

June 2011

NEWSLETTER



173 N. PROSPECT ST. BURLINGTON VERMONT 05401

Burlington Friends Meeting

NEYM Annual Sessions: 350 Years of New England Friends

New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM) Annual Sessions 2011 meets on the campus of Bryant University (Saturday, August 6 to Thursday, August 11, 2011).

From Jean McCandless, Sessions Committee Clerk:

You are invited to join us for a joyful celebration of 350 consecutive years of New England Yearly Meeting, while at the same time exploring what Friends are called to do to address global climate change.

350 Years of New England Friends: On Friday, August 5, before Sessions begins, we will have the opportunity to participate in celebratory events at the Great Meeting-house in Newport, RI where Friends gathered for Yearly Meeting for more than 200 years. There will be afternoon and evening activities (1 to 7pm), including a work project at the neighboring Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center, a peace vigil, music, and supper. At Bryant University on Sunday afternoon, we will have birthday cake (and local fruit!). On Tuesday evening, there will be a choral presentation by NEYM Friends, *The Fire and the Hammer*, based on the life and writings of George Fox. Throughout the week, Friends can help create giant birthday cards, and be in large group photographs.

Called to heal a broken earth. To help us consider our theme, we will have two community plenary sessions, as we did last year. Sunday's presentation will be by Steve Chase (Putney MM) who facilitated the NEYM April 22nd Awakening the Dreamer Program. The Peace and Social Concerns and Racial, Social and Economic Justice Committees will share the Monday plenary. We will move directly from these presentations into Anchor Groups, which were so successful last year. These groups will again meet every day, to provide a "home base" for shared community, discussion and worship.

Our work together will be supported and strengthened by many parts of the Sessions program. Strong feedback on last year's evaluations resulted in the restoration of the 8:30 am Bible Half Hour. Maggie Edmondson, Pastor of Winthrop Center (ME) Friends Church, will be our speaker. Committee Fairs will occur over two days to ensure more space and time for committees to share their work with all of us. There will be a posted schedule for our new Media Room where Friends can view a variety of theme-related and other issue-oriented materials.

Our Youth Programs will as always provide a rich schedule of activities and learning. This year's Children's Sessions Peacemaker is Nancy Shippen, Fresh Pond (MA) MM, the NEYM representative to Friends Peace Team Projects, and deeply involved in Alternatives to Violence Project. Evening vespers, rocking chairs, intergenerational games in the Rotunda, and the Bookstore's rich selection of books, crafts and curriculum, will round out the offerings of a full, Spirit-led week.

For a detailed program of events and online registration, go to: <http://sessions.neym.org/>



Great Meeting House

www.burlingtonquakers.org

A Tale of Two Journeys

Louis Cox, BFM Presiding Clerk

George Fox is credited with inspiring and helping to organize the Religious Society of Friends in mid-17th century England. But during that tumultuous period, Quakerism had to weather strong cultural and religious forces that were pulling society in other directions—and might have overwhelmed it. This probably is true as well today—Quakerism’s future will depend on how it deals with various cultural and religious trends in today’s world.

This point can be appreciated by comparing George Fox’s spiritual journey with that of one of his English contemporaries, John Bunyan, a well-known Puritan preacher and author of the widely read novel, *Pilgrim’s Progress*. Both Fox and Bunyan were minimally educated but were exceptionally well versed in the Bible. As dissenters in an age of religious intolerance, both were jailed for long periods totaling many years for preaching what the state-supported church denounced as heresies.

As a youth, Fox worked as a shoe maker’s apprentice. He had been brought up to lead an honest and upright life, but soon discovered that such a happy state was more easily hoped for than achieved. Venturing out into the world, he sought advice from one religious authority after another, until he realized in dismay that all of them were only parroting second-hand sources, and did not live in ways that were noticeably different from those who professed no faith or interest in Truth. *When he had lost all hope, it came to him as a revelation that the spirit of the living Christ was available at all times to every person, as a teacher and guide to living in accord with Truth.*

In one of his epistles, Fox wrote, *“Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations wherever you come; that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every-one; whereby in them you may be a blessing, and make the witness of God in them to bless you.”*



George Fox

In short, Fox’s vision was primarily about redeeming the existing world, not escaping to a different one. He was called to kindle the Light that is latent within all living things, acting in faith that the Peaceable Kingdom would become manifest on Earth when a critical mass of the world’s population

submitted to this Light as their primary guide for living.

Bunyan was an apprentice in a similarly lowly occupation, that of a tinker, or mender of pots. He apparently had a wilder streak during his boyhood, taking part in many activities that were condemned as sinful in those day—profanity, dancing, gambling, etc. As he entered adulthood, his sense of guilt and anxiety grew as he became convinced that he had committed unpardonable sins. He too sought advice from various religious authorities but was dissatisfied with the stock solutions they offered in terms of receiving the outward sacraments of the church. *Out of his despair and brokenness suddenly came a sense that he had been rescued from hell by a miraculous act of unmerited forgiveness of his sins.*

Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* is an allegory about a spiritual journey to an other-worldly “Celestial City.” The dedicated pilgrim is subjected to a variety of trials, temptations, and distractions, throughout which the material world and the majority of its human inhabitants are shown as hopelessly mired in sin and base existence. The book’s hero, Christian, is depicted as one of only a few earthly souls who have been endowed with sufficient character and determination to complete the uphill journey to ultimate release from the burden of original sin.

In short, Bunyan’s writing and preaching reflected the belief that was common among Protestants of that day, that worldly existence is primarily a moral testing ground to help separate the sheep from the goats, i.e., the saved minority from the damned majority. For them the physical world had little or no value for its own sake.

Fox and other Quakers carried on a vigorous debate with Bunyan over this and other issues through a series of pamphlets. The fact that the Quakers argued their case very effectively may have been responsible for a gradual shift of many faith groups’ attention to such “worldly” issues of peace, social justice, and care for the natural world. In other words, they helped change the course of history. But their call to “mend the world” and avoid escapist theologies is a challenge that continues today.



John Bunyan

Burlington Friends Monthly Meeting for Business

Minutes May 15, 2011

Attending. Anne Liske, Jean , Christopher McCandless, Jean McCandless Caroline Tasse, John Moore, Jane VanLandingham, Jim Geier, Lynne Silva, Rosemary Zimmerman, Robin Lloyd, Jonathan McCandless, Diane Montgomery-Logan, Lynne Parker, Beth Truzanski, Helen Head, Spencer Smith, Martha Penzer, Honor Woodrow

Clerk: Louis Cox

Recording Clerk: Linda McKenna

Prayerful witness: The gathered community.

Ministry and Counsel: Anne Liske

Committee clerks are reminded to submit a summary of their committee's spiritual journey over the course of the last year to be included in the State of the Society report.

Young Adult Friends: (no report this month)

Peace Justice & Earth Care: Robin Lloyd

As members of the Religious Society of Friends, we believe we are called to be good stewards of the earth. In recent times, we have been overwhelmed and even numbed by the growing confluence of natural disasters with man-made catastrophes. Again and again, the fail-safe systems of human engineering are swept aside by the power of a living and restless planet: levees in New Orleans, well-plugs in the Gulf of Mexico, tsunami seawalls in Japan. The persistent arrogance of our belief in the ability of science to understand, manipulate and ultimately control the forces of Creation is nowhere more evident than in our use of nuclear fission to build bombs and boil water.

After Hiroshima, after Chernobyl, after Fukushima, we must say "No". We have seen entire cities destroyed in a flash, seen wind-borne poison circumnavigating the globe, and seen radioactive waste material created that will bring death to living things for thousands of years.

To say "No" to nuclear fission here in Vermont is to say "Yes" to being a different people: to overcome our fear of powerlessness and become hopeful and courageous. Saying "no" is to become radically more simple in our patterns of living, to consuming far less energy and material things.

If we choose to be a different people it will make it much clearer what we, as Friends, must do:

Join with those called to public witness, including non-violent civil disobedience, to shut down our own nuclear power plant, Vermont Yankee and continue to speak to public officials on this matter;

Encourage local meetings to establish Committees of Concern and other traditional Quaker structures to challenge and assist one another in making the profound changes in consumption that we must achieve to heal the Earth;

And, corporately model simplicity and good stewardship of our meeting houses and grounds through such projects as insulation, solar panels, wind generators, vegetable gardens and fruit trees.

We are made to be an integral part of this wondrous Creation. Let us now chose to take up our stewardship commitment, fully accepting our responsibilities to care for our planet and all people. Let us now chose to join with other Friends, and peoples of good will and understanding, to move forward through worship and through witness to reach our goals.

The Meeting approves this Minute to be forwarded to The Northwest Quarterly Meeting.

The subcommittee will return to the June Meeting for Business with an edited version for us to consider for wider publication

Finance: Jean Berggren (no report this month)

Children's Religious Education: Jean McCandless (no report this month)

Gifts and Services: (Christopher McCandless)

The proposed slate of committees and clerks was presented for seasoning. It is as follows for Friends to consider. If Friends feel led to address unmet needs, please contact Christopher McCandless, Diane Montgomery-Logan or Spencer Smith.

Louis Cox has already served as Presiding Clerk for three years. He has agreed to extend his service for one more year. Friends are asked to reflect on the strength which comes from Friends serving in different capacities within the Meeting. We have a slate which represents many people who have gone beyond the six-year term limit and members are concerned that such

Minutes, May 15, 2011 (*continued*)

consistent leadership is keeping other members from taking on leadership.

It has been suggested that the process of organizing Meeting responsibilities (ie Gifts and Services) be included in the envisioning process. For example, a survey of gifts and interests has been helpful in the past. There is concern about the small membership on some committees but there is also concern that members feel forced to take on responsibility that they are not led to do.

It has also been suggested that a review of the Quaker decision making process could be helpful to both reeducate ourselves as to how we make decisions and to determine where and how our process could be getting in our way.

Burlington Friends Meeting
Meeting our Needs 2011-2012:
the report of our Gifts and Services Committee
Presented for seasoning by Meeting for Business 5/15/10

CLERK – Louis Cox ('08)
RECORDING CLERK – Linda McKenna ('07)
TREASURER – Christopher McCandless ('11)
RECORDER – Peggy Powell ('10)

MINISTRY & COUNSEL

Rosemary Zimmerman, co-clerk ('08)
Lynne Silva, co-clerk ('10)
Paul Hood ('05)
Beth Truzansky ('07)
Martha Penzer ('07)
Helen Head ('08)
Louise Brill ('09)
Jane VanLandingham ('10)

CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS ED

Jean McCandless ('99)
Ellyn Leamon ('07)
Ali Karmosky-Douglas ('08)
Christopher McCandless ('08)

COMMUNICATION

Pat Suozzi, clerk, *newsletter* ('06)
Diane Montgomery-Logan, *website* ('09)

FINANCE

Caroline Tassej ('10)
Marcia Mason ('11)
Christopher McCandless, *ex officio* ('11)

LIBRARY

Marcia Mason, clerk ('04)
Jeanne Plo ('02)
Noelle Glouchevitch ('04)
Jonathan McCandless ('08)
Jean Hopkins ('10)

PEACE, JUSTICE AND EARTHCARE

Robin Lloyd, co-clerk ('03)
Spencer Smith, co-clerk ('07)

PROPERTY

Jim Geier, clerk ('05)
Jeanne Plo ('05)

Charles Simpson ('08)
Christopher McCandless ('10)
John Moore ('10)
Andrew Graham *BFM Scheduler* ('10)
Robin Moore ('11)

YOUNG ADULT FRIENDS

MAIL DISTRIBUTION
Jonathan McCandless ('99)

Burlington Friends Meeting contacts/representatives to:
New England Yearly Meeting Ministry and Counsel:
Jeanne Plo ('08)

New England Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee:
Christopher McCandless ('09)

Quaker Earthcare Witness: Louis Cox ('97)

Friends Committee on National Legislation: Matt
Thompson-Rose ('08)

Friends General Conference: Marcia Mason ('01)

American Friends Service Commit-
tee: _____

Friends World Committee for Consulta-
tion: _____

Vermont Interfaith Power and Light: Ruah Swennerfelt
('06)

Joint Urban Ministry Project of Burlington
(JUMP): _____

Burlington Ministerial Associa-
tion: _____

Submitted for approval by the

GIFTS & SERVICE COMMITTEE

Christopher McCandless, Clerk ('08)
Spencer Smith ('10)
Diane Montgomery-Logan ('11)

Property: Jim Geier (no report this month)

Communication: (no report this month)

Meeting concluded with silent worship at 3:54 pm.

Conversation on discerning our future - May 15, 2011

Friends gathered to think and plan about the future of our Meeting. It was agreed that we would act together as “Prayerful witness”. We considered queries following which Friends shared their thoughts with one other person in attendance.

- How are you connected to Burlington Friends Meeting and how do you want that to change in the future?
 1. We remember Friends who are no longer with us and who carry strong memories of fellowship and care.
 2. The personal connections of people and the good and bad times we have shared together bring us together in a rich and meaningful way.
 3. The community allows each to express their own interpretation of the Light in their world outside the Meeting.
 4. Connected through worship and committee work that brings meaning to each personally.
 5. There are times when the Meeting feels like family and that sometimes brings with it feelings of ambivalence. Despite the mixed feelings, we do need family and the belonging that we experience here keeps us coming back.
 6. Young adult friends provides connection through the fun, energy and sharing of spiritual journeys shared. These shar-ings are unique in a community like this one.
 7. Sharing a spiritual and personal journey is a strong connection. It relies on the formation of trusting relationships and a strong connection includes eldering.
 8. My core identity as a Quaker.
 9. Providing space for individuals and groups that share our world view, particularly around the “peace testimony”.

- How do you want that connection to change?
 1. That we continue to grow together spiritually as well as through our works together. Wants us to move more toward a “faith community” that can deal both with conflict and provide love and forbearance together as a community.
 2. To provide peripheral support to those members who are closer geographically.
 3. Would like to be known personally in the community and to be asked to provide assistance based on individual talents and interests rather than based on ...work needed.
 4. Would like the wider community to have more information about Quakerism and our Meeting and the beliefs we care about as well as the space we have to share.
 5. A connection to the Meeting where a personal sense of loving can be pursued while trust can be built so that eldering is meaningful and helpful. Tom Bassett is a notable model.
 6. That we create many opportunities to talk with each other in whole Meeting groups to share our visions and hopes.
 7. To work on strengthening our individual and corporate sense of integrity.
 8. Elderling is both pointing out mistakes that have not been recognized and seeking out the gifts and talents in each other and supporting the manifestation of them.
 9. Hope that the physical space becomes transformational and that it is shared with the wider community.

Issues that seem to be rising for the Meeting:

- It is about where children and families live in connection to the Meeting.
- The future of our property.
- Deep issues of sharing as a community, including Elderling. Elderling (Lynne and Roger Silva will host a dinner in July on this topic)
- Provide some action steps to the November Business Meeting.
- Friends are invited to consider planning an event/dinner during the summer and invite members/attenders.

Burlington Friends Meeting
 173 N. Prospect St.
 Burlington, VT 05401



Burlington Friends Meeting Events

All at the Meeting House unless noted

DATE	EVENT	CONTACT/COMMITTEE
Each Sunday	Meeting for Worship - 11 am	Anne Liske (497-0154)
Each Wednesday	Meeting for Worship—Noon	Paul Hood (865-0403)
First & Third Sundays	Children’s Religious Education & Family First Day School—10:30 a.m.	Ellyn Leamon (434-7744) or Jean McCandless (862-8665)
Second Sundays	Meeting for Worship for Business—12:45	Louis Cox
August 6-11, 2011	NEYM Annual Sessions	Bryant University

Advices and Queries (NEYM Draft)

Learn about others’ experiences of the Light. Take opportunities to enter into prayer and work with the wider community of faith. No one human being or group has the full measure of the Light.