe Sahn and Long Hung, and the Agent Orange/dioxin cleanup site at the airport in Saigon.

For the veterans in our group, and the Chapter members who joined us along the way, the trip was both emotionally challenging and healing.

Viet Nam is a young country. It has been independent for only 40 years. In many ways, the amount of rebuilding that has occurred since the war ended is phenomenal. It is also “young” because 70% of its population was born after 1975.

The Vietnamese veterans that we met, some of whom joined the fight for independence in the 1950's, are a minority. They and the Communist Party face the challenge of conveying to the young people the depth of the struggle, and the extent of the suffering their generation endured. Three million Vietnamese are estimated to have died during what they call "the American War". 300,000 (North) Vietnamese soldiers are still listed as "MIA", and searches for their remains continue.

Unexploded ordinance litters the country, particularly in Quang Tri province, but also in urban areas such as Hanoi where as recently as March 19th, 2016, a scrap-metal dealer using a blow torch detonated unexploded ordinance that resulted in 4 deaths, injured 10, and damaged more than 120 homes.

Chuck Searcy, the vice-president of Chapter 160 accompanied us on the entire trip. Searcy says that it is impossible to locate and remove all of the unexploded ordinance, but that it is possible to teach people, particularly children, how to live safely amid unexploded ordinance, and what to do when they come across it.

During an annual safety day educational event that we attended at a rural school, a child correctly answered the question, "How



many provinces in Viet Nam have a bomb problem?" The answer: 63; every single province including every city in Viet Nam. During the Southeast Asian bombing campaigns, the total tonnage of ordinance that the United States dropped approximately tripled the totals for World War II. We were told that 20% of the ordinance dropped did not explode.

Agent Orange was only one of eight chemicals used by the U.S. military in what should be recognized as the most egregious example of chemical warfare in modern history. Concentrations of dioxin, its active ingredient, in parts of one part per billion are considered toxic. The US sprayed 21 million gallons of defoliant, including 12 million gallons of Agent Orange, on Viet Nam.

Viet Nam is now addressing the medical needs of third-generation Agent Orange victims. They include birth defects such as missing or malformed limbs and organs, skin diseases, and brain damage such as hydro-encephaly and mental retardation. The doctors of Viet Nam are world-renowned experts on the consequences of Agent Orange.

One of the major puzzles of Agent Orange is that it is impossible to predict who will be



afflicted. A Vietnamese soldier may have three children, and the oldest may show no symptoms, while the younger children do. The healthy child may be the parent of an afflicted child, while other grandchildren are healthy. The burden of caring for the victims falls primarily on the family, with some assistance from the state in the form of free medical care. NGO's with the support of the international community provide additional support, and the Association of Agent Orange Victims, which has many chapters, lobbies on their behalf.

In every meeting we attended, the lack of US financial support to redress the long-term legacy of the war was raised.

Each participant in the trip was asked to contribute \$1,000 to support the work of Chapter 160, and to engage in further public education work and fundraising. From the funds raised, it was decided by the tour group and the chapter to support the organizations in the column to the right:

If you would like to make a tax-deductible contribution to support Chapter 160, please make your check payable to Veterans for Peace, and give it to Phil Stone or Katie Green.

Starting Balance	21,000.00
1. Friendship Village, Ha Noi	500.00
2. Project RENEW (Blind Workshop, 3,500.00 water supply, support for AO families, P & O outreach)	
3. A Luoi Hearts for Hue (builds homes), AO animal husbandry	3,500.00
4. Chua Duc Son Pagoda and Orphanage	500.00
5. DAVA Center #3 (associations of AO victims)	2,500.00
6. VAVA Nha Trang (AO families water supply, homes)	3,500.00
7. Tu Du Hospital, AO Peace Village	500.00
8. Chapter 160 admin costs	3,000.00
9. Contingencies, quick response donations	3,500.00

Spring, the Sweet Spring
from *Summer's Last Will and Testament*
by Thomas Nashe (1600)

Spring, the sweet spring, is the year's pleasant king,
Then blooms each thing, then maids dance in a ring,
Cold doth not sting, the pretty birds do sing:
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!

The palm and may make country houses gay,
Lambs frisk and play, the shepherds pipe all day,
And we hear aye birds tune this merry lay:
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!

The fields breathe sweet, the daisies kiss our feet,
Young lovers meet, old wives a-sunning sit,
In every street these tunes our ears do greet:
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to witta-woo!

Worcester Convoy of Hope

Worcester area churches, businesses, community service providers and local residents are partnering to sponsor the second annual *Day of Hope* at University Park on June 11, 2016. Last year, the first convoy provided over 2,500 Worcester residents with groceries, services, prayer and activities. For more information and to register go to <https://worcestercoh2016.eventbrite.com>

Dan Berrigan's Life Celebrated by Katie Green

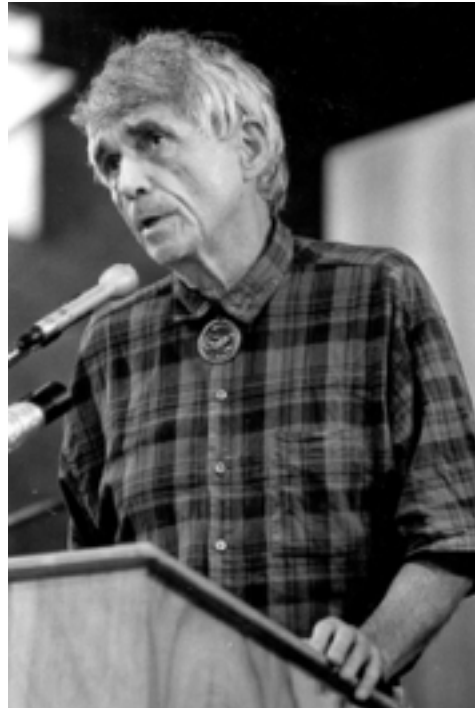
Dan Berrigan, well known peace activist and Catholic priest, died on April 30th, 2016, shortly before his 95th birthday. Scott and Claire Shaeffer-Duffy were among the more than 800 people who attended his funeral and life celebration at the Church of St. Francis Xavier in New York.

The internet is flooded with information about Dan Berrigan. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hSXQ-t8JvSQ> which shows people telling how they met Dan and what effect that he had on their lives.

I heard Dan Berrigan speak at a few events, and I spent a little time with him when he was visiting Tom Lewis here in Worcester. I knew Tom over a period of several years when there was quite an active group of people and churches protesting the development of nuclear weapons. Tom, who died in 2008, was a fine artist who is also remembered for his participation in two actions with Dan Berrigan.

In 1967, a group known as "the Baltimore Four" (Dan Berrigan, Tom Lewis, David Eberhardt and Rev. James Mengel) occupied the Selective Service Board in Baltimore and poured blood on draft records. This was the first of over 100 actions to protest the Viet Nam war. Tom was also involved in "the Catonsville Nine" action, in which nine Catholic people burned draft files by pouring home-made napalm on them and setting them on fire.

Dan Berrigan was admired by Quakers and other people who live with a deep concern about war and the manufacture of weapons mass destruction. His actions have motivated many of us to commit actions of civil disobedience. In his later years, he despaired about the lack of national movement toward a more peaceful world. I remember him saying that if you're not in the streets or in jail, you are complacent with what the government



is doing, and you are part of the problem. (I may not have his exact words, but this is the message I heard.)

As Quakers, we struggle with putting our faith into action. Friends like to say that not one person or one group holds *all* of the Truth. Quakers like to acknowledge each other's paths and differences. I like to think that the personal sacrifices that some people make - such as civil disobedience or tax resistance - will inspire others to evaluate what actions they, personally, are able to do to bring about a more peaceful and just society. While Berrigan questioned whether his actions would make a lasting difference and result in disarmament, he believed that a belief in God was essential.

Surely this belief in God, however one defines God, continues to be essential if we want to live in peace. May we, as part of the Religious Society of Friends, support each other in our efforts to discern and follow our leadings to create a caring community.

A Visit to Clearwater Friends

By Katie Green

While I was in Dunedin Florida, I had the pleasure of revisiting the Clearwater Friends. I had looked forward to worshipping with this Friends Meeting again ever since I was in Dunedin in 2012. I was there when the shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown CT took place, and the Friends Meeting in Dunedin was where I went for comfort. Later I found that Mike Flanery's weekly E-mail, Q-News from Clearwater Friends, is similar to the Weekly Reminders that our own Worcester Friend Clarence Burley so thoughtfully and consistently sends out.

This purpose for this visit to Dunedin was to explore the possibility of purchasing property that will allow me to escape New England's ice, and to be able to be outside more. I was also eager to spend more time with the Clearwater Friends.

On Saturday, April 30, Clearwater Friends had a potluck meeting focusing on concerns regarding climate change and rising sea levels (RSL). Mike Flanery and Debra McMaster hosted the event at the coastal Flanery home. I was welcomed to the potluck accompanied by my apologies for arriving empty-handed. Of course there were plenty of delicious offerings. About fifteen members and attenders were there. At first, I was aware that I was in a room of strangers, most of whom were my age or older. I realized how much I love the familiarity of Worcester and New England Friends. I looked out over the water at the buildings in Clearwater and thought of Worcester County and Worcester Friends. I wondered how I could have imagined replacing my Meeting for Worship with different people.

Of course, things change, and as I became present and mindful, the afternoon evolved into a pleasant experience. Debra McMaster opened

the meeting with a recording of an original song, *Blue Boat Home*, by Peter Meyer. We were invited to sing along. A copy of a Facebook posting by someone named Gus Speth was then handed out. I remembered seeing this post on FB and pausing. Gus Speth is a Professor of Law at the Vermont Law School and co-founder of the Natural Resources Defense Council and World Resources Institute.

A Google search finds a lot of information on his work.

<http://www.wri.org/profile/james-gustave-speth>

Gus Speth's Facebook post, as handed out at the meeting opens, "I used to think the top environmental problems were biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse, and environmental change. I thought that with thirty years of good science, we could address these problems. But I was wrong. The top problems are selfishness, greed, and apathy. To deal with those, we need a spiritual and cultural transformation, and we scientists do not know how to do that.

Mike Flanery then shared a power point presentation about the rising sea level, naturally focusing on the geographical location of Florida and the effects of climate change on the ocean life. I was especially struck when I realized that by the time JoAnna is 45 years old, our coastline in the northeast is predicted to be dramatically altered by rising sea levels.

Several years ago, NEYM Young Adult Friends (YAFs) made an excellent presentation to our meeting. Each YAF spoke eloquently about the personal life changes that they were making in order to leave a smaller carbon footprint and to honor the earth. I remain grateful to these young people for sharing their concerns and making time to do this important outreach.

After the PowerPoint presentation, we spoke out of the silence, returning to reflections at the bottom of the FB handout:

How do these thoughts relate to our Quaker testimonies of

- Simplicity
- Peace
- Integrity
- Community
- Equality/Environment

I learned that Florida politicians apparently deny or ignore the real danger of climate change. One Tampa Friend said, "I feel like an ant trying to roll a grape up a mountain." Another Friend observed that we discuss the technical problem, but not a technical solution. He pondered, "What are we working toward? We need something positive." Other human problems that interfere with addressing climate change were thoughtfully named: ignorance, denial, fear. As a storyteller, I had to contribute that I believe that stories are more effective in effecting social change than are facts. Story makes a heart-to-heart connection and encourages the listener to consider the teller's intention for sharing the story. We were reminded that LOVE and Faith are essential. We expressed our gratitude for Quaker tradition of discernment, and also of waiting for other voices. Mike reminded us that we Quakers are *family*; we are close to each other and we shouldn't be afraid to talk about hard things.

When we ended the meeting with a second sing-along of *Blue Boat Home*, the melody was more familiar and the voices stronger. I am eager to return to meeting for worship with these Friends who no longer feel like strangers.

Quarterly Meeting

Mark your calendars for Rhode Island-Smithfield Quarterly Meeting. Worship will take place at the Westerly, Rhode Island Meetinghouse on Sunday, June 19 at 10:30 AM. followed by the quarterly meeting. Contact Clerk **Daron Barnard** to arrange carpooling if interested.

First Day School Discussions prod our children to think:

