

Smithfield



Friends

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

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Recording Clerk: Connie Bair-Thompson

Pastor: Marnie Miller-Gutsel

Treasurer: Cindy Keene

Ministry & Counsel: Diane Gauthier

Newsletter: Randy Oftedahl

CALENDAR FOR May/June

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

Meeting Yard Sale Saturday June 25. Save your stuff and mark your calendars now!

Sat May 14 – Sun. May 15

Smithfield Meeting Retreat on Cape Cod

Sunday, June 5

Monthly Meeting for Business

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE FOR SUMMER

Mon June 13:

Ministry and Counsel Committee meets at the meetinghouse 6:45 PM

1st Day Worship Schedule

- May 15 Worship at Meeting retreat in Craigville. There will be no meeting for worship held at our meetinghouse; Friends who are unable to attend the retreat are encouraged to worship at Saylesville or Providence meetinghouses.
- May 22 Programmed worship led by Pieter Byhouwer
- May 29 Unprogrammed worship
- June 5 Programmed worship led by Richard Frechette
- June 12 Unprogrammed worship
- June 19 Programmed worship led by Connie Bair-Thompson
- June 26 Unprogrammed worship



Smithfield Meeting Retreat

May 14 & 15 in Craigville on the Cape. If you have not already received your personal notice and registration form in the mail, please contact Suzanne Frechette (401-769-4433; SFreche105@aol.com).

Letter from Marnie

Dear Friends,

It's Sunday morning in Drogheda, a pleasant small city/large town just little way north of Dublin. There are Quakers here, but they only meet two Sundays a month, and this isn't one of them, so no Meeting for Worship for me this morning.

I'm taking a break from pursuing Job and chose Drogheda for several reasons. First, there are several of the most famous sights in Ireland just a few miles outside of town. One is the site of the Battle of the Boyne, which has enormous symbolic significance for Irish nationalism but little appeal for me. However I am interested in the ancient monastery of Monasterboice, where there are not one but two of the most famous "High Crosses" in Ireland. And there's New Grange, one of the most renowned prehistoric sites in Europe (for details of my visits, see the next installment of my journal). But also, somewhere in the mists of the 19th century, I am supposed to have had

ancestors living in Drogheda.



I've just returned from the north, where the Archivist of the Northern Ireland records and her husband housed me, fed me, and took me around to most of the sites Scott visited. And they introduced me to one of the best known of the Quaker historians in the north, a delightful elderly man who drove me around to most of the rest of the sites, enabling me to see places I couldn't even have found without help, much less have gotten to by public transport.

Dublin, regrettably, had been a different story--and I found it a sort metaphor for some of the issues Quakers face today. First I need to describe the Dublin of 2005, which has changed out of all recognition from the leisurely, relatively quiet place I knew in 1988. Population and pace of life have about tripled since then; prosperity has brought all the problems prosperity usually does--waves of new immigrants, more crime, urban sprawl out into the lovely countryside, much more dependence on cars, people spending more and more time at work and having less and less time and energy for family and community.

And of course, Dublin Quakers have been caught up in the rush, the busyness. Also, the Archives have recently moved to a lovely new purpose-built facility out on the far southern edge of town--the far, far edge. I'm sure Friends had excellent reasons for moving--better, more spacious facilities; climate controlled storage to keep the books happy, and so forth. And after all, they weren't designed with thoughts of wandering scholars without cars (and nothing, I repeat, nothing could persuade me to drive a rental car in Dublin traffic, which is even more insane than Boston's--and all on the "wrong" side of the road).

But---the Archives are now next to impossible to get to without a car. My first attempt required two bus trips and a very expensive taxi ride. There was supposed to be another way, involving a long bus ride and a longish walk--up a narrow curving road with no sidewalk or even a shoulder to walk on. After figuring out this would consume at least an hour going in each direction, I decided it was a better use of my time to visit the city historical library--which turned out to have lots of useful stuff--even some that referred to Job Scott.

But what has all this got to do with Quaker "issues"? Just this--it's sort of a metaphor for the way we have become the "secret Society of Friends." We all have very good reasons for doing what we do, living the way we live--but often we don't like to look closely, at the long term consequences of our choices. Quakers have some valuable things to share with the world--but how often, even with the best of intentions, do we wind up making our message inaccessible in a whole variety of ways--not on purpose, sometimes even with good intentions. But inaccessible nevertheless. Is it time to rethink some of our choices? And remember what Jesus said in Mt. 14-15: "You are the light of the world....But people do not light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to everyone in the house." How could we do better at sharing the Light?

A hundred thousand blessings from Ireland--

Marnie

End of Life Directives

You are invited to attend a public presentation on preparing end-of-life directives. at the meetinghouse on Wednesday, May 18 at 7:00 PM

Recent events have brought to light the importance of adults of all ages preparing documents that state how they wish to be cared for in the event that they are unable to articulate their wishes. Such documents need not be complicated and do not need to be executed by legal counsel.

The presentation will utilize a document entitled "*Five Wishes*," which was developed by the non-profit organization Aging With Dignity. The document addresses all of a person's needs: medical, personal, emotional and spiritual. *Five Wishes* meets legal requirements in all three southern New England states

A contribution of \$1.00 for your own copy of the *Five Wishes* document will be appreciated.
For more information, contact Richard Frechette at (401) 769-4433

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business: May 1, 2005

2005-36 Opening Minute Smithfield Monthly Meeting met for a regularly scheduled meeting for worship with attention to business at 11:45AM on May 1, 2005. Richard Frechette served as clerk, Connie Bair-Thompson as recording clerk, and there were eleven other Friends present. We began with a period of waiting worship.

2005-37 Parsonage repairs Suzanne Frechette told us that repairs are continuing on the parsonage and that Harry Bushnell has done some work on the inside, including painting. Unfortunately, she said that the people hired to put vinyl siding on the parsonage said that some of it could not be sided. They gave a very high estimate for painting it instead and that we will look at other alternatives. A replacement washer, dryer and toilet will be needed.

2005-38 Request to use meetinghouse for Hispanic Evangelical Friends Church – Clearness Committee Report For the clearness committee that met with Carlos Moran (Susan Furry, Jeanne Kinney, Richard Frechette and Carla Moran), Jeanne Kinney said that they had a successful meeting and that they support Carlos' leading to use our meetinghouse to house a Hispanic Evangelical Friends Church he feels led to form. This Evangelical Friends Church will be under the care of Evangelical Friends International (EFI) and not under the care of Smithfield Friends.

Carlos expressed his thanks to Smithfield Friends for their willingness to discuss his leading and to consider sharing our building.

Friends expressed happiness about this opportunity to reach out to Evangelical Friends and to Hispanic Friends. We will have to work out details like:

- Scheduling, especially around minimizing heating concerns
- Cleaning
- Using products inside and outside that will not irritate those people with chemical sensitivity
- Sign in front of the meetinghouse
- Rent and sharing of utility costs

Since this group has not yet formed, Friends agreed to set a period of six months where no rent will be charged.

Marcel St. Germain, Ana St. Germain (tentative), Jeanne Kinney, Richard Frechette and Paul Klinkman or Liberty Goodwin agreed to act as a liaison committee between Smithfield Friends and this new meeting and to develop a written agreement.

2005-39 Request to use meetinghouse for Valley Alliance for Smart Growth Caroly Shumway has requested that we allow the Valley Alliance for Smart Growth the use of our meetinghouse for occasional meetings. Friends approved, as long as Caroly or another member of our community is present at all meetings. We will make our building available at no charge if it doesn't need to be heated, although contributions would be welcome, and that fees will be discussed later in the year when heating is necessary. We request that the group adhere to a statement of expectations about the use of our meetinghouse that we have given to others using our facility.

2005-40 Representatives to World Gathering of Young Friends Kara Price will be attending the World Gathering of Young Friends in England this August as a representative of New England Yearly Meeting, and Carla Moran will be attending the gathering as a representative of the Evangelical Friends International. Friends approved both Kara and Carla to act as representatives of Smithfield Meeting as well, and ask that they report back to us on their experiences at the World Gathering. Friends also approved giving a travel minute to both.

Respectfully submitted,

Constance Bair-Thompson
Recording Clerk

Friends Camp - Camperships Available

The Meeting encourages its youth (ages 7 to 17) to attend Friends Camp in South China, Maine. Brochures are available in the meetinghouse lobby. Partial camperships are available to all of our Meeting family. See the Clerk for more information.

Let God's Voice – and Yours - Be Heard!

An important part of our worship is unprogrammed time. As a community we seek to connect with God, and sometimes God speaks through one or more of us. So it is important to make sure that that inner voice is heard by all. Please be mindful that some people have difficulty hearing. Remember to speak loudly enough for all to hear. Note that if you are sitting under the loft, that cover tends to suppress sounds from beneath it.

Silence

is a natural demand
born of a need for God,
felt by young and old,
in all the world's religions.

In silence we may worship together,
sharing our search for life,
sharing our quest for peace,
sharing God's gift of love.
-Sign at Providence Meetinghouse

Gathering for discernment about the FUM personnel policy:

Ministry & Counsel Committee invites Friends to gather on Thursday, May 26 at 7:00 PM at the meetinghouse for a threshing session related to the Friends United Meeting personnel policy. The issues associated with the policy were outlined in an information packet included in the March newsletter (available at the Meeting's website – www.smithfieldfriends.org, and in the meetinghouse lobby). We are hoping to have a representative of NEYM's working party on the FUM policy in attendance. This session is not intended to be a debate but a worshipful sharing.

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