

Smithfield



Friends

Newsletter January 2004
Smithfield Monthly Meeting of Friends
108 Smithfield Road Woonsocket, RI 02895

Vol.16

No.155

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 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

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, Jan. 11

9: 00 AM: Smithfield Friends Peace and Social Concerns Film Series:
"Uncovered: The Truth About the War in Iraq"

4:00 PM: Meeting for Healing at Uxbridge Meetinghouse

Weds., Jan. 14

7:00 PM: First Day School Committee meets at Meetinghouse

Sunday, Feb. 1

Meeting for Business following worship

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE FOR FEBRUARY

Sunday, Feb. 8

Peace and Social Concerns Committee meets following worship

Saturday, Feb. 14

9 AM to 3:30 PM: "Day of Discernment" at Wellesley Meetinghouse (*see page 5*)

***For 285 years, Smithfield Friends
welcomes you!***

*Smithfield Meeting and some of its pastors in the
late 19th century*

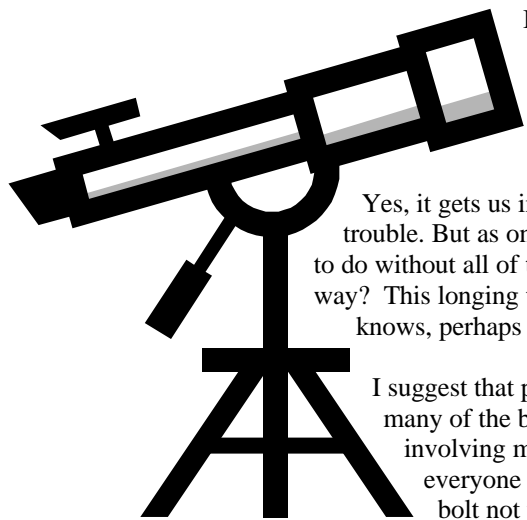


Letter from Marnie

Happy New Year, Friends!

I have been very intrigued by our current efforts to explore Mars. The last time we were there, we hoped to find signs of life. This time, we have settled for a slightly more modest goal: sending a “robot geologist” to search for signs that there once was water in the geological formations that look so much like dry lake and river beds.

Some will ask if the money wouldn't be better spent on feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, etc. I am not one of those, because I believe the richest society on earth has the resources to do both. We have not chosen between Mars and the poor. Rather, we have chosen to bother as little as possible with the poor; the two issues are quite separate.



But that's not really what I want to write about this month. The Mars project appeals to me for a number of reasons. For one thing, our intense curiosity about what's out there is an essential human characteristic. If it's there, we want to get to it. It's a major element of our creativity.

Yes, it gets us in trouble, just as Adam and Eve's desire to know got them in trouble. But as one of my Old Testament professors remarked, would we really want to do without all of the things we have explored, discovered, reached for along the way? This longing to explore is one of the things that truly makes us human. And who knows, perhaps God is using this trait to shape us into better creatures.

I suggest that possibility because the Mars journey seems to have called up so many of the best traits of humanity. In the first place, it is a huge effort, involving many people, working cooperatively because they know that everyone is important: one tiny problem, one wire not properly soldered, one bolt not tightened enough, one tiny mathematical error not caught--and the result is disaster. And there have been many disasters in the efforts to explore Mars. The latest British attempt, the "Beagle 2" was to have landed on Christmas but appears to have been lost; in fact, two-thirds of the attempts to land on Mars have failed--but we keep trying. That willingness to take risks and to keep trying is another trait we need in order to live and to live well.

And now we seem to have arrived safely--in a comically bouncing cocoon of air-bags enclosing a container that unfolded like a flower to release a rover that someone described as a Rube Goldberg machine which also unfolds itself. (I thought it looked like something made from a very expensive Erector set.)

But most of all, I loved the departures. For some reason, we seem compelled to give names to these little machines--the first was "Spirit," the second, "Opportunity." I think the naming is, in fact, a recognition that there is a spiritual as well as a scientific aspect to this event. Their missions are peaceful. And the rockets that bear them are awe inspiring as they soar up from the earth in graceful arcs--they are very beautiful. "Opportunity" was launched at night, to the accompaniment of bagpipes playing "Amazing Grace." I found it oddly and incredibly moving to watch.

What are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than the angels, and crowned them with glory. (Psalm 8:4-5)

I think, Friends, that we are meant to soar.

Love and blessings for the New Year,
Marnie

Jr. High Retreat Coming Up Soon!

The next Jr High Retreat (open to all 6th, 7th, and 8th graders) will take place in **Wellesley, MA, Feb. 6-8**. The theme is "Bread from Heaven." Registration is first come, first serve, so avoid the waiting list--send in your registration soon! See the Bulletin Board for details.



Friends United Meeting
CHAIN OF PRAYER
January 1–May 31, 2004

“Bound Together in Love”

**Our day to pray for a sister Meeting
and FUM’s ministries world-wide.**

Day: **Thursday February 26**
Time: **6:15 PM**
**Following simple meal
at 5:30 PM**

Friends United Meeting
energizing and equipping Friends
through the power of the Holy Spirit
to gather people into fellowships where
Jesus Christ is known, loved and obeyed as Teacher and Lord

www.fum.org

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.

New Woolman Hill Programs

The latest offerings from Woolman Hill have been posted on the Bulletin Board. The first is a weekend workshop on Ghandi's strategies for building a society of peace and justice, coming up on **February 6-8**; leaders will be John Humphries and Joanne Sheehan. Check 'em out!

Think Gardens!

What a pleasant thought for the dreary days of January! Pendle Hill will offer a week long program on "Earth-Friendly Landscaping," from **April 4-9** (what a beautiful time of year to be at Pendle Hill!). Details on this and other Pendle Hill programs on the Bulletin Board. Financial aid available.

Friends Aged 16-35-- Opportunities in England and Europe

The Quaker Youth Pilgrimage for Young Friends who will be 16-18 next summer will take place in Europe in July and August. (Our own Josh Oftedahl went on this Pilgrimage.) For information and registration procedures contact the Friends World Committee for Consultation at 1506 Race St., Philadelphia, PA, 19102. (E-mail Americas @ fwcc.quaker.org)

And a World Gathering of Young Friends (ages 18-35) will take place at Lancaster University in England in August

of 2005. The last such gathering occurred in 1985, and Friends who attended found it powerful and life changing. They still talk about it. For information, see flier on the Bulletin Board.

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business: January 4, 2004

2004-2 **Nominating Committee Report** For Nominating Committee, Connie Bair-Thompson reported the following recommendations for committee and other duty assignments for 2004:

2004 Nominating Committee Recommendations

Marnie Miller-Gutsell (ex-officio)

Building and Grounds Committee:

Ron Belliveau
Elaine Bello
Suzanne Frechette
Barbara Landi
Alex Malin
Diane O'Hara
Marcel St. Germain
Nathan St. Germain

Peace and Social Concerns Committee:

Liberty Goodwin
Paul Klinkman
Kathy Malin
Rocky Malin
Randy Oftedahl
Marcel St. Germain
Nathan St. Germain
Bob Sumner-Mack

Finance Committee:

Harry Bushnell
Bruce Buteau
Cindy Keene (ex-officio)
Kathy Malin
Rhoda Mowry
Randy Thompson

Religious Education/Youth Committee:

Debbie Chick
Helen Ducharme
Liberty Goodwin
Ana St. Germain
Cindy Keene
Meghan Keene
Jeanne Kinney
Randy Oftedahl
Caroly Shumway
Martha Smith

Library Committee:

Nigel King
Jeanne Kinney
Cathy Sleeth
Karin Sprague

Child Care Coordinator:

Nigel King

Ministry and Counsel Committee:

Ron Belliveau (2004)
Diane Gauthier (2004)
Bruce Buteau (2005)
Jeanne Kinney (2005)
Diane O'Hara (2005)
Suzanne Frechette (2006)
Richard Frechette (ex-officio)

Yearly Meeting Ministry & Counsel representative:

Rhoda Mowry

Clerk: Richard Frechette

Recording Clerk: Connie Bair-Thompson

Treasurer: Cindy Keene

Friends approved these recommendations.

2004-3 **New member - Cindy Keene** For Ministry and Counsel, Jeanne Kinney reported that a clearness committee has met with Cindy Keene and that they recommend her for membership. Friends approved. Welcome Friend Cindy! This led to our discussing a need to better define the meaning of membership in Smithfield Monthly Meeting.

2004-4 **Purchase of a printer/copier/scanner - Marnie Miller-Gutsell** Marnie Miller-Gutsell asked that Smithfield Friends consider purchasing a combination printer/copier/scanner machine. She said our copier is not working well and the ink cartridges are quite expensive. She has done some research and feels that a combination machine would serve us well. The expected price should be less than \$200. Friends approved the purchase.

2004-5 **Quarterly Meeting Retreat: October 30-31, 2004** Richard Frechette reminded us that we are responsible for hosting and planning this year's Quarterly Meeting Retreat while will be held on October 30 and 31. We will begin working on this in the near future.

2004-6 **Meeting for Healing next First Day (January 11) at the Uxbridge Meetinghouse** Friends decided to designate the next regularly scheduled meeting at the Uxbridge Meetinghouse on January 11 as a meeting for healing.

Respectfully Submitted,
Constance Bair-Thompson, *Recording Clerk*

YOU ARE INVITED!!

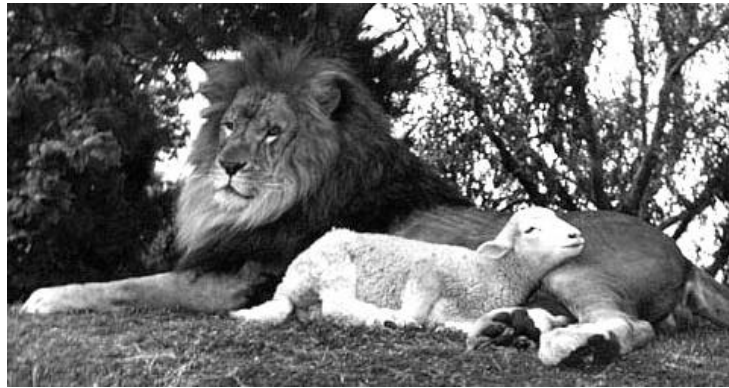
To send representatives from your monthly meeting to participate in a

DAY OF DISCERNMENT

February 14, 2004 - 9:00 AM - 3:30 PM

Wellesley Meetinghouse

On Ways to Keep the Peace Testimony Central to Our Faith and Practice



For several years, it has been increasingly clear to many that there is a divide between those, on the one and, who are led by the Peace Testimony to a practice that appears to some to be purely political activity and those, on the other hand, who feel that the Peace Testimony, while surely a part of Friends' faith, is to be lived out more quietly, in a contemplative way. Of course, there are many of us on the broad spectrum between these two poles. This polarity is visible in Friends United meeting, possibly in Friends General Conference, certainly in New England Yearly Meeting and reportedly in many of our monthly meetings.

As a matter of community health, we need to remove the polarity from this faith-practice spectrum, even as we keep the diverse intellectual perceptions and expressions of faith. Our practice of worship depends in the gathering of individual souls in the presence and fullness of the Holy Spirit, with God leading us in our worship and into the inspiration for our lives. Our witness in life is inspired, guided, and nurtured by our faith. There is nothing in this that suggests that polarity will be helpful in the lives of our communities, a great deal that bespeaks integration of faith and practice.

One way we see the polarity is that those who appear to be merely vocal and active in their efforts to create peace tend to be assigned to our Peace and Social Concerns committees, while those perceived as being more spiritual tend to be assigned to our Ministry and Counsel committees. Others in our ranks may pray for us all from the sidelines or simply tolerate our efforts at evangelism of Peace or of Spirit. However, we are one people. Keeping mindful of the wholeness of our way is hard to do! How can we? This may be part of our day of reflection and discernment.

To build a constructive, diverse, and vibrant conversation, we would like to have your monthly meeting's diversity present. Please consider sending two of your number to this conversation, one more to the contemplative persuasion, possibly a member of Ministry and Counsel, one more toward the activist persuasion, possibly a member of Peace and Social Concerns. Members of NEYM Ministry and Counsel and Peace and Social Concerns committees will join us in this Day of Discernment. Please come!

More information about this event, plan for the noon meal, child care, overnight options, directions, registration are available at the Meetinghouse.

Yours for Peace in Faith and Practice,
Bonnie Norton
Clerk, NEYM Ministry and Counsel

Marguerite Helen
Co-Clerk, NEYM Peace and Social Concerns Committee

Nonviolence Study Series – 2004

Mahatma Gandhi Community Center, 58 Tell Street, Providence

- ❑ **Thursday, January 22, 7 PM**
Mohandas Gandhi: Essential Writings, edited by John Dear
- ❑ **Thursday, February 26, 7 PM**
Out of Weakness: Healing the Wounds That Drive Us to War, Andrew B. Schmookler
- ❑ **Thursday, March 25, 7 PM**
Getting to Peace: Transforming Conflict at Home, at Work, and in the World, William L. Ury
- ❑ **Thursday, April 22, 7 PM**
Cultures of Peace: The Hidden Side of History, Elise Boulding
- ❑ **Thursday, May 27, 7 PM**
Is There No Other Way? The Search for a Nonviolent Future, Michael N. Nagler
- ❑ **Thursday, June 24, 7 PM**
Doing Democracy, Bill Moyer

We suggest you order your books online or through Books On The Square (331-9097).
For more information about the Nonviolence Study Series, call 724-7700, Ext. 6 or 273-4369.

Sponsored by the Fellowship of Reconciliation Rhode Island Chapter.



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