

Smithfield



Friends

Newsletter SUMMER 2008

**Smithfield Monthly Meeting of Friends
108 Smithfield Road Woonsocket, RI 02895**

Vol. 18

No. 199

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Clerk: Glenda Byhouwer

Recording Clerk: Connie Bair-Thompson

Pastor: Marnie Miller-Gutsell

Treasurer: Richard Frechette

Ministry&Counsel: Rhoda Mowry

Newsletter: Randy Oftedahl

CALENDAR FOR June/July/August

EVERY 1st DAY

10:30 am: MEETING FOR WORSHIP
Child Care Available

LAST 1st DAY OF EACH MONTH: Unprogrammed Worship followed by Pot Luck Lunch

Other Events:

- Sun. Jul 20** RI/Smithfield Quarterly Meeting at Providence Meetinghouse 10AM-3PM
- Tue. Jul 22** Ministry & Counsel Committee meets at 6:45 at the meetinghouse
- Aug 2 – 7** New England Yearly Meeting sessions at Bryant University, Smithfield RI
- Sun. Aug 3** No 1st day worship at the meetinghouse; worship will be in communion with all New England Friends at Bryant University
- Sun. Aug 10** 1st day worship will include worship sharing about NEYM sessions (to benefit both those who attended and those who were unable)
- Sun. Aug 17** Unprogrammed 1st day worship
- Sun. Aug 24** Programmed 1st day worship
- Sun. Sep 7** Monthly Meeting for Business at the rise of worship
September Newsletter Deadline

Celebrating Birthdays in our Meeting family:

- June:** Jonathon Kay, Jeanne Kinney, Paul Klinkman, Marnie Miller-Gutsell, Heather Smith, Kenneth Smith
- July:** Diane Belliveau, Aaron Frechette, Susan Furry, Joel Oftedahl, Randy Oftedahl
- August:** Ron Belliveau, Cindy Keene, Emily Oftedahl, Kara Price Bachand, Tami Ruprecht, Randy Thompson, Wendy Verhoek-Oftedahl



Smithfield Friends Meeting Cookbook

Friends are reminded to gather 20 of your favorite recipes for inclusion in our fundraising cookbook by **June 30**. Please bring to Meeting and give to Tami, or contact cindyk1141@cox.net for more information.

Letter from Marnie

Dear Friends,

At last, summer is on the horizon. One of the signs of its coming is the annual appearance in the newspapers and on public radio of lists of “beach books.” I have a cousin who always used to start re-reading the same book every year when he arrived at the beach: it was *Self Reliance*, by the famous American clergyman and Transcendentalist philosopher, Ralph Waldo Emerson. I think he hoped it would improve his character. But somehow, improving my character is not what I’m usually thinking about when I’m sitting on a sand chair under a beach umbrella. I’m really looking for entertainment—a page-turner, with a good plot and interesting characters. I’m much more likely to go for a fantasy novel.

Yet, years ago, I realized a curious thing about fantasy novels. Of course they are entertaining—they wouldn’t be so popular if they weren’t. But the really great fantasies enchant—they weave a spell that draws us in to new understandings of life. They can do this because they are entertaining at the same time that they explore serious themes. And oddly enough, they can do this not in spite of, but because of the fact that they do not have to abide by the laws of nature. The writers create for us worlds populated not only by humans but also by dwarves, centaurs, elves, monsters, and other bizarre creatures. They are worlds where people and other creatures can fly, disappear, or



change shapes. Yet the characters must be rounded and the narrative believable. The moral themes must emerge from them, not vice-versa. The characters must come first—they cannot be stick figures spouting moral lessons. Oddly enough, we can understand abstract ideas like love, self sacrifice, redemption, death and resurrection better this way than we can by reading any book that is self consciously preaching virtue. Real human virtue is always mixed with many other things.

For instance, I have just been recaptured by C.S. Lewis’ fantasy series, the

Chronicles of Narnia. The film version of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* just reappeared on television, no doubt to coincide with the first showings of the sequel, *Prince Caspian*. I remembered the time when my husband and I discovered the *Chronicles*, and actually got quite competitive over who was going to put our children to bed and therefore “win” the prize of getting to read the next couple of chapters of *Narnia* to our daughters. So last week I went to the library and checked out the first two books.

The truly great fantasies can be read, reread, and reread again. Some have clearly Christian underpinnings, like *Chronicles of Narnia*. But the great ones all explore the eternal ethical and moral questions, the struggles between darkness and light. When I was training for hospital chaplaincy, the interns were all encouraged to read Ursula LeGuin’s fascinating series, the *Earthsea Trilogy*. This series explores the enticing nature of power, especially for gifted people, and how dangerous and corrupting this can become. At the same time, these books also reflect on the redemptive power of courage and love. Similar themes can be seen in virtually all these books, from the latest successful entry into the field, J.K. Rowling’s Harry Potter series, to the greatest of them all, J.R.R. Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings*. I have read that series four times, and will no doubt do it again—but I remember the way those books led me to consider how tempting it is for good people to want great power in order to do “good”—or at least what they think is “good.” Now there’s a fable for our times. For a Gospel look at this same theme, check out the story of the Temptation in Matthew 4:1-11. So this summer, read, ponder, and have fun!

Summer blessings,
Marnie

Religious Education among Friends

Interested in Religious Education for our kids? Consider the FGC Religious Educators Institute August 14-17 (Thursday evening--Sunday morning), 2008, at the Bradford Woods Conference Center near Indianapolis, IN. A list of the workshops to be offered is posted on the bulletin board. Children welcome—camping options are available. See the flier and fee schedule on the bulletin board.

And/or plan ahead to 2009 for a workshop nearer at hand—**Pendle Hill**, just outside of Philadelphia, will offer a weekend workshop May 15-17, 2009 on **Godly Play**. See bulleting board for a flier.

Arts and Spirituality

Pendle Hill, a Quaker Conference Center near Philadelphia, is offering a wonderful series of workshops on Spirituality and the Arts, ranging from painting to song-writing and mosaic. Check out the offerings in the flier on the bulletin board.

Great Summer Breaks at Pendle Hill

The Pendle Hill Quaker Conference Center offers regular workshops on a variety of Quaker oriented subjects, including an **Inquirers' Weekend** July 25-27, 2008. See the fliers on the bulletin board.

Quakers *Yearly Meeting Sessions*

The Religious Society of Friends **New England Yearly Meeting** will gather Saturday, August 2 through Thursday, August 7 at Bryant University, Smithfield, RI. The program and a schedule of fees is included in the latest issue of the Yearly Meeting Newsletter, the *New England Friend*. Extra copies of that are available on the table in the lobby. You can attend any or all of sessions. Don't let cost keep you away—financial assistance is available.

From Peace and Social Concerns

The Peace and Social Concerns Committee at Smithfield Friends Meeting has decided to begin a fund to purchase mine detectors. These mine detectors will be sent to the United Nations to be used to locate and eliminate the world's 200 million mines that injure and kill thousand every year. This program is coordinated with the United Nations Mine Action Team and the State Department's Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement. To date, over 75 mine detectors have been purchased (16 from Woodstown, NJ Monthly Meeting) and Kearneysville, WV based Schonstadt Instrument company has donated another 75 detectors which are currently being used in Laos, Kenta, Vietnam, Somalia, and Tajikistan. For every mine detector that is purchased at \$1029, the company donates one.

The fund will ask for voluntary contributions from the RI Council of churches and hopes to achieve widespread publicity so as to generate donations from the larger community. The Peace and Social Concerns Committee would like to thank all Friends for their support of this, especially Richard Frechette who agreed to help set up the fund. For more info, please visit www.schonstadt.com.

Message from the Clerk

Greetings! Thank you for your response to the sign up sheet for child care during meeting. Many slots in June and July are filled! I am purposely calling it "child care" rather than "First Day School" for several reasons. Notice that one has CAPITAL LETTERS so seems much more important and more difficult. And it says "school"!!! So we'll talk about "child care" for now. It is really a chance to experience a different kind of worship, one where you can enjoy playing and talking with the children. You get to color and read and tell stories. You also get to explain what the adults are doing during meeting. You get to discuss the testimonies on a much more basic, rubber-hits-the road way. You get to help our kids learn the protocols of Quaker worship. Kids can be shy, but will warm up and talk if they have a project to work on together with you. Just remember to look like you know what you are doing.



Hope you have a safe, fun summer.

Glenda

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business: June 1, 2008

2008-37: Opening Minute

Smithfield Monthly Meeting met for a regularly scheduled meeting for worship with attention to business at 12:15PM on June 1, 2008. Glenda Byhouwer served as clerk, Connie Bair-Thompson as recording clerk, and there were nine other Friends present. We began with a period of waiting worship. The clerk talked to us about the hymn "Lea, Kindly Light" which encourages us to take one step up and God will meet us. Tami Ruprecht will be holding the meeting in prayer today even though she can not be with us today.

2008-38: Committee Report – Outreach Committee

For Outreach Committee, Cindy Keene reported that the committee has been meeting monthly. They reported the yard sale was a huge success, netting \$910. The committee is also working on a meeting cookbook as a fundraiser. They continue sponsoring a monthly movie showing after potluck on the last First Day and are working on planning events in the future targeted at families with children in the wider community. The Circle of Friends is not meeting currently and will continue in the fall if there is interest. Friends accepted this report from Outreach Committee.

2008-39: Committee Report – Peace and Social Concerns Committee

For Peace and Social Concerns Committee, Philip Mayer followed up on the committee's interest in raising money to purchase mine detectors from Schoenstadt Instrument Company as part of a program coordinated with the United Nations. A Quaker meeting in New Jersey has already been collecting money to purchase mine detectors from the same company. Philip said that he has done some additional investigation and he feels this is a valid program. He asked us if we would like to set up a special account for contributions to this effort.

Friends expressed agreement that this is a cause we are willing to support and agreed to set up this fund and publicize our collections to the other meetings within our Quarter, beginning with the clerk of Quarter, and also with member churches in the Rhode Island Council of Churches. Friends asked Peace and Social Concerns Committee to write something about this to be included in the newsletter as well and to continue overseeing this project.

2008-40: Committee Report – Building and Grounds Committee

The clerk read from a written report received from Building and Grounds Committee that details the status of some of the many projects being worked on. Friends accepted this report and it will be attached to these minutes.

2008-41: Committee Report – Ministry and Counsel Committee

For Ministry and Counsel Committee, Rhoda Mowry said the committee met two weeks ago. She said the committee is working on getting the new membership book functional. Tami Ruprecht has agreed to inscribe the names of members in the new book.

Rhoda said the committee continued the discussion about how to address Religious Education and childcare needs. They would also like to send cards to members of our community who are absent for an extended period of time or members for whom we have concerns. Rhoda said the committee asks us to bring in some blank cards to be used for this purpose. Friends approved of this idea. Friends suggested re-generating notecards with a drawing of the meetinghouse that we have had in the past. Richard Frechette agreed to look into doing this. The committee will meet again on June 17, 2008.

2008-42: Closing Minute

No further business arising, Friends closed with a period of waiting worship, intending to meet again for business on September 7, 2008 or at the call of the clerk, God willing.

Respectfully Submitted,

Constance Bair-Thompson
Recording Clerk

Young Jesus

The Disciple Luke tells us:

“When they had performed all things the Law of the Lord required, they went back to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew to maturity, and he was filled with wisdom; and God’s favour was with him. *Luke 2:39, 40*

“When he was twelve years old, Jesus was found in the temple, sitting among the doctors, listening to them, and asking them questions; and all those who heard him were astounded at this intelligence and his replies.” *Luke 2: 46, 47*

“Then a certain principal Rabbi asked him, ‘Hast thou read books?’ Then he explained to them the books of the Law, and the mysteries which are contained in the books of the prophets; thing which the mind of no creature could reach.”



“He told them the number of the spheres and heavenly bodies; their triangular, square, and sextile aspect; their progressive and retrograde motion; their size and several prognostications; and other things which the reason of man had never discovered.”

“He explained to them the powers of the body, how the soul operated upon the body; the faculty of speaking, anger and desire, and other things, which the understanding of no creature had ever reached.” *Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus, 21: 5-20.*

Jesus went to the Temple and began to teach. The Jews were astonished and said, “How did he learn to read? He has not been taught.” Jesus answered them:

“My teaching is not from myself: it comes from the one who sent me; and if anyone is prepared to do His will, he will know whether my teaching is from God or whether my doctrine is my own.”

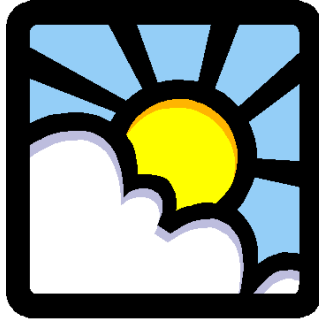
“When a man’s doctrine is his own he is hoping to get honor for himself; but when he is working for the honor of the one who sent him, then he is sincere.”

People stood in groups whispering about him. Some said, ‘He is a good man’, others, ‘No, he is leading people astray’. *John 7: 12-19*

-Arthur Gilbert Johnston

Friendly Connections

Ministry and Counsel Committee is looking for suggestions on how we can enhance the social and spiritual connections between us. If you have suggestions on how we might accomplish this, please call M&C Clerk Rhoda Mowry at 401-354-8799 or e-mail her at RhodaE@cox.net.



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