

Worcester Friends Meeting

Religious Society of Friends (Quaker)

901 Pleasant Street
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<http://www.Worcesterfriendsmeeting.org>

June- July, 2008



QUERIES on Personal Conduct

- *Faith and Practice of New England Yearly Meeting of Friends 1985, p 212*

Do you live with simplicity, moderation, and integrity? Are you punctual in keeping promises, careful in speech, just and compassionate in all your dealings with others? Do you take care that your spiritual growth is not sacrificed to busyness but instead integrates your life's activities? Do you walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone?"

NEYM Sessions

New England Yearly Meeting will gather for the annual sessions on Saturday, August 2 through Thursday, August 7 at Bryant University, in Smithfield, Rhode Island.

If you have yet to attend NEYM Annual Sessions, don't hold back any longer! Registration forms are available online at NEYM's web site – www.neym.org. Don't let cost prohibit your presence – financial assistance is available. All Friends and attenders are encouraged to attend the sessions.

Childcare is available for pre-schoolers; children entering kindergarten this fall will be part of the Young Junior Friends. The youth programs at Sessions have been the high point each summer for many young Friends from the Worcester Meeting. No matter how old you are, NEYM's summer gathering offers an opportunity to meet Friends from other Meetings, to grow spiritually, and to learn more about Quakers. And what's more, it's FUN!

RI Smithfield Quarterly Meeting

What a wonderful time of year to visit this island in Narragansett Bay. The RI Smithfield's Quarterly Meeting is on Sunday, July 20th. Worship will begin at 10:30 AM in the old 1787 Quaker Meetinghouse in Jamestown, RI. Since the space is quite cozy, lunch, fellowship, friendship and meeting for business at 1:30 PM will follow at the nearby home of Marcie Lindsay of Conanicut Friends Meeting.

Please contact Katie Green (978-464-5146) or check the bulletin board for details and directions.

Please RSVP to Mark Conley by July 12th. mconley@uri.edu or call (401) 398-8339. Childcare will be available with advance notice.

Clerks Corner – Spiders on the Rhodies**by Katie Green**

It was one of those perfect early summer days. The sky was Georgia O'Keefe blue. No clouds. No humidity. And a slight breeze to keep the bugs away. All week I had promised my husband, Phil, I would keep Saturday open for yard work. He had a list. We both like lists. Phil makes a list so he can cross out tasks as they are completed. I make lists so I won't forget the tasks that need to be done.

The first thing on my list is "Pick up the bears". Family culture can result in strange language. This odd task on my list is an entertaining way of naming an unpleasant task: Search for and pick up the dog poop on the grass. (Although Phil doesn't think one needs to search for it.)

I complete task #1, and Phil revs up the lawn mower. "Katie," he hollers over the motor, "Can you get the spiders off the Rhodie?" "Huh?" I imagine the Rhododendron beside the front door to be covered with spider webs. "Yes," says Phil, cutting the motor so he can talk, "they are unsightly and need to be picked off."

I see what he's talking about. Each of the beautiful purple Rhododendron blossoms has died, and what remains is a collection of white stamens. They do look like spiders, and they are unsightly, but picking spiders off the Rhodie is not on my list.

I walk over and remove a spent blossom. Yuk! It's sticky. I fetch my garden gloves and a bucket to continue. But I soon realize that this task is much too delicate for garden gloves. The faded blossoms at the end of each branch are surrounded by small new sprouts which will form new branches, and, next spring, new flowers. I realize that the bush would continue to grow even if the faded flowered were not removed. I frown. This simple task is not on my list; it is unnecessary. Mother Nature will take care of it.

I look at the small area of the Rhodie that I've picked over. The bush really does look better. "Phil," I call to him, "Have you been picking these spiders every year?" "Just when I notice them." "Well, I've never noticed them before. Where was I when you did this?" He answers, "Probably on the telephone."

I am amazed. This Rhododendron has been by our front door for twenty-five years, and I never noticed the spiders or saw Phil picking them off. I'm embarrassed. How could I have been so unobservant? I continue picking the spiders, no longer bothered by their stickiness, being more aware of how this small and careful act can make such a large aesthetic difference.

Again, I wonder, "Why have I never noticed the spiders before?" And, in the same moment, I become aware of all those things that Phil does to attend the house and the garden. He does them all too often without thanks. And I am enormously grateful that he is my husband, my life partner.

Last week I read the Pendle Hill booklet *God Raising Us: Parenting as Spiritual Practice* by Eileen Flannagan. In the pamphlet, she calls on Friends to recognize parenthood as a phase of spiritual development with special gifts and needs. The author writes that parenting taught her about God – the act of placing someone else's needs before her own is a supreme act of love – an act that brings an understanding of what God is – a deeper understanding of Christ. Parenting was probably the most difficult job I've ever had. But marriage isn't always smooth either, and it's necessary to work together at "living happily ever after". The Quaker testimonies, honesty, equality, simplicity and non-violence are essential in any "right" relationship, whether it be parenting, marriage, family, business, or the relationship one has with God.

I once heard it said that the way we spend our time is how we define our lives. When we live mindfully, we spend our time doing things that are valued and meaningful to us. I think that the way we live with each other is an extension of how we experience God.

My thoughts turn to our Monthly Meeting. Some First Days there are few Friends and attenders, on other First Days (like last week), the room is filled. I am always glad that I am there, and I always feel thankful for the others who come to meeting for worship on First Day.

Out of the silence, the peaceful lightness of Truth comes to me: that we are loved, that we are love, that life is sacred. Let us be with each other with these thoughts resonating in our hearts.

Worship Sharing

The Worcester Friends Meeting holds a worship sharing group at the Meetinghouse on each fourth Tuesday of the month at 7 PM. This worship sharing group started at the request of two Friends who wished for an opportunity for more spiritual reading during worship.

Each month, a Friend brings a reading to worship sharing, and those present share what thoughts arise from that reading. Some months the readings tempt us to engage in discussion rather than worship sharing. I have learned that maintaining the silence allows me to more fully appreciate the Spirit in the reading and my relationship to it.

At the worship sharing on June 24th, we entered with following texts brought by Friend Clarence Burley:

The world would be a sorrier place without the quiet witness-bearing of the Quakers. Their humanitarian service, their practical dedication to the ideal of universal brotherhood, their conviction that love can move mountains stand as a challenge and an inspiration to their fellow men. Even in totalitarian countries Quaker influence has reached through iron resistance to bring minds in slavery and bodies in need a solace and a glimpse of a higher peace.

- *Christian Science Monitor, July 10, 1949*

The Quakers have shown us that it is possible to carry into action something which is deeply rooted in the minds of many: sympathy with others; the desire to help others; that significant expression of sympathy between men, without regard to nationality or race; feelings which, when carried into deeds, must provide the foundation of a lasting peace. For this reason they are today worthy of receiving Nobel's Peace Prize.

- *Gunnar Jahn, chairman, Nobel Committee,
at the presentation of the Nobel Peace Award, December 10, 1947*

While the readers of this newsletter may not have an hour to reflect on these two readings and share thoughtful and Spiritual messages that arise, it is my hope as Clerk of our Meeting, that readers take a bit of time to sit with these two very interesting observations about Quakers from people who not Quakers.

Perhaps you might be led to ask yourself what it is about the Religious Society of Friends that brought you to the Meeting for worship, and what it is about Quakers that brings you back again and again.

The worship sharing on 4th Tuesdays provides a fine opportunity to invite others to our Meetinghouse. Clarence Burley writes, "I look at worship sharing as a learning experience, a learning to listen to what the spirit is telling others, and trying to separate that of God from that of Clarence." He notes that Worship Sharing groups are emphasized at NEYM Sessions, and he looks forward to the "In Jesus Christ" worship group at Sessions this August.

Paul Schiff Asks

Friend Paul Schiff asks that Friends be mindful that these are very difficult times for many people. People are worried about increasing costs, and many are afraid of losing their homes. "Fear increases the possibility of violence in a society," Paul reminds us, and he encourages us to do simple, "random acts of kindness."

Let's Talk About God**Katie Green**

Young Zika recently attended a family wedding. Her parents told me that it was a beautiful, traditional Protestant church wedding. When the bride walked down the center aisle and met the groom, Zika, wide eyed and breathless, whispered to her mother, "God is here."

This evening (June 24, 2008), I have a small bouquet on the kitchen counter. There is one perfect pink peony; one faded blue columbine, the last heart of a bleeding heart stem, a stem of fresh coral bells, and a cream weed-like goat's beard flower. They are held together in an 8 ounce glass milk bottle from Pincroft Dairy – once our favorite place to get ice cream in the 50's. I know God is present. Thank you, God, for all These Gifts. Thank you, God, for showing me the way to love.

Once I was told that our Young Friends in New England cringe when they hear the word "God". Why and how can this be? We need to think about what we mean when we say "God" or whatever word one may use. We must be able to communicate to Young Friends what "God" means to us. How do we experience the Divine? What is it that leads people to lead a Spirit-based life?

Palestinian Scholar Delayed

Friends had anticipated hosting Mohammed Sawalha, a Palestinian academic, and the founder of the House of Friendship in Nablus. Friends approved a speaking event for Mohammed at the Friends Meeting House on Friday, May 30th at 7:00 p.m. However, Mohammed's visa has been delayed by a "security check" in Washington.

We hope to either host Mohammed Sawalha this Fall at the Meetinghouse, or to arrange a conference call with him on the telephone.

Friends Visit Friends' Homes**Katie Green**

One of the aspects of Quakers that I love is the tradition of visiting each other's homes. Each time we visit each other outside of the Meetinghouse, we strengthen our community and come closer being able to help each other grow spiritually.

The pot luck lunch made its annual trip out to Sandy Kocher's lake-front home in Spencer at the rise of the meeting for worship on June 28th. The weather was sunny and warm, and Friends enjoyed a leisurely meal outside. Friends enjoyed comfortable conversation and delicious picnic vegetarian food. Some of us fed the fish from the end of her dock, and all of us enjoyed a refreshing breeze on such hot day. A few of us even took a brief snooze in the shade.

Family and Friends gathered to celebrate Mary Bennett's 60th birthday at her home in Spencer on Saturday, July 5. Mary's house was filled with her friends from work, friends from animal rights organizations, her family, and Friends from our Monthly Meeting. We enjoyed meeting Mary's mother, Mary's children, Paula and Michael, and their spouses. In spite of an overcast sky, everyone enjoyed the sunshine and warmth of friendship at Mary's place. There was a large, tasty spread of food, and Mary may yet turn us all into vegans!

It is my hope that Friends will continue to open their homes and their hearts to each other. It is easy to say that we, as Friends, recognize that there is that of God in everybody. It may be a little more challenging to share more of ourselves with each other, to learn more about each other, and to open our hearts to God and to each other – without fear of being judged, but with faith that God, how ever one may define that mysterious Spirit, is present in each of us. It is that faith and belief that strengthens and builds our Quaker community.

The words of a song from nursery school skip through my mind:

*The more we get together, together, together,
The more we get together, the happier we'll be -
For your friends are my friends, and my friends are your friends,
The more we get together, the happier we'll be.*

Simplistic? Perhaps, but then, Simplicity is a Quaker value. And, besides, getting together is FUN too!

A Prayer for the Season

Katie Green found a 1980 calendar in her office closet. It had a religious theme to it, and she wanted to share this prayer from the month of June with Friends:

We give thanks for the loveliness of spring and its promise of summer. Open our eyes to see the beauty all around us. But not let us accept the bounty of earth and sky and sea and forget Thee. Let us not wander in the garden and forget the Gardener. Let all lovely things fill us with gladness and lift up our hearts in true worship. Amen.

Did you know that . . .

Mary Chenaille has a new job. She's working for a company called Benchmark, and she has taken up temporary residence with Betty Hoskins.

Adelle Erskine is working at her father's law office this summer, and liking it enough to consider studying law in the future.

Althea Greenstone is spending the summer designing costumes for theatre productions. One show was in New York City. Althea returned from that experience with lots of interesting theatre tales and a firm conviction that she never wants to live in New York.

Betty Hoskins is recovering from the shingles, and would love to hear from Friends. She says that this illness "moves one into a new state because you can't do what you had planned – either because you ache or because other people think you're contagious."

Betty Jones is in Maine at the resort that she has been going to for decades. We miss her at meeting, but are happy that she is at a place that she loves.

Hermann Patt spent a couple of nights in St Vincent's Hospital, and he's back home now. Hermann looks forward to coming to Meeting for Worship.

Mike True's wife, Mary Pat, was in UMassMemorial for a week and was transferred to the Jewish Nursing Home on Salisbury Street on Saturday, July 5. She will continue to recover from circulatory problems. Friends will hold her and her family in the Light.

Contributions

Mark Sullivan, Treasurer, announced that he has made arrangements with Webster Five Cent Savings Bank so people will be able to make regular and automatic contributions to the Meeting. Information and sign-up forms will be forthcoming.

Worcester Friends Meeting – Meeting for Business**June 8, 2008**

Present: Mark Sullivan, Karen Sargent, Brian Poynton, Betty Poynton, Clarence Burley, Michael True, Betty Jones, Phil Stone, Barbara Sullivan, Katie Green, clerk, Whiney Mikkelsen, Fred Mikkelsen, Mary Ann Walker, Paul Gallagher, Sue Serpa, moderator, Northeast Impeachment Coalition.

- 01-06-08-08 Meeting began with a period of silence and a reading from NEYM *Faith and Practice* on 'moral concern' by Rufus Jones.
- 02-06-08-08 Ministry and Counsel recommends junior membership for JoAnna Whittier Danielle Mikkelsen. The meeting heartily approves.
- 03-06-08-08 To familiarize Friends with the proposed revision of NEYM *Faith and Practice*, Chapter 2 on Worship, there will be a reading or queries for Friends to consider during the last 10 minutes of meeting for Worship during the next few weeks.
- 04-06-08-08 Mark Sullivan gave the treasurer's report; there is nothing outstanding. He notes that both utility use and cost have been down compared to last year. Yesterday's Fair took in at least \$1000; not all money has been counted yet. Mark asks that any Friends who purchased supplies for the fair submit a voucher for reimbursement as soon as possible. If supplies were purchased as a donation, please submit that amount to Mark also, as he is starting to track "in kind" donations as well.
- 05-06-08-08 The trustees report was given by the clerk, Karen Sargent. Due to continuing problems working with Webster Five Savings Bank to set up direct donations, the treasurer has contacted other local banks to find one that will help us expedite this service. Friends will be notified when a bank is selected and the service is expected to be available.
- 06-06-08-08 The trustees propose re-instituting the position of assistant treasurer, and the treasurer agrees. Friends approve.
- 07-06-08-08 The nominating committee brings forth the name of Paul Gallagher as assistant treasurer. Friends approve.
- 08-06-08-08 The trustees also propose a cosmetic upgrade of the kitchen. This would likely include painting, replacing the floor with vinyl tile, purchase of a countertop, installing a (donated) stainless steel sink, relocating or replacing the dishwasher and a new table. The estimated cost would be \$3,000. The treasurer states that the meeting has the money. Friends approve.
- 09-06-08-08 A concern raised and discussed at the trustees' meeting was the decrease in attendance (from about 30 to 20) at meeting for worship. They request Ministry and Counsel consider calling a threshing session, and ask NEYM for assistance. Friends approve; Ministry and Counsel is asked to take up this recommendation.
- 10-06-08-08 Susan Serpa, moderator of the Northeast Impeachment Coalition requested the use of the meeting house for a speaker they are sponsoring, Dr. Bob Bowman, a retired USAD Lieutenant Colonel who is on a "Patriot's Tour" of the country. He is speaking for peace, against the war in Iraq, and other national issues. The date would be Saturday, June 28, time to be determined; about 40 people would be expected to attend; a donation would likely be requested to attend. Friends approve the use of the meeting house for this purpose, but while it was initially suggested the meeting sponsor this talk, Friends were not clear to do so.
- 11-06-08-08 There was no report from Peace & Social Concerns/Outreach Committee.
- 12-06-08-08 Mike True reported on his first conference call as a NE representative to the AFSC committee on nominees for the Nobel Peace Prize.
- 13-06-08-08 There will be a movie and discussion at the meeting house next Friday, June 13: "The Man Who Planted Trees", at 7 pm. The original book was illustrated by Sandy Kocher, long-time meeting attender!
- 14-06-08-08 Katie Green reports that monthly meetings have been asked to have a display at NEYM sessions in August re. "Quaker Witness", and how we in the meeting live this. Please give any pictures, articles, etc. to P&SC/Outreach in July for our display.
- 15-06-08-08 Mary Ann Walker reported for Building & Grounds that she has been working with Mr. Barnard who has fixed the front porch roof, and states it is sound. He states that part of the house roof was damaged by trees and will need to be replaced and the gutters repaired, which he will do soon. Mary Ann will be getting bids to repair the front porch ceiling and the back porch stairs. A suggestion from Friends was to clean up the screened porch area on "putter day". Friends minute their gratitude to Mary Ann for all the work she has put in with Building and Grounds!

- 16-06-08-08 Brian Poynton notes for the Cemetery committee, that the meeting has received another request for a paranormal investigation at the Friend's Cemetery. He proposes rewording the policy to say "no paranormal investigations are allowed." Friends are encouraged to share their thoughts with Brian who will bring his proposal back to business meeting in the future.
- 17-06-08-08 Karen Sargent and Betty Poynton reported on Market Day yesterday, and thank everyone who helped in any way. Friends minute their gratitude for the work both Karen and Betty did in preparation and during the Fair. Fall Market Day is set for Saturday, September 27.
- 18-06-08-08 Opportunity having been given for question and concerns, meeting closed with a period of silence, purposing to meet again seventh month, thirteenth, or at the call of the clerk.

Submitted in the Light,
Barbara Sullivan, recording clerk.

Pot Luck Setup

7/6/2008	Gallagher Paul	508-842-8350	pgallagher@townisp.com
7/13/2008	Goodenow Carol		cgoodenow@earthlink.net
7/20/2008	Green Katie	978-464-5146	Katie@katiegreenstories.com
7/27/2008	Hoskins Betty	508-791-7434	bbhsibyl@aol.com
8/3/2008	Jones Betty	508-853-7885	ejones1552@earthlink.net
8/10/2008	Joslin Elliott	978-464-2760	elliott@joslin.net
8/17/2008	Kocher Sandra	508-885-5365	
8/24/2008	McKinstry Deborah	508-347-7891	mckins511@aol.com

Scheduled Meetings:

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

Clerk: Katie Green

Recording Clerk: Barbara Sullivan

Recorder: Karen Sargent

Treasurer: Mark Sullivan

Committees (at 9.30 A.M.):

Trustees meet each 1st Sunday. Clerk: Karen Sargent

Peace and Social Concerns/Outreach meets each 1st Sunday. Clerk: Mary Bennett; Recording Clerk:
Betty Hoskins

Ministry and Counsel meets each 4th Sunday. Acting Clerk: Matthew Shorten

Library: Brenda Woodside, Clerk

Cemetery: Brian Poynton, Clerk

Building and Grounds: Maryanne Walker, Clerk

