

Smithfield



Friends

Newsletter January 2005
Smithfield Monthly Meeting of Friends
108 Smithfield Road Woonsocket, RI 02895

Vol. 17 _____ No. 165

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Clerk: Richard Frechette

Recording Clerk: Connie Bair-Thompson

Pastor: Marnie Miller-Gutsel

Treasurer: Cindy Keene

Ministry&Counsel: Diane Gauthier

Newsletter: Randy Oftedahl

CALENDAR FOR January/February

EVERY SUNDAY

10:30 am: MEETING FOR WORSHIP

Child Care Available

LAST SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH: Unprogrammed Worship and Pot Luck Lunch
Children's First Day School during worship (2nd & last Sundays)

OTHER WORSHIP UNDER THE CARE OF SMITHFIELD MEETING:

SECOND SUNDAY OF MONTH 4:00 PM: Unprogrammed Worship at Uxbridge Meetinghouse, Uxbridge, Mass

Other events

Sunday, January 16,

3 PM--Ecumenical Martin Luther King Day Service at St. James Baptist Church (see below for details)

Finance Committee will meet at the rise of worship

Sunday, February 6

--at Meeting For Worship--Singing and Worship Sharing to discern our leading on the new Faith and Practice preface (details on page 2)

MONTHLY MEETING FOR BUSINESS

Newsletter Deadline for February



Letter from Marnie

Happy New Year, Friends--

And we need one, especially after the unbelievable tragedy that struck the world at the end of last year in the form of the greatest natural disaster in recorded history. So often I thought of the words from the Book of Job 1:18-19. Job has just heard that all his animals have been stolen or killed, and all the herdsmen are dead.

Then comes the final messenger, who tells him of the deaths of all his children in a natural disaster which struck their eldest brother's house. The messenger says, "it fell upon them, and they are dead. I alone have escaped to tell thee."

"I alone have escaped to tell thee."-- One family member survives, the rest have been swept away. Millions are homeless. Whole villages vanish along with livelihoods --70% of the fishing boats in Sri Lanka have been destroyed. "I alone have escaped..."



The world has been generous, but I am troubled by many questions. Why was the first offer from the US so paltry? If we were really waiting until the actual needs became clearer, why didn't we say so at the time? Our offer has now been increased by ten times the initial amount, but by the time that explanation was given, it sounded like an embarrassed excuse. Something doesn't seem right here.

Other troubling questions: Does it take the presence of western tourists to catch our attention? One television commentator asked why, for instance, we haven't heard anything about tsunami damage in Somalia, where many coastal fishing villages were wiped off the face of the map, and in a country that was already suffering dreadfully from famine and drought--but these aren't resorts, and she had heard nothing about that on the broadcast news. Neither have I.

And why does it seem to take a really spectacular crisis to inspire this sort of generosity? What happens when all the reporters pack up and go home? It takes months to ensure there is adequate food, clean water, housing, and decent medical care. It takes years, even decades, to rebuild villages, businesses, farms, families, communities--to help people become self-sufficient. Will private donations continue? Will nations keep to their commitments? Or will it be out of sight, out of mind?

More troubling still, will those who have been generous here now cut back on their donations elsewhere? Already the Red Cross has said they have enough to cover their work with tsunami victims, but

please not to forget their (largely unpublicized) work in other places where just as many are dying. British Prime Minister Tony Blair has called the humanitarian situation in Africa "The equivalent of a man-made, preventable tsunami every week."

And here's a question that troubles me most deeply of all. Did you know that polls consistently show that Americans vastly over-estimate the amount the US gives in foreign development aid? It is any wonder there is little support for increasing the amount? In fact, we--the richest country in the world--are near the bottom of the list compared other developed countries. Is this right or just?

"As you have done it unto one of the least of these, my brothers and sisters, you have done it unto me." (Matt. 25:40) When millions everywhere--in Indonesia, or Iraq, or the Sudan, or anywhere else--stand before us saying "I alone have escaped to tell thee," how will we respond?

New Year blessings to everyone, and especially to the "least of these,"
-Marnie

Martin Luther King Day Ecumenical Service

There will be an ecumenical Martin Luther King Day Service at St. James Baptist Church, 340 5. Main St., at 3 PM, January 16. This has been an annual event at St. James for many years, but this year it will be on the Sunday preceding Martin Luther King Day, to allow for more participation by those who don't get the actual Day off. Local pastors, including Marnie, have been asked to participate in ways that reflect their traditions. We have a long relationship with St. James and its senior pastor, the Rev. Sammy Vaughn, so we hope many Friends will turn out.

Worship Sharing on the Proposed Faith and Practice Preface

Our regular Meeting for Worship on Sunday, February 6 will be devoted to singing and Worship Sharing on the topic of the proposed Preface for the new NEYM Faith and Practice. The NEYM Revision Committee has urged all Meetings in New England to study this Preface and to discern as a community how well this Preface reflects the vision of New England Friends. This Preface was printed in our last newsletter. Please read it and pray about it in preparation for this worshipful consideration, it is important that we have as much participation as possible because the new Faith and Practice needs to represent all New England Friends. Attendees are very welcome to participate along with members-- the Spirit may speak through

anyone. If you need a copy, and don't have access to our website, please ask Marnie for one.

Friends in Elementary and Jr. High School--Retreats Coming Up!

The next Elementary Retreat is almost here! It will be at Wellesley Meeting on January 2 1-23. Interested? Contact Kevin Lee at 508-994-1638, or <kevin @jymretreats.org>.

The next Jr. High retreat will be March 4-6, at Hartford Meeting. Contact Gretchen Baker-Smith at 508-997-0940, or <gretchen@jymretreats.org>.

Young Friends Retreats

High School Age Friends-- thinking of attending one of the Young Friends Spring Retreats? The Sexuality and Relationships retreat will be at Cambridge (MA) Meeting, Feb. 11-13; the Gender retreat will be at Hartford (CT) Meeting, March 18-20; the Rest and Relaxation retreat will be at Mt. Toby Meeting, April 29-May 1. In addition, there will be a Seniors Retreat at Monadnock (NH) Meeting May 13-15. Take Note: Registration for all retreats is January 18. If you miss this deadline, there may still be room: contact Lisa Graustein, interim Young Friends coordinator at 617-922-7095 or at <yfcoord@neym.org>.

Plus!--if you would like to help plan these retreats, come to Committee Day January 29. (Let Lisa know if you are coming to this.) More info on the bulletin board. FGC Gatherings--Reaching Out To Pastoral Friends

The Friends General Conference has launched a serious effort to get better acquainted with pastoral Meetings in their midst, and hopes to encourage more interactions between pastoral and non-pastoral Friends. As part of this effort, they are hoping that Friends in pastoral Meetings will plan to attend the annual FGC Gathering on July 2-9, 2005, in Blacksburg, VA; the theme is Weaving the Blessed Tapestry. Plans are already in the works for the following summer, July 1-7, in Tacoma WA, on the theme Swimming in Living Waters. Financial aid is available.

Further information is available in the foyer.

Messages from Distant Friends

There are Christmas messages from distant Friends on the bulletin board. If you haven't yet checked them out, be sure to do so. They will be taken down at the end of January.

Friends World Committee for Consultation

Friends World Committee for Consultation--FWCC, the international organization of Friends, invites all Friends to attend the next annual meeting of the Section of the Americas, which includes Friends in Canada, the US, and Latin America. This will take

place in Tempe, AZ, April 14-17, 2005. See flyer on the Bulletin Board for more information.

Perfume-Free Meetinghouse

Some of our members have serious chemical sensitivities. Please consider making our meetinghouse an area free of perfumes, strong deodorants, etc. Thank you!

...From the Sojourning Mangeldorfs (Paul III, Laurice, Paul IV)

The Mangeldorfs returned from Argentina in December 2002, and took up residence near Philadelphia. "As the year ends, we wanted to make a contribution to Smithfield Monthly Meeting, for although we have been many miles away for some time now, in our hearts you are our meeting...Although we were sad not to have returned to RI, we were glad to be near both our families (in Philadelphia)...Paul has (recently) elected to leave Bank of America and has taken a job with SunTrust Bank in Atlanta. He is in charge of retail credit risk management...We have adapted well to Atlanta and have made new Friends. Paul and Paul IV are attending Atlanta (Friends) Meeting and Laurice is attending St. Jude's Catholic Church. Paul IV is now a junior at Holy Innocent Episcopal School. We certainly have a diversity of religious experience. He has adapted quite well to this his third high school...Please do look us up if your travels bring you to Atlanta, we have plenty of room." (their address is 545 Trowbrook Rd. Atlanta, GA 30350; mangeldorf@bellsouth.com; (770) 677-4280)

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business: January 2, 2005

2005-1 **Opening Minute** Smithfield Monthly Meeting met for a regularly scheduled meeting for worship with attention to business at 12 Noon on January 2, 2005. Richard Frechette served as clerk, Connie Bair-Thompson as recording clerk, and there were eight other Friends present. We began with a period of waiting worship.

2005-2 **Statistical report for 2004** The clerk presented our statistical report for 2004, noting that we have gained three members by application and lost one (Ruth Smith) by death, bringing our total membership to 40 (12 non-resident and 28 resident). We report that we have about 14 active attenders who are not members. Friends accepted the report. It will be forwarded to New England Yearly Meeting and will be included as an attachment to these minutes.

2005-3 **2005 Friends United Meeting Chain of Prayer** The clerk asked us if we want to participate in the 2005 FUM Chain of Prayer. He read us the information on this included on the FUM web site. Friends decided that we would like to participate

corporately and our first choice date would be during our planned meeting retreat on May 14-15. Friends asked the clerk to ask FUM if this date is available.

2005-4 Marnie Miller-Gutsell: letter of introduction or travel minute For ministry and counsel committee, Diane Gauthier (clerk) presented a draft letter of introduction and travel minute for Marnie Miller-Gutsell in anticipation of her upcoming sabbatical and trip to England and Ireland. With one grammatical change, Friends approved this travel minute:
January 2, 2005

Dear Friends:

Please consider this travel minute for our beloved Friend, Marnie Miller-Gutsell.

Marnie has served as the Pastor of Smithfield Monthly Meeting since 1995, is a recorded minister of New England Yearly Meeting, and serves as the New England Yearly Meeting Archivist. Marnie is following a leading to trace the path of New England Quaker Job Scott, a member of our Monthly Meeting who ministered among Friends in England and Ireland for a year in the late eighteenth Century. Through this journey, she wishes to better understand and appreciate the essays and journals he wrote, and to share that which she has learned with Friends along her travels and upon her return.

We have released her to follow this leading, which is also funded by a grant from the Lilly Endowment's National Clergy Renewal Program. We hope that you will welcome Marnie and will open yourselves to a refreshment of interest in the words of Job Scott.

*In peace,
Richard J. Frechette
Presiding Clerk
Smithfield Monthly Meeting*

The clerk will forward this minute to New England Yearly Meeting. We also ask Marnie to have each meeting she visits sign the back of this letter to bring back to our meeting.

2005-5 Reports from committees The clerk asked each committee's clerk or convener to report on the committee's organizational meeting or to identify a date in January that the meeting will occur.

Kathy Malin (convener) reported that finance committee is scheduled to meet on Sunday, January 16, 2005, following meeting.

For library committee, Jeanne Kinney said the committee will meet on the last Sunday of each month and that work continues weekly on the library.

For ministry and counsel committee, the clerk said they continue to meet monthly.

We are unsure when peace and social concerns committee will hold their first meeting, but

recognize that they met monthly following meeting for worship on the second Sunday throughout 2004.

We are also unsure when religious education committee and Building and Grounds Committee will hold their first meeting.

Young friends advisors have tentatively scheduled their first meeting for before meeting for worship on January 16, 2005.

For outreach committee, Connie Bair-Thompson reported that the committee met before meeting on December 19. She and Dottie Bushnell will serve as co-clerks and the committee plans to meet monthly before the second First Day of each month. Connie referred Friends to page 250 of Faith and Practice that describes the outreach function among Friends, noting that she didn't discover this before the committee's first meeting. The committee feels some of its functions will include:

- * making new attenders feel welcome and making sure they have all the information they need about our meeting. Several ideas about how to better accomplish this were discussed.

- * trying to attract new attenders through publicity, advertising and/or events that will be open to the public. Several ideas about how to do this were also discussed.

- * staying in contact with meeting community.

- * organizing social gatherings for the meeting community. Particular interest was expressed about organizing some sort of small group meetings. The committee is open to input from Friends about what its functions should be.

Connie said the committee spent a good portion of its first meeting expressing concern about our First Day School program because they feel lack of a consistent program may be one of the reasons people don't return to our meeting. Ana St. Germain and Connie Bair-Thompson plan to relay these concerns to the Religious Education committee.

Friends accepted this report from outreach committee and also suggested that the committee publicize the birthdays of members of our community. We ask the clerk to maintain a master calendar of committee meetings and to find a way to publicize this.
2005-6 Review of draft introduction to the new NEYM Faith and Practice

The clerk told us that the NEYM Faith and Practice Revision Committee has requested that monthly meetings review and provide commentary on the draft preface to the new Faith and Practice book. The draft was included in the December newsletter.

Friends decided that we will hold a worship sharing session on the draft preface during meeting for worship on the first First Day in February (February 6).
2005-7 Evangelical Friends mission among Spanish speaking people in Rhode Island

Friends discussed supporting Carlos Moran's leading to establish an evangelical Friends church among Spanish speaking people in Rhode Island. We ask ministry and counsel to consider how we can best help him pursue this leading, possibly beginning a

clearness process with Carlos. If a clearness committee is formed, Friends suggested that someone from Puente de Amigos be on the clearness committee. We also ask the clerk to talk with Carlos before ministry and counsel committee considers this.

2005-8 Food and shelter for homeless people in our community We recognize that there are a substantial number of people who are homeless and without adequate food in our community. Friends expressed a concern that we need to help provide food and shelter to these people. While we do not have a specific plan in mind at this time, we plan to continue discussing this issue and present a more specific plan at a future meeting for worship with attention to business. We also ask our peace and social concerns committee, as well as Young Friends and advisors, to discuss and determine how best we can help.

2005-9 Closing Minute No further business arising, Friends closed with a period of waiting worship, intending to meet again for business on February 6, 2005, God willing.

Respectfully Submitted,
Constance Bair-Thompson
Recording Clerk

From Ministry & Counsel Committee:

As most of you know, in late February our Meeting will be sending Marnie off on a journey to Ireland and England to follow the historical travels of Job Scott. It is our hope that this will prove to be spiritually refreshing for her.

At the December meeting of Ministry and Counsel members discussed how our community will miss her and how we could best fill in the gap while she is absent. In addition to unprogrammed meetings we will be arranging for guest speakers; but we also felt that Marnie as Pastor of our meeting serves as one who is there to be called upon when somebody may have a particular need. This need may be to pray, listen, encourage or to share an individuals spiritual connection. As Quakers we know that communion with the spirit is within and any member of M&C is willing to realize or share that knowledge with anyone who so desires. We are present for and in one another as a Friends Community and we are united in the Spirit of Christ.

We hope you will feel free to call upon us.

In The Light,
Ministry & Counsel Committee
Diane Gauthier, Clerk

Members of the 2005 Ministry & Counsel Committee include: Ron Belliveau (401-769-1755); Richard Frechette (401-769-4433); Suzanne Frechette (401-769-4433); Diane Gauthier (508-883-1189); Jeanne

Kinney (508-634-1076); Paul Klinkman (401-351-9193); Diane O'Hara (401-769-8914); Marnie Miller-Gutsell (401-762-5726); Rhoda Mowry (401-354-8799)



AFSC-SENE 2005 PEACE AD

The AFSC-SENE Peace Ad, to be placed in newspapers throughout the region, is being circulated to friends and supporters for their signatures.

In opposition to the current policy of this government, the ad asserts that the non-violent resolution of differences can better lead to lasting peace.

It is inspired by George Fox's "stand as a witness against all violence", by Martin Luther King's reminder that "we must pursue peaceful ends through peaceful means", and by Gandhi's example of the courage and strength of non-violent action.

We are asking those who share our concerns to sign the ad and contribute funds for its publication in as many papers as possible. Our ability to place ads in local newspapers depends on the amount of sponsorship within each geographical area. Because of this, it is especially important that we "get the word out" as widely as possible within our own communities.

The deadline for signatures is Friday, January 28, 2005. The Ad will be run in papers throughout our area during the month of February. More exact dates will be available as we determine the level of sponsorship. Tax-deductible costs are as follows: \$25 individuals; \$45 couples or domestic partners; \$10 students/low-income.

AFSC SENE is in need of volunteers to distribute copies of the Peace Ad throughout our communities. Anyone interested in receiving copies to distribute should contact the AFSC office at 521.3584 or email sene@afsc.org. A PDF of the *Peace Ad Letter* can be downloaded with Adobe Reader from the AFSC website, www.afsc.org/sene.



To consider mankind otherwise than brethren, to think favours are peculiar to one nation and exclude others, plainly supposes a darkness in the understanding. For as God's love is universal, so where the mind is sufficiently influenced by it, it begets a likeness of itself and the heart is enlarged towards all men.

-John Woolman

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