

Smithfield Friends

Newsletter September 2008
Smithfield Monthly Meeting of Friends
108 Smithfield Road Woonsocket, RI 02895

Vol.20

No.200

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Recording Clerk: Connie Bair-Thompson

Pastor: Marnie Miller-Gutsell

Treasurer: Richard Frechette

Ministry&Counsel: Diane Gauthier

Newsletter: Randy Oftedahl



CALENDAR FOR September/October

EVERY SUNDAY

10:30 am: MEETING FOR WORSHIP

Child Care Available

LAST SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH: Unprogrammed Worship and Pot Luck Lunch

Other Events

Sunday, Sept. 28 2:00PM: Ecumenical Worship at Old Blackstone Meetinghouse

Sunday, Oct 5 Monthly Meeting for Business

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE FOR OCTOBER

October 18-19 RI/Smithfield Quarterly Meeting Retreat at Clara Barton Camp in N. Oxford, MA

*Mark your
calendars for the
Smithfield Friends
Christmas Bazaar
November 15!*

Letter from Marnie

Dear Friends—

This summer, while I was on Long Island, a childhood memory rose up in my mind. It was a photograph of my mother sitting in the door of our summer cottage, sewing up the side of a straw tick—a home made mattress, made of a lightweight canvas called “ticking.” Straw ticks were stuffed with straw, and they were light, pretty comfortable, and smelled nice. They rustled when you rolled over—a nice sort of homey sound. When they got really mashed down, they could just be restuffed with fresh straw. My brother and I slept on bunk beds built into the end wall of the kitchen, and we each had a straw tick to sleep on.

My parents literally built that cottage with their own hands—with a little help and advice from my two grandfathers—my mother’s father was a professional carpenter, and my father’s father worked for a lumber company and was a fine woodworker. Of course it was a small luxury to have a summer house at all—even a tiny cottage built of beaverboard. But it was the tag end of the Great Depression, nobody had much money, land was cheap, and college professors had all summer off. Neither of my parents had grown up with much money—and my mother’s family had gone through times of real poverty. But they also grew up with the skills to live in hard times. People did in those days. So they did everything themselves. My father made the dining table and the bed frames; everything else was a hand-me-down or bought used. My mother was a skilled seamstress, making curtains and



straw ticks and furniture covers, and getting extra wear out of worn sheets by tearing them down the middle and sewing the sides together.

All the water came from the pump and there was no electricity. We did have an indoor toilet, but of course there was no washer—but no one felt any great need to do a load every day. We all washed underclothes and many other things by hand, with water heated on the propane stove. We went to the laundromat once a week, but never bothered with a dryer. There was no refrigerator. We had an icebox. And we used kerosene lamps for years. They gave a lovely, soft light. It was nearly 20 years before we got electricity, and along with it an electric pump. But interestingly, never, during all those summers

we spent there, did any of us ever feel deprived (though I was never really keen on having to pump and carry all that water).

That was the lesson. We didn’t feel deprived. We felt incredibly fortunate. And even when my mother talked about the hard years of her childhood, the times she felt a sense of deprivation had nothing to do with material goods. They had to do with the death of her mother when she was seven, and of her father having to be away for long hours when there was no work nearby. Of course it’s genuinely hard if there isn’t enough money for heat, shelter, food, medical care. But beyond those basics, what does affluence get us? A satisfaction that lasts?

Ordinary Americans used to live with less “stuff” all the time. There is nothing “deprived” or “inferior” about mending our clothes instead of getting new ones, cooking from scratch, forgoing the latest electronic gadget, or not taking on more debt than we can realistically manage. And we need to recover the skills of living in community and helping each other out. I am profoundly grateful that my parents showed me the value of those skills—they don’t just get us through hard times; they are to be valued in all times.

Honor your father and your mother. (Mark 7:10)

Blessings,
Marnie

New Bible Study

This fall Smithfield Friends are invited to sign up for a **new Bible study**, a series on the **Parables**, which will start soon. Dates and times will be announced shortly. If you have a favorite parable, or one you find puzzling that you would like to discuss, let Marnie know.

East Blackstone Meeting House Ecumenical Service



As many Friends know, Smithfield Friends used to have the care and oversight of the **old Meeting House in Blackstone**. It ceased to be an active Meeting for Worship back in the 19th century, but it is a charming and historic building. It is now cared for by its own Historical Society, many of whose members are descendants of the Friends who once worshipped here. They regularly sponsor ecumenical worship services, and we are invited to attend the September one, which will take place at **2 PM, Sunday, September 28**. The worship leader will be Father Ed St. Godard, whom many Friends know from his regular participation in our Lenten Ecumenical Services.

October Quarterly Meeting Retreat

Again this year, our **Quarterly Meeting Retreat** will take place at the beautiful Clara Barton Camp in Oxford, MA. Smithfield is the host Meeting this year, so be sure to save the weekend of October 18-19. The camp is equipped with all modern conveniences, including heated cabins and comfortable beds. This is a wonderful chance to get away for the weekend, relax, and enjoy the chance to meet old and new Friends from around the Quarter. More details to follow.

USFW to Meet Here

The **United Society of Friends Women** will be hosted by Smithfield Friends on October 26, the last Sunday of October. They will join us for worship and potluck, so bring a little extra food this month. And all are welcome to attend their regular meeting, which will take place after lunch.

Some Friends Women who are coming from a distance may wish to come Saturday night. Eunice Strobel is coordinating hospitality, so Friends who may have a spare bed for visitors should let her know.

Christmas Bazaar November 15

Outreach committee would like to invite artists and crafters to participate in our Christmas bazaar, Saturday November 15 from 9am to 2pm. Tables are available for \$20 each. Contact Cindy Keene at CindyK1141@cox.net or 401-765-3101 for more information. (Watch for details in next month's newsletter).

Cookbook Update:



Thank you to Friends who have submitted recipes for our Meeting Cookbook fundraiser. Tami has been hard at work formatting these and we now need to fill in some categories. Bread, soup, vegetarian, and miscellaneous (drinks, relishes, sauces) are needed to complete our book. Please forward these as soon as possible.

Unfortunately, we will not be to press by the bazaar, but hope to have copies ready for the Christmas season.

Here is a "taste" of Smithfield Meeting's cookbook:

Peggy's Famous Fast Food Family Dinner

My friend Peggy raised her 4 children when 4 was a low number in our neighborhood. She often walked in the door to face a group of starving children and she claims they loved this quickie meal.

In a large skillet, place 1 lb hamburger crumbled up. Add 1 can corn and 1 can tomatoes and then 1 can green beans. Throw in 1 cup of rice. Place on low heat for 15 to 20 minutes. Voila!

-Jeanne Kinney

RI-Smithfield Quarterly Meeting
Annual Quarterly Meeting Retreat

Dates: **Saturday October 18 & Sunday October 19**

Place: Clara Barton Camp, North Oxford, Mass.

Host: Smithfield Monthly Meeting

About the Retreat:

This will be a very informal retreat, designed to let us all get to know each other better. It will begin on Saturday at noon with lunch, but all are invited to arrive as early as 9 AM to enjoy the grounds and some walking paths surrounding the camp.

In the afternoon, Kathy Boger will guide Friends in an introduction to yoga as a path to inner peace. Throughout the afternoon we will also have several discussion groups on various topics relating to us as members of the Quarter and Yearly Meeting. Official Meeting for Business will be held on Saturday evening. Programs for Youth and Children will be formulated once numbers and ages of have been determined.

After Breakfast on Sunday we will caravan to Old Sturbridge Village and will hold 1st day worship in the former **Bolton Meetinghouse** that now rests in OSV. Worship will begin there at 9:30 AM. The retreat formally ends at the rise of worship. Friends are invited to spend the rest of the day touring Old Sturbridge Village – optional with the purchase of group discount tickets.



Costs:

- Overnight \$25/person, max of \$50/family
- Saturday only \$10/person
- Sunday only – if coming to worship only at OSV, no registration cost
- Friends needing equalization should speak with their Monthly Meeting Clerk.

Old Sturbridge Village Tickets:

(Optional, for post-worship touring of the village)

- \$15, Adults (assumes minimum of 15 adults for this group rate; otherwise \$18 for seniors and \$20 for all other adults)
- \$7, ages 3-17

Registration Process:

DEADLINE, Sunday October 12 (earlier would be appreciated)

- Register via telephone, e-mail or US Postal
Richard Frechette
Richard.Frechette@cox.net
401-769-4433
46 Cherrybrook Ave. North Smithfield RI 02896-6902
- When registering, identify:
 - a. Name of all participants
 - b. Telephone # if not registering via e-mail
 - c. Ages of any children
 - d. Overnight, Saturday only, or Sunday only
 - e. Whether you wish to purchase the Old Sturbridge Village tickets for the above
- You may mail pre-payment or pay at the retreat

Food Preparation Responsibilities:

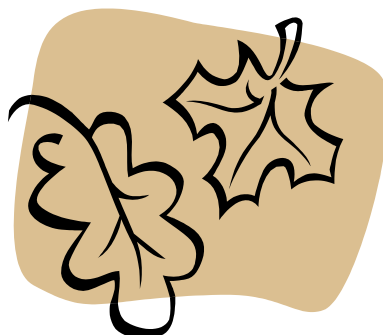
- Saturday morning coffee-an; Saturday evening snacksSmithfield Meeting
- Saturday Lunch..... Worcester Meeting
- Saturday Dinner..... Providence Meeting
- Sunday Breakfast..... Westerly Meeting

Directions to Clara Barton Camp* (Clara Barton Rd and Ennis Rd.)

From Smithfield, Providence and Saylesville Friends Meetinghouses

1. Make your way to Rte 146-N. Take entrance to RI 146-N.
2. From the RI/MA Line continue on Rte 146-N for about 12.2 miles
3. Take exit for Central Turnpike/Northbridge/Oxford.
4. Left onto Central Turnpike which turns into Sutton Ave. (about 5 miles total)
5. At light to Rte 12m turn right onto Main St.
6. Drive North for about 3 miles and turn left onto Clara Barton Rd.
7. Clara Barton Camp and the Clara Barton homestead are at the intersection of CB Rd and Ennis Rd. – about 1 mile from Main St.

* Fee free to check with seasoned attenders of QM retreat at Clara Barton who might have found better routes.



Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business: September 7, 2008

2008-43: Opening Minute Smithfield Monthly Meeting met for a regularly scheduled meeting for worship with attention to business at 12:30PM on September 7, 2008. Glenda Byhouwer served as clerk, Suzanne Frechette as recording clerk pro-temp, and there were twelve other Friends present. We began with a period of waiting worship.

2008-44: Ministry & Counsel Ministry & Counsel Committee is currently reviewing our existing personnel policy and to what degree it describes and defines the needs and expectations of the Meeting and of our pastor.

2008-45: Peace & Social Concerns – Financial Support Phil Mayer has forwarded to us a request for financial assistance to flood victims in Iowa via a local Iowa Friends Meeting. We will notify Friends of this request via our weekly e-mail update and newsletter, leaving it to Friends to consider individual contributions.

This request led to a general discussion of whether the meeting should budget for corporate financial support of peace and social concerns work outside of our Meeting. We intend to dedicate an hour of time in our October meeting for business for discernment of our process of corporate support for such activities, both near and far. We expect that this will then provide guidance to the Finance Committee in the development of next year's and future budgets.

2008-46: Library Committee Ann DeNevers and Jeanne Kinney presented a concern that old and sometimes rare books are scattered throughout the meetinghouse and should be placed in a more secure and environmentally appropriate location. They plan to meet with library-committee Friends of other New England Meetings in order to gain insights on proven practices.

We approve the committee's plan to address the care for these books, namely, to catalogue them and to find a good location for storage and access of these books/documents. We also ask the committee to create copies of original photos, certificates and documents of Meeting-related historical significance, displaying the copies and preserving the originals. Friends are asked to return Meeting books and papers that have been on extended loan, and we encourage Friends to contribute other books of Quaker interest to our collection.

2008-47: Financial Report Richard Frechette, Treasurer, presented the financial report for the period ended June 30, 2008. In summary, in the general fund there were \$12,746 in revenues and \$13,512 in expenditures. While this results in a deficit of \$767 budgeted for the half-year, this is far better than the budgeted \$3,800 deficit that had been anticipated for the year. The full report is included with the official copy of these minutes.

2008-48: United Society of Friends Women The New England Chapter of the United Society of Friends Women International has accepted our invitation for the use of our meetinghouse for their meeting on Sunday, October 26. They will join us at worship on that morning, and will have their meeting in the afternoon, to which all are invited. We have been asked to provide Saturday and/or Sunday night hospitality to those who will travel a distance, and we will expand our normal end-of-month pot luck so that enough food is available to include the USFW. Eunice Strobel will serve as the general contact person. Pieter Byhouwer will coordinate our men who will serve pre-worship coffee-an' and lunch.

2008-49: Quarterly Meeting Richard Frechette, who had earlier agreed to serve as principal coordinator for the upcoming Quarterly Meeting retreat (October 18-19 at Clara Barton Camp in North Oxbridge, MA), shared some ideas for program and activities at the retreat. We approve the holding of 1st day worship at the Bolton meetinghouse (now part of Sturbridge Village), and the offering of the option for attenders to spend the rest of the day at Old Sturbridge Village – if logistics can be worked out with OSV. We will encourage retreat attenders to arrive earlier on Saturday than the normal noontime arrival.

Quarterly Meeting clerk, Betsy Zimmerman, is interested in holding discussions on the relationship of Quarterly Meeting and Yearly Meeting; we will incorporate this into Saturday's program. Also, we will include in the program an introduction to yoga as an aid to inner peace and meditation, if we are able to secure the services of a Friend trained in yoga.

The following will serve as an ad hoc committee to work out the logistics of program, registration, etc.: Richard Frechette., Pieter Byhouwer, Arthur Johnston, Randy Oftedahl, and Suzanne Frechette. Eunice Strobel will write a note to document the past use of the Bolton Meetinghouse at OSV for worship, which might be a helpful tool in our dialogue with OSV.

2008-50: Meeting Website Randy Thompson has volunteered to update and maintain our Meeting's website, which was last updated in 2006. Randy Oftedahl, who had previously maintained the website, will contact Randy Thompson to address the transition. We approve this assignment. We thank Randy Oftedahl for all his past work on the website and Randy Thompson for his willingness to take on this task. We encourage Randy to seek assistance as needed from other Friends in the Meeting.

2008-51: Quaker Evangelism Arthur Johnson has voiced a leading that he believes flows from his reading of George Fox's Journal. He believes that there are many in the larger community who are seekers and would like to join us he has. Arthur would like to establish a way to find and meet with fellow seekers. We encourage Arthur to explore this leading further through a clearness process, and advised him to write a letter to the clerk of Ministry & Counsel Committee articulating his leading and requesting such a clearness committee. We recognize that we shy away from evangelizing and that we need to reach out to the larger community in a variety of ways that shouldn't exclude an open invitation to experience to experience what it is to be a Quaker today.

2008-52 Closing Minute No further business arising, Friends closed with a period of waiting worship, intending to meet again for business on October 5, 2008, God willing.

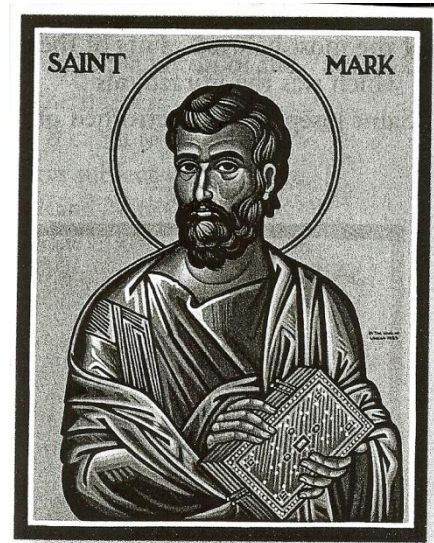
Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Frechette

Recording Clerk pro tem

Coptic Christians

Mark, The Evangelist, founded the Coptic Church in Alexandria in the first century bringing Christianity to Egypt. John Mark, was a cousin to Barnabas, and accompanied him and Paul to Rome. Mark was also a disciple of Peter and author of the second Gospel, written in Rome in 60 A.D.



Clement, Bishop of Alexandria, (c.150-c.215). Clement held that knowledge and illumination was the chief element in Christian perfection. Originally he was an early martyr, but was later excised by Pope Clement VIII on the grounds of his doubtful orthodoxy.

Origen, (c.185-c.254) Christian theologian, became head of the catechetical school in Alexandria after Clement. Origen represented Alexandrian theology. 'Interpretation of the Bible by mystical and allegorical methods' (interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning). Origen's theology was always biblical in source based on a full understanding of scriptural revelation. He believed that man is a preexisting soul that is placed in the flesh for repentance and ultimate salvation, so that in the end, even the demons can be saved. His teachings were condemned at the 2nd Council of Constantinople (553).

((Since we are also to judge angels, it follows that we can judge matters of everyday life." 1 Cor: 6-3

((When angels sinned, God did not spare them: He sent them down to the underworld and cosigned them into chains of darkness, to be held there until the day of Judgement. " 2 Peter: 2-4

((The spirit of an unclean devil, shouted at the top of its voice, (What do you want with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torture us before the time? I know who you are: the Holy One of God. " Matt: 8-29, Luke: 4-34

((And there are other sheep I have that are not of this fold, and these I have to lead as well. They too will listen to my voice, and there will be only one flock, and one shepherd." John 10:16

Finally the Coptic Church split from the Church of Rome in the 6th Century. Today, the Coptic Museum in Cairo, contains the Nag Hammadi library, a collection of thirteen texts, written on papyrus, found in 1945 buried near the Nile. These books are *Gnostic* works, written in Coptic, and hidden by Christian monks during the hunt for unorthodox literature in the 5th Century. These are the only surviving documents of the Gnostics.

Pope Shenouda **III**, now 85, has led some 6 million Coptic Christians for the past 36 years. They are isolated from Egypt's 70 million Muslims. Their lives are centered around the Church.

-Arthur Gilbert Johnston.

“There is a Principle which is pure, placed in the human mind, which in different places and ages hath had different names. It is, however, pure and proceeds from God. It is deep and inward, confined to no forms or religion nor excluded from any, where the heart stands in perfect sincerity. In whomsoever this takes root and grows, of what nation soever they become brethren in the best sense of the expression.”

-John Woolman, 1761



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