

Newsletter Summer 2003
Smithfield Monthly Meeting of Friends
108 Smithfield Road Woonsocket, RI 02895

Vol.15 _____ No.150

Parsonage: 762-5726

Internet: www.smithfieldfriends.org

Clerk: Richard Frechette **Recording Clerk** Connie Bair-Thompson **Pastor:** Marnie Miller-Gutsel

Treasurer: Bruce Buteau **Ministry&Counsel** Rhoda Mowry **Newsletter:** Randy Oftedahl

CALENDAR FOR June/July/August

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

OTHER WORSHIP UNDER THE CARE OF SMITHFIELD MEETING OR RI/SMITHFIELD QTLY. MTG.

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

EVERY WEDNESDAY

4:00 PM: Unprogrammed Worship and discussion at ACI(Maximum)

Other events

Sunday, July 20

Sunday, June 29

Sunday, July 20

August 2-7

Sunday, August 17

Sunday, September 14

Quarterly Meeting--Smithfield will host

after Meeting, First Day School picnic at the Frechette's

Bible Study group after Meeting for Worship

Yearly Meeting Sessions at Stonehill College

Bible Study Group after Meeting for Worship

9:00 AM: P&SC Film Series continues



First Day School Picnic

After Meeting on Sunday, June 29 at the Frechette's home

Pot Luck Cook-Out! - Everyone is welcome!

Letter from Marnie

Dear Friends,

Something happened at the Archives recently that struck me as very funny--after I stopped being very annoyed. And there may be a message in it for all of us.

This is the situation: As Friends know, I consider computers to be useful tools, but I'm not their greatest fan. To get my E-mail at the Archives, I must use a computer in the manuscript room that is "mine" on Tuesdays, but someone else uses it the rest of the week. Back in January, the Library did a series of three "upgrades," with two results. First, this machine became much less user friendly--more complicated to use and much slower. (I can now start it up, go back to my little corner in the stacks, do something there, come back, and find it still beeping to itself.) The second result was that I could no longer get my E-mail. Despite the best efforts of the best computer minds in the building, that continued for five weeks. (Gives a whole new meaning to the word "upgrade," doesn't it?) The Library has a computer consultant for just such occasions--he, of course, was on vacation. I have grumbled about the US Postal Service but they've never locked me out of my mailbox.



However, shutting the thing down became the ultimate challenge. Gone was the simple process of pushing three buttons. Now I had to click on "Start" (to shut down? How obvious! I should have thought of it myself!), and *then* on "Shut down." But did it shut down? Of course not. I would then get a series of messages asking me "What do you want the computer to do?" (Didn't I already tell it that?), telling me that I needed to insert another disk to do what I wanted to do (I need a disk to shut down this

flipping machine???) and a variety of others--occasionally it would even accuse me of attempting to perform an "illegal operation." (I confess, your honor! I did in fact try to turn off a computer!--"Ten days in jail and a \$100 fine!") Then, after finding myself trapped in a repeating series of messages, I would wail, "Rick! Help!" (Rick is my supervisor) Then he would come and bail me out, though he had no idea why I was getting all these messages either, since I seemed to be starting out in the right way.

Finally, he figured out what I needed to do: "Get rid of all that rubbish!"--i.e., ignore the messages, including the dread words, "Fatal Error!" (they are accompanied by a big red "X"). Instead I simply needed to close all those boxes that were telling me that I couldn't or shouldn't do what I was trying to do--shut down the computer.

As I drove home on that great day, thinking about what had happened, I laughed out loud. I had let that machine intimidate me (partly because I was afraid I might cause some disaster for the woman I was sharing it with.) But the machine was *lying* to me--it was telling me that I could not or must not do what, in fact, was not only perfectly possible but necessary.

How often do we let our machines, or our jobs, or some other system we're stuck in, control and manipulate us to our hurt and not to our benefit? With summer vacations coming, maybe it's a good time to challenge the grind, or the rat race, or whatever we're stuck in: does it really have to be this way? "I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life..." (Deut. 30:19)

Love and blessings for summer,
Marnie

NEYM Nominating Committee

Each Monthly Meeting is asked to designate a person to serve on Yearly Meeting's Nominating Committee. The Committee meets a few times during the year. The role is to identify individuals in the Yearly Meeting family who would seem appropriate to serve on various YM committees, and to participate in the calling of some individuals within the local area. Please contact Richard Frechette if you feel you might be able to serve in that capacity.



Annual Meeting Picnic!

The annual Smithfield Meeting picnic will be held on **Sunday, June 29**, following worship, at the home of Richard & Suzanne Frechette (46 Cherry Brook Avenue, North Smithfield).

This will be a pot luck picnic. Also, it would be helpful if some friends can bring additional folding chairs.

There is a swimming pool and hot tub, bocce, and laid-back socializing.

For directions contact the Frechettes (401-769-4433 - RFrech@cox.net). In the event of bad weather, we will have pot lunch in the meetinghouse, and will reschedule the picnic.

Quarterly Meeting Will Be Here July 20

Smithfield Friends will host the next Quarterly Meeting, coming on **July 20**. Friends from around the Quarter will worship with us, and then we will all gather for potluck, program, and Meeting for Business. Hospitality volunteers are needed-- please let Marnie know if you can help. ***More details on page 8...***

Yearly Meeting Sessions--New Location (Again!)

New England Yearly Meeting sessions this year will be held from **August 2-7** at Stonehill College in Easton, Massachusetts. If you have not received a notice in the mail (included with the most recent edition of the New England Friend), additional copies can be found in the meetinghouse lobby. Yearly Meeting provides equalization funds for those whose budgets would be stretched by the YM fees. The application for equalization is included in the registration packet. Equalization requests are due by July 5.

Lock the Door, Friends

A few weeks ago, we had a couple of uninvited guests in the Meeting House-- two local teenagers who discovered the downstairs door unlocked. They were ushered out and no harm was done, but Friends, PLEASE---if you use the downstairs door for anything, LOCK IT AFTER YOU! And if you are the last person out, please check to be sure BOTH doors are locked.

New Brochures

Ministry & Counsel Committee has produced two brochures that are available for taking. Both are available in the meetinghouse lobby.

- **Welcome to Smithfield Friends Meeting:** This tri-fold brochure provides a brief introduction to Quakers in general (common beliefs, Friends testimonies, etc.) and Smithfield Meeting in particular. It is intended for first-time attenders; you may also want to share it with friends and acquaintances.
- **Membership in Smithfield Friends Meeting:** This brochure is intended for regular attenders who are thinking about formalizing their relationship with the Meeting community. It gives both general advice and formal instructions on the process of requesting membership, and includes suggested reading material.

Would you prefer an electronic version of Smithfield Friends Newsletter?

Smithfield Friends Newsletter will be 15 years old on the next issue in September! Our mailing list has grown over the years and so has the cost of printing and mailing this newsletter. Therefore, there will be some changes in the format come September – and we're asking all those with email if they would prefer to have an electronic copy (in Acrobat) automatically emailed to them each month. If you would, let me know at randy@oftedahl.com. Alternately, by September you will be able to download the newsletter from our website at www.smithfieldfriends.org.





**Smithfield Friends' Peace and Social Concerns Film Series
Continues on Sunday, September 14 9:00 AM**

Grave of the Fireflies

Smithfield Friends' First Day School sleep-over watched this film and now we want to invite parents and adults to share in this moving and thought-provoking film. Isao Takahata's anime film was widely popular when it was shown in theaters in Japan in the early 1990's. Set in Japan in the closing days of World War II, it tells the story of two orphan children and their struggle for survival in a society on the verge of collapse. A poignant and personal film that shows the tragic human effects of war on the most innocent – those who have no role and no voice in the political decisions of the war makers.

This is what Chicago Times film critic Roger Ebert says about **Grave of the Fireflies**:



"Grave of the Fireflies" is an emotional experience so powerful that it forces a rethinking of animation. Since the earliest days, most animated films have been "cartoons" for children and families. Recent animated features such as "The Lion King," "Princess Mononoke" and "The Iron Giant" have touched on more serious themes, and the "Toy Story" movies and classics like "Bambi" have had moments that moved some audience members to tears. But these films exist within safe confines; they inspire tears, but not grief. "Grave of the Fireflies" is a powerful dramatic film that happens to be animated, and I know what the critic Ernest Rister means when he compares it to "Schindler's List" and says, "It is the most profoundly human animated film I've ever seen."

Message to Young Friends on Selective Service Registration:

The federal government requires that all males age 18-26 register with the Selective Service Agency to be included in a pool of candidates for any potential military draft. Recent international events increase the potential risk of there being a military draft. Persons who fail to register may be disqualified from various federal programs and may face other sanctions.

Quakers have a long history of conscientious objection to participation in war, and some Friends may have concerns about selective service registration. There is no one answer in this matter. The next Quarterly Meeting, to be held at Smithfield Meeting on Sunday afternoon, July 20, will be focused on the Selective Service System, and we encourage you to come to both listen and share thoughts at that session. You are welcome to invite non-Quaker friends to this session as well.

Smithfield Meeting has also previously minuted its willingness to maintain records of correspondence and other materials from individuals wishing to establish a record of his/her commitment to conscientious objection to war.

The following minute from last Sunday's meeting for business has relevance to the P&SC Committee:

2003-36 Letter from NEYM Peace and Social Concerns Committee relating to Selective Service Registration

The clerk read a letter from the New England Yearly Meeting Peace and Social Concerns Committee regarding the US Patriot Act and Selective Service Registration. He also read a minute from the 1980 New England Yearly Meeting on Selective Service registration as well as a recent minute from the Connecticut Valley Quarterly Meeting. Friends discussed whether Smithfield Monthly Meeting should actively provide guidance and/or support to young Friends who feel conflicted about registering for the Selective Service.

Both the letter from NEYM Peace and Social Concerns Committee and Connecticut Valley minute mention that there is a bill being considered in Massachusetts that would deny a driver's license to those young men between the ages of 18 and 26 who have not registered with Selective Service. Friends are particularly alarmed by this and feel that it unfairly penalizes those who are religious conscientious objectors.

The clerk asked if we want to take any action to guide and support young people in our meeting and in the wider community who are religious conscientious objectors. Friends agreed to make Selective Service registration the topic for the next RI-Smithfield Quarterly Meeting, which we are hosting. The clerk will pass our concerns to our Peace and Social Concerns Committee. The clerk will also write something for the newsletter on this issue and will also remind Friends that our meeting accepts letters from young people stating their conscientious objection to war. Richard Frechette temporarily stepped away from his role as clerk to remind us of Quakers' long-standing tradition of supporting those who are conscientious objectors and to encourage us to continue to provide this support locally. Marnie Miller-Gutsell, who is the archivist for New England Yearly Meeting, noted that Friends in New England have provided support for conscientious objectors since the American Revolution.

Friends expressed a desire to begin researching how we might bring a minute to New England Yearly Meeting to use the Fund for Sufferings to aid conscientious objectors. We will bring our concerns to our Peace and Social Concerns Committee for them to consider at their meeting on the next First Day. We will also plan to call a meeting for worship with attention to business to consider this minute at the rise of meeting on June 22, 2003.

Addendum:

I've attached the Minute from Connecticut Valley Quarter on this matter. The Mass legislation is Senate #1275. I also checked the RI legislative website to see if such a bill was also introduced in RI, and was shocked to find that an almost verbatim bill was PASSED AND MADE LAW in the last legislative session! I've attached the law (31-10-47). There is, in fact, a bill introduced this year that would delete that language (2003-H-5570), introduced by Tejada et al, but it looks like that bill never made it out of Committee.

At any rate, as you will read in the minute, we will have a called meeting for business on June 22 – primarily to address the matter of Yearly Meeting involvement, but also to consider further anything else about this topical area. Any guidance that the P&SC Committee to provide to the Meeting would be greatly appreciated.

I've taken the liberty to copy at least some of the members of the committee, but I don't believe I covered the full list of members.

*In peace,
Richard Frechette*

*Connecticut Valley Quarterly Meeting
of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
New England Yearly Meeting*

We find guidance in the New England Yearly Meeting of Friends minute approved in 1980 and stating:

Believing in the law of love, and striving to live "in the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars, we in the New England Yearly Meeting of Friends are deeply opposed to war and the preparation for war, including military conscription and registration for conscription. We know that many young people who are legally required to register for the draft hold strong moral scruples against war. We reaffirm our long-standing support for those, both Friends and non Friends, whose consciences lead them to reject participation in the armed forces. We encourage them to follow their consciences, and we stand ready to help, to the best of our ability, with information, counseling, and spiritual and practical support.

On May 4, 2003, at our Meeting for Business, the Connecticut Valley Quarterly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends approved the minute below to express our continued concern with this Issue:

Friends at the Connecticut Valley Quarterly Meeting are concerned about the effects of a new program that Selective Service is initiating nationwide that would automatically register men for Selective Service when they apply for a driver's license. The effect of such legislation would deny a driver's license to any man between the ages of 18 and 26 who cannot with a clear conscience register for Selective Service. We regard this as an effort to coerce young men into registering without an opportunity to reflect on the moral implications that service in the military entails. We view with alarm the expansion and increasing severity of state and federal measures to penalize non-registrants who are religious conscientious objectors. We emphasize the responsibility of governments to uphold the free exercise of religion guaranteed by the United States Constitution, and the human right of conscientious objection recognized as derived from freedom of religion and conscience by the United Nations. We reaffirm our loving support of those who are faithful to our peace testimony in the face of these challenges.

-Bonner McAllester

Clerk, Connecticut Valley Quarterly Meeting

AFSC EVENTS

AFSC Around the World: Conversations with National and International Directors of the AFSC

THURSDAY, JUNE 19, 7-9pm, Providence Friends Meeting House, 99 Morris Ave, Providence. Join us for an unprecedented opportunity to meet and talk to a visiting delegation of AFSC's national and international directors, including AFSC General Secretary Mary Ellen McNish, International Programs Director Martin Garate, and Peacebuilding Unit Director Mary Lord. Members of the delegation oversee AFSC's broad range of national and international programs including aid to landmine victims in Cambodia, conflict resolution work in Mozambique, and peace activism throughout the U.S. Members of the delegation will discuss the direction of the peace and justice movement in the U.S., and around the world.



AFSC's "Peace is Patriotic" Annual Picnic,

FRIDAY, JULY 4, 4pm-8pm, Providence Friends Meeting House, 99 Morris Ave., Providence. Food (veggie & meat) and music for the whole family. Requested donation: \$10 per person (regular); \$5 per person (student or low income).

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business: June 1, 2003

2003-30 Opening Minute

Because of scheduling conflicts, Smithfield Monthly Meeting elected not to hold our regularly scheduled meeting for worship with attention to business on May 4, 2003. We met for a regularly scheduled meeting for worship with attention to business at 12:15PM on June 1, 2003. Richard Frechette was presiding clerk, Connie Bair-Thompson was recording clerk, and 10 other Friends were present. We began with a period of waiting worship.

2003-31 Meredith Taber Memorial Minute - second draft

Suzanne Frechette read a second draft of the memorial minute for Meredith Taber. With some minor changes, Friends approved the following minute:

Meredith Taber



Meredith Taber was born in and lived all of her life in North Smithfield, Rhode Island. During much of her adult life Meredith worked in various mills in Northern Rhode Island. Meredith was a lover of horses and rode in equine clubs for many years. Meredith attended the Rhode Island School of Design for a short time as a young woman and enjoyed drawing & painting. She was also an avid rock collector; her collection included samples from Israel, the Vatican, New Zealand and Scandinavia.

After the death of her second husband, Meredith developed a loving relationship with Lester Taber, a member of Smithfield Monthly Meeting. She attended meeting for worship and other Meeting activities with him, and Friends fondly remember their growing commitment to one another. In 1982, Meredith became a Member of Smithfield Meeting and married Lester under the care of the Meeting. Throughout the remainder of their lives, they were inseparable, loving companions.

In their later years, Lester and Meredith became regular participants in Senior Center Services, serving as both clients and volunteers. When Lester's eyesight and hearing became seriously impaired, Meredith became his eyes and ears. Meredith's quiet and peaceful persona inspired those around her.

In fall 2001, Lester and Meredith made the difficult choice to leave their beloved Rhode Island in order to live next to Meredith's daughter Holly in Arkansas. Lester became seriously ill soon thereafter, dying in April 2002. Meredith's strength failed shortly thereafter, and she soon rejoined her beloved husband. She died in June, 2002 at the age of eighty-six.

Meredith is survived by a son, Robert, and a daughter, Holley, from two prior marriages, and a grandson Howie.

2003-32 Report from Peace and Social Concerns Committee

The clerk read this report from Kathy Malin, clerk of Peace and Social Concerns Committee:

The Peace and Social Concerns Committee is working on a new community forum on Affordable Housing. Our last regular meeting will be June 8th. We will resume regular meetings in the fall. Our video series will continue in the fall also. The Committee would also like to sponsor coffee after every Meeting for Worship

2003-33 Report from Building and Grounds Committee

For Building and Grounds Committee, Harry Bushnell reported that he has begun to work on refinishing some of the pews. Ron Belliveau reported that he had met with a contractor about painting the meetinghouse. Ron also said that he intended to begin working on the remaining parsonage repairs. A few members of our meeting community are also interested in doing some of the work for an hourly wage. We recognize that there may be some problems inherent with doing so, such as insurance coverage and worker's compensation. The clerk said he would check with our Treasurer, who has copies of our insurance policies, and will forward that information to Building and Grounds Committee.

Ron said that he would bring these items to Building and Grounds Committee within the next few weeks.

2003-34 Newsletter copying and mailing

Randy Oftedahl reported that he has begun to look for another job and has set a goal of being in a new job by September. When he does change jobs, he will lose his access to free copying he has been able to access to produce the newsletter. A Friend also pointed out that Marcel St. Germain has been paying for the postage to mail the newsletters and may not be able to continue.

Friends affirmed their desire to continue producing and distributing a monthly newsletter. The clerk agreed to ask Finance Committee to add this cost item to our budget. We recognize that there may be some things we can do to cut down on production and mailing costs, including purchasing a higher-capacity copier distributing the newsletter to some via e-mail or posting them on our web site. Randy said he would include something in this coming newsletter asking e-connected Friends if they would be amenable to receiving the newsletter electronically. Randy will also send an e-mail asking this question to everyone in our community who has a listed e-mail address.

2003-35 Annual Meeting Picnic

Friends decided to hold our annual pot-luck picnic after the rise of meeting on June 29, 2003 at the home of Richard and Suzanne Frechette.

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2003-37 Request for sponsor support from St. James Baptist Church on their 50th anniversary in November

The clerk read a letter from St. James Baptist Church regarding their fiftieth anniversary in November in which they asked us to sponsor an advertisement in the program for their anniversary celebration. Friends agreed to purchase a small ad for \$25.00. Marnie Miller-Gutsell and Richard Frechette will create the advertisement.

2003-38 Closing Minute

No further business arising, Friends closed with a period of waiting worship, intending to meet again for business on June 22, 2003, God willing. Friends noted that our next regularly scheduled meeting for worship with attention to business will be held on September 7, 2003, unless a special meeting is called by the clerk in the interim.

Respectfully Submitted, *Constance Bair-Thompson* Recording Clerk

The Religious Society of Friends
RI-Smithfield Quarter
[Notice of Quarterly Meeting](#)

When: Sunday, July 20

Where: Meetinghouse of Smithfield Monthly Meeting
108 Smithfield Rd (Rte 146-A), Woonsocket, RI

Time: 10:30 AM to (approx) 3:30 PM

Activities:

- Worship
- Lunch provided by Smithfield Meeting - Cookout, weather permitting
- **Discussion***** on Selective Service registration and Friends' Testimony on Peace
- Conduct of Quarterly Meeting's business

*****Discussion:**

This is an open discussion, with knowledgeable resource persons available as needed. **We encourage the participation of young adult and high school Friends in this discussion.** Some queries to consider in the discussion:

- What are the current Selective Service rules? What are the sanctions?
- Do Friends feel a conflict between the traditional Peace Testimony and Selective Service Registration? Are things different than in the past? How so?
- Are our Meetings providing adequate guidance to our young adults of draft age and to those nearing such age relating to the spiritual dimension of this issue?
- Are we ready to provide support to those who may choose to suffer for conscience sake? How so?
- Do we/should we actively provide similar guidance and support to young adults in the larger community?
- Is there a role for Quarterly/Yearly meeting in this matter?

For more information, or to arrange for child care, please contact:

- ***Richard Frechette (RFrech@cox.net; 401-769-4433)***

As many candles lighted and put in one place do greatly augment the light and make it more to shine forth, so when many are gathered together into the same life there is more of the glory of God, and His power appears to the refreshment of each individual, for that he partakes not only of the light and life raised in himself but in all the rest.

-Robert Barclay, Apologies, 1675



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