

Portland Friends Meeting Newsletter

Third Month, 2017

Meeting for Worship: Sundays 10:30a

Adult Education: 8:45am, 2nd & 4th Sundays

First Day School: 10:45am following 15 minutes in Meeting
for Worship, 2nd & 4th Sundays

Connections

Co-Clerks

Jennifer Frick 939-1312
Lea Sutton 642-2327

Treasurer, Contributions

Sue Nelson 391-6116
60 Shadagee Road, #2
Saco, ME 04072

Treasurer, Operating Account

Kathy Beach 741-2940
14 Drew Road
South Portland 04106

Treasurer, Special Funds

Sara Jane Elliot 749-9706

Special Needs Funds

Chris Beach 741-2940
Elizabeth Szatkowski 772-1774

Ministry and Counsel

Kirk Read
207 782 3524
kirkread@gmail.com

Pastoral Care Coordinators

Christina Davis 518-0784

Religious Education

Adults: Sandi Jensen 839-2372
Judith Spross 617-872-8817
Youth: Luke Hankins 207-200-6042
Youth Religious Education Coordinator:
Anne Payson 781-2501

Use of the Meetinghouse

Lise Wagner 232-1778
lise.r.wagner@gmail.com

e-group Coordinator

Patricia Pyle
moderator_pfm@yahoo.com
208-7331

Newsletter

submissions
Heather Denkmire
pfmnewsletter@grantwinners.net

address change details

Dennis Redfield
dennis.lee.redfield@gmail.com



1837 Forest Ave Portland, ME 04103
portlandfriendsmeeting.org
207-200-6544

"Meeting Business: Are meetings for business held in a spirit of worship and prayerful search for the way of Truth? Are all members encouraged to use their talents in the service of the meeting? Do you undertake your proper share of the work and financial support of the meeting?"

New England Yearly Meeting, 1985 Faith & Practice, III: Advices and Queries

Calendar

March 12: Rise of Meeting, Voluntary Carbon Tax Witness launch
Raise of Meeting, First Day School ("Middles") pizza and a movie

March 17-19: Young Friends Retreat, Hartford Monthly Meeting

March 31- April 2: Junior High Yearly Meeting Retreat, Storrs Friends Meeting

April 8: 10am Friends School of Portland auction at FSP

April 16: 9am Easter breakfast at PFM

Monthly

Every Sunday: 10:30a Meeting for Worship

First Sunday: 9a Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business (open for all)

2nd-5th Sundays: 10-10:20a Intergenerational singing

1st Thursday: 4-7p Preble Street Soup Kitchen
Aaiyn Foster 766-9762

2nd Saturday: 5-8p Youngish adults potluck
Bart Czyz, btczyz@gmail.com, 207 899 5937

2nd & 4th Sundays: 8:45a Adult Religious Education
10:30a Children in Meeting for Worship
10:45a First Day School

Join us for the Annual Easter Breakfast! Sunday, April 16 at 9am

Please join the First Day School community for a delicious breakfast to celebrate Easter. Donations collected will support Bradley at Kakamega Orphan Care Center in Kenya (a Quaker facility) and other projects the children have selected.

This year Easter coincides with the beginning of school spring vacation week, so a number of our families will be away. We may need a little extra help with food contributions and clean-up from the Meeting community to make the breakfast a success!



Portland Friends Meeting
Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business
March 5, 2017

We began in silent worship at 9:00 a.m. with 21 members and attenders present.

Co-clerk Lea Sutton read query #3 asking whether our meetings for business are held in a spirit of worship and prayerful search for the way of truth. Are all members and attenders encouraged to use their talents in the service of the meeting. Do we each undertake our proper share of the work and financial support of the meeting?

1. Minutes. The February minutes were received, and no corrections were noted.
2. Treasury: Kathy Beach presented the treasurer's report, with the good news that donations this past month were generous, and that we had some rental income. Here's the financial summary she presented:

For the month of February:

Income: \$4,625
Expenses: \$4,226
Balance: \$ 399

For the year to date:

Income: \$10,461
Expenses: \$11,684
Balance: (-\$ 1,223)

Quick Summary of Income and Expenses 2 months — 17% of 2017	
Year-to-date Income	\$10,461
Percent of Budget	15%
Year-to-date Expenses	\$11,684
Percent of Budget	17%
Balance	(\$1,223)

Kathy also presented information about our endowment funds:

Funds in TD Bank

Capital Improvement Funds: \$26,779.36
Cemetery Funds: \$6,568.52
Leadings Committee: \$10,610.69
Meeting Funds: \$6,568.53
Total: \$50,527.10

Friends School loan

4% loan to Friends School, 100,000.00
(7 year loan, taken out in 2014, \$333.33 interest received monthly) Pax World Fund

Katherine explained that we have three sources of money for PFM:

- Our operating budget that comes mainly from members and attenders in the form of monthly, quarterly and/or annual donations. This pays for the day-to-day expenses of the Meeting.
- Money set aside for annual expenditures that are outside of the day to day operating expenses, namely capital improvements, cemetery expenses, leadings grants, and other "in-and-out" money such as the Easter Breakfast, Meeting retreats, and special fund-raising efforts.
- Pax World Balanced Fund. This is where the majority of PFM's funds are kept. This is a growth and income fund. If this money earns a reasonable rate of return, we can keep the principal to ensure money for future generations to come.

The schematic diagram shows what comes in and what goes out of the Pax World Balanced Fund. We are re-investing \$333.33 each month from the interest on a 4% loan to Friends School of Portland. This year we are withdrawing \$24,000 from the Pax Fund as follows: \$12,000 to augment donations to the operating budget, \$6,000 for Leadings grants, and \$6,000 for capital improvements.

Friends accepted this report, with appreciation for the careful work of both of our treasurers. Concern was raised about the Margaret Jones Youth Endowment, which now has a balance of about \$30,000. We are encouraged to review how those funds are or might be used to support our youth.

We were also reminded how helpful our initial loan to the Friends School of Portland has been in helping the school with its building.

(cont-)

3. Buildings and Grounds: Karin Wagner and Syl Doughty presented recommendations for re-surfacing our parking lot, replacing the current gravel surface to correct several problems: Winter plowing results in the gravel being gradually shoved against the side fence and onto the rear flower garden. The city drain was placed by the city during street reconstruction with the understanding that an attempt would be undertaken by the meeting to control gravel movement into the drain. Summer erosion creates a gully and irregular surface with gravel running toward the city storm drain. Regrading should be done every ten years if the parking lot is not paved.

Syl noted that the volume of rainwater runoff from compacted gravel is nearly the same as from bituminous paving (95% versus 100%).

The site needs first to be regraded to remove gravel from the fence line and rear areas and smooth it all out as a base for any finish work. This will cost approximately \$6,000. (\$1 per sq ft).

Then we need to do the actual paving – either with bituminous paving at a cost of about \$2 per sq ft, or \$12,000, or with pervious pavers, at a much higher cost of about \$7 per sq ft, or \$42,000. The grading cost of about \$6,000 needs to be added to both of these figures.

While there would be some saving on the stormwater runoff charges from the city if we used pervious pavers (now about \$66 per month), we would not make back our added cost for at least 70 years.

For these and other reasons, the buildings and grounds committee recommended that the current gravel parking lot be regraded and paved with bituminous paving.

In response to questions, we learned that pervious pavers or pervious paving (not the same!) would be the most environmentally friendly paving systems. But with pervious paving, we would need to level the lot to remove much of the slope (estimated at about 3% grade), which would require some redesign of the lot and how we enter and leave it. And pervious pavers are made of concrete, so there's an environmental cost in creating these. We were reminded that our driveway already has bituminous paving. What is the maintenance cost of both paving systems? And could the lot be graded so that water runs away from the city's drain?

We appreciated the careful work of the Building and Grounds Committee in presenting this information to us, but deferred action on their recommendation until we learn more about environmental and maintenance costs of each option, and about other possible ways that we might adopt a more environmentally friendly paving system.

Our clerk reminded us of the hard work the committee has already done, and encouraged those of us who feel strongly about how we rework the parking lot to join in the research and deliberation with the committee.

4. State of Society Jane Mullen presented a final draft of the state of society report for our approval. We approved the report as submitted, noting that it will be considered again for final approval at our April meeting for business. Here is the text as submitted:

Portland Friends Meeting remains a strong spiritual sanctuary for a large community of seekers. We write at a particularly turbulent moment in the national, political landscape that has challenged us to respond to social violence and upheaval in ways that bear witness to our Quaker testimonies and faith. As many members and attenders both new and longstanding come back to our fold, we are blessed to have a solid, grounded meeting for sustenance and worshipful discernment.

A place of worship

Our meeting is foremost a community of worshipers whose spiritual fires are kindled and stoked continuously. We have deepened our sense of Quaker history and connection through thoughtful programming that helps clarify and root our spiritual lives in shared values and practices; we have worked to provide attenders with material about our community and how to proceed with membership as the spirit leads; we have managed our cherished building as wisely and efficiently as possible given its age and multiple uses. We have been attentive to the diversity of spoken and unspoken ministry and hold this complexity constantly in the light; we welcome and celebrate our fellow worshipers with warm greetings at rise of meeting and in the celebration of new members annually. To the best of our ability, we conduct our various committee meetings and the monthly business meeting as times of worship guided by love and divine leadings; as our hearts sing in joy and in strife, so do our voices in regular musical worship together.

(cont-)

4. (cont-) *A place of engagement*

Portland Friends Meeting is a nexus of many engaged members and attenders with a broad range of involvements in activities concerning social justice and the health and stewardship of the Earth and its inhabitants. Our meeting has navigated the calls to both individual and collective engagement with pressing issues of climate change and social justice, providing multiple opportunities for activism and education. Our personal (and at times professional) commitments to activism are honored, shared, and enabled through loving outreach and attentiveness to individual leadings; we have invited into our midst experts and activists who motivate and encourage us. Our period of announcements at rise of meeting speaks to the multiple ways in which Friends are called to engage and bear witness to our faith in the world.

A place of beloved community

Our meeting is a dynamic community of many individuals and families whose life stages we mark, celebrate, and mourn in timeless, abiding fashion. We have held three marriages under the care of the meeting, joyous events that highlighted the sacred union that is marriage, both for the couples themselves and for those who served on the clearness and oversight committees; we have seen the health struggles and deaths of longstanding Friends and arranged for their care and remembrance; we have also celebrated births and new members who give hope and continuity to our community. We have also then delighted in nurturing and in being nurtured by an enthusiastic group of young Friends whose often raucous witness to the divine buoys our collective soul. As we endured the anxieties and uncertainties of the past year nationally, we have, through the gift of deeply loving clerkship, held each other in the Light in both corporate, gathered worship and in our individual seeking.

Twenty-two members and attenders took part in a clerking workshop led by Arthur Larrabee at Friends School of Portland. Our sustained ability to attend to the spirit is made possible by the responsible stewardship of our finances and we are grateful for both the financial generosity of our community and those tasked with its oversight.

A place of love and joy

In the late fall when a call came at rise of meeting to assist with tending to fallen leaves and stray branches, members and attenders poured into the yard in numbers too large for the available rakes; many of us volunteer as greeters and to clean and close the meeting house after worship. We struggled for a time with a growing interest in singing and our Adult Religious Education classes overlapping in the same space and time, but a good solution emerged. We spent a very long time looking for a replacement for our nursery care provider, who graciously continued until we found another (although we still need extra adults to be with children on non-First Day School Sundays.) Such are the testimonies that make us confident of the health and well-being of a meeting answering joyfully and lovingly to that of God in all its seekers, celebrating our steadfast commitment to each other and the wider world.

We see regularly that John Woolman's example of love as the first motion, and of George Fox's entreaty to walk joyfully over the earth answering that of God in everyone is possible both at Portland Friends Meeting and in the world that we seek to celebrate, ameliorate, and console.

5. Memorial Minute for Al Norton: We approved the following memorial minute for Al Norton:

Alfred Leo (Al) Norton (81), a member of Portland Friends Meeting, passed away peacefully on Sunday, September 4, 2016, at Brentwood Health Care Center in Yarmouth, ME. He had lived his last year at, first, St. Joseph's Manor Nursing Home in Portland and, then, Brentwood. During this time, Al frequently enjoyed visits from Friends, friends, and family members as he wrestled with, and often rose above, the hardships of his deteriorating health.

Al was born on April 16, 1935, to Earnest Norton and Elsie (York) Norton in Arlington, MA, where he and his younger sister Judith Ann grew up. As a child, Al loved music, playing the piano and trying other instruments. He attended Arlington High School and later earned an undergraduate degree from Boston Architectural Center (now Boston Architectural College). He would also attend the Graduate School of Social Psychology at Harvard and, later, the Bangor Theological Seminary, where he greatly enjoyed his studies and earned a Masters in Divinity. He loved to read, learn, and engage just about anyone in discussions about politics, philosophy or religion.

Al married Joan Doherty, in 1958, and moved to Columbus, Georgia, where he served for two years as a helicopter mechanic in the Army. Al's and Joan's first child, Ann, was born there. The three then moved to Boston, where Al worked as an architect and the family grew with the births of three more children – Garret, Sean, and Martha. Living just outside of Boston, the family enjoyed camping trips to Andover, MA; Parrsboro, Nova Scotia; Prince Edward Island; and the Maine Coast.

5. (cont-) After awhile, politically progressive Al and Joan joined the "back to the land" movement by moving the family to Freeport, Maine. There they bought an 18th Century farmhouse, planted a garden and tended to a host of animals, including goats, a pony, two horses, chickens, a turkey, and three pigs. Al worked at an architectural firm in Portland during the weekdays and tended to the house and farming on weekends and evenings.

Tragically, so much changed in 1974, when Al suffered a stroke at age 39, leaving him hemiplegic, and thus unable to work as an architect or at home. No longer could he do such favorite activities as farming, photography, playing musical instruments, and birding. His doctors said he would never walk again, but fortunately they were wrong. Al learned to walk with the aid of a brace and cane. He forever stopped his long habit of heavy smoking, which he was convinced had led to the stroke. Over the years, Al's efforts to live as independently as he could were truly heroic. For years he managed to drive himself in his own car, going as far as Canada. After he could no longer drive, his insistence on moving himself from wheelchair to passenger seat in a car and later back to wheelchair were acts of which many of us marveled.

Changes in life kept coming. Al and Joan divorced after a marriage of two decades. His time as a lapsed Catholic ended when he began attending Quaker services. After several years of living in Connecticut and then in various towns in Maine, Al met and married his second wife, Dorothy Zug, also a Friend. They lived for several years in a geodesic dome in Rindge, New Hampshire, before moving to Wayne, Maine, where their marriage ended in divorce, as well.

Thereafter, Al's health problems worsened, and his family convinced him to move from rural Wayne to Portland, where he lived in Franklin Towers, enjoying what he called his "million dollar view" and the bustle of the city. He was often seen steering his motorized wheelchair on the streets and sidewalks, taking in much of the city and engaging its residents. He was a member of the Portland Art Museum and a season ticket holder to the Portland Symphony and Portland Pops. He also was a proud member of Veterans for Peace in Portland.

Throughout his life, Al loved to read and learn. In his last months, e.g., he was taking in Martin Buber and Paul Tillich. He was as likely to engage a street person as a professor, a beleaguered resident of a facility as a staff member. His generosity of spirit often lifted those of us around him. The thanks that he freely gave to all who helped him made helping him easy.

Al initially attended such Meetings as Midcoast Meeting in Damariscota, ME, and Middletown Meeting in Middletown, CT. Later, he became a member of Meetings in Worcester, MA, Durham, ME, and Pondtown Monthly Meeting in Winthrop, ME, where he was a member for eleven years. In 2006, Al had his membership transferred from Pondtown to Portland Friends Meeting.

He participated in several ways at Portland Friends, including first as a member of the Peace and Social Concerns Committee and later as a member of the Pastoral Care Committee. Those of us who served with him were touched by his spritely sense of humor, his care for others, and his passion for various political causes. Much in need of care himself, it was striking how much he expressed his concern for others. A number of us formed a Circle of Friends who took turns bringing Al to meeting for worship most Sundays, where amid the chairs we reserved a space for Al to park his wheelchair. Occasionally, the Spirit would speak through him in worship – more than once as he read from his father's writings during his service in the Army in WWI. Each of us thoroughly enjoyed the wide-ranging discussions we had with Al as we drove him to and from meeting and helped him in and out of the meetinghouse. He also faithfully attended New England Yearly Meeting's Sessions each summer, and regularly attended the joint meeting of Maritime Meeting (of Canada's Maritime Provinces) and New England Yearly Meeting, held during Canadian Thanksgiving weekend in early October.

Portland Friends held a service celebrating Al's life, on October 29, 2016. Many family members and friends came and remembered Al, often with humor and always with love. We have missed and shall miss him. His family is honoring his wish to have his ashes buried in Parrsboro, Nova Scotia, his ancestral home and favorite place on earth. May he rest in peace.

6. Transfers of membership: We approved the transfer of member to Portland Friends Meeting for Marian Hall to Downingtown Friends Meeting in Downingtown PA, and for Dorienné Lewin from Newtown Friends Meeting in Newtown PA to Portland Friends Meeting, along with a transfer of junior membership for her children Damen, Ada, and Stone.

We closed in silent workshop at 10:25 a.m., with 34 members and attenders present, purposing to meet again, God willing, at 9:00 a.m. on April 2, 2017.

Respectfully submitted,
Arthur Fink,
Co-Recording Clerk



Bouquets of Thanks

To all who brought soup or bread or led singing, worship or affinity groups on Saturday, March 5th for the Falmouth Quarter Extended Worship: Thank you.

Twenty Friends from three Falmouth Quarter Meetings gathered for worship, fellowship and continued search for centered action in our world. This message of hope from Thomas Kelly's *Testament of Devotion* reflects what we were seeking and want to share.

"Life from the Center is a life of unhurried peace and power. It is simple. It is serene. It is amazing. It is triumphant. It is radiant. It takes no time., but it occupies all our time. And it makes our life programs new and overcoming. We need not get frantic. He is at the Helm."

Waiting Truth

We criticize
fence-sitters,
hair-splitters,
the indecisive.

But, what if they –
not the great majority,
or the oh-so-sure
demagogue,
and we –

are the ones
wise enough
to await [the?] truth?

cb@2003, revised 2013

PFM e-group instructions

To join the Portland Friends Meeting e-group, send an email to: portlandfriendsmeeting-subscribe@yahoogroups.com and our moderator will approve your membership.

Intergenerational "Odd Sundays"

The Youth Religious Education Committee is seeking volunteers to be available to spend time with our younger members and attendees, those older than nursery age, on Sundays when First Day School isn't in session. Greet the kiddos, show them the shelf of crafts and games, and help keep the volume low as appropriate. Interested? sign up in the parlor or talk to Anne Payson annepayson10@gmail.com 781-2501

Mother's helper available!

Maya Denkmire, 13 year old daughter of Heather Denkmire, is fundraising for her grade's eighth grade trip to Montreal. She would love to spend some time with your little one. Please email her at mayajeand@gmail.com if you have a job, or for more information. Thank you!



Problem solving in community with First Day School's "Middles."



NEW ENGLAND YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS QUAKERS

Concern for the Earth's Climate

Saturday, April 22nd

Friends are invited to gather at Friends Meeting at Cambridge for worship, fellowship, encouragement and sharing with a concern for the Earth's climate. Please come and bring good news from your meeting, bring your open heart ready to be called to further witness, bring your despair and hope for renewal. Check NEYM.org for further details.

*The winter tree Resembles me,
Whose sap lies in its root:*

*The spring draws near
As it, so I Shall bud, I hope,
and shoot.*

Thomas Ellwood, 1639-1714



Friends School of Portland Auction

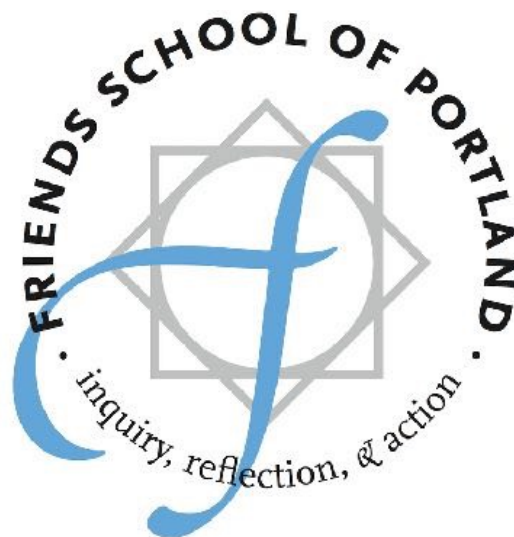
Beginning on March 31st, the **online auction** will be "open" for 7 days [visit the online auction here: <http://bit.ly/2natort>], and will be full of wonderful, creative items to bid on. You will be able to invite family and friends near and far to bid by sending out links via email or social media. **Our Live Auction and Celebration will be held on Saturday April 8th from 10am-1pm.**

The Auction is Friend School of Portland's most important fundraising event. Proceeds go directly to FSP's Annual Fund, which supports the most essential aspects of FSP - among other things, our amazing teachers' salaries and classroom budgets, keeps tuition increases to a minimum, and supplements the tuition assistance program.

The deadline for donation items is Friday March 17th! Our auction item theme this year is to speak our values in the world. Think of a way you love to spend your time, build community and being kind to others - is it sitting around a campfire? Donate a professionally built stone fire pit. Is it taking time to relax with family? Donate a week stay at a cabin. Is it enjoying delicious homemade food? Donate a homemade pie or cake! Is it spending time in nature learning new things? Donate a plant ID or mushroom walk. Is it making art? Donate a photograph, watercolor, piece of art made by you.

If delivering in person, please bring donations to the main office, or direct any questions to the Development Coordinator, Brooke Burkett at brooke@friendsschoolportland.org or 207-558-6214.

Download a donation form here: <http://bit.ly/2lAsXm3>
For a great list of donation suggestions: <http://bit.ly/2l2X344>





Portland Friends Meeting

Women's March,
Augusta, Maine
January 20, 2017

What makes a police officer? Training and expectations of law enforcement

Wednesday, April 5, 6:30 – 8 pm

SPACE Gallery, Portland

Panelist: Sarah Walton, Executive Director of PE+ACE (Policing Education & Active Civic Engagement), co-author of Maine Law Enforcement Officer's Manual, and former Maine Assistant Attorney General

PE+ACE Vision: People in local neighborhoods, municipalities, and counties across the U.S. will develop ways to enhance the well-being, safety, and fair treatment of everyone, including members of law enforcement and their families.

PE+ACE supports the ability of diverse people from all walks of life and political persuasions to increase their understanding of policing and policing outcomes, to come together to build stronger relationships and create thriving, resilient local communities.

PE+ACE will provide everyday people information about policing, civic engagement, and ways to learn more about policing outcomes in the places they live, work, and travel.

[Free educational resources in multiple formats, languages, learning styles, etc]

PE+ACE will provide educational resources about

- 1) systemic factors that may influence taxpayer-supported policing and policing outcomes at the local level;
- 2) possible starting points for learning more about factors that might be significant in a specific local police jurisdiction or neighborhood;
- 3) possible forms of nonpartisan, diverse, and inclusive civic engagement.

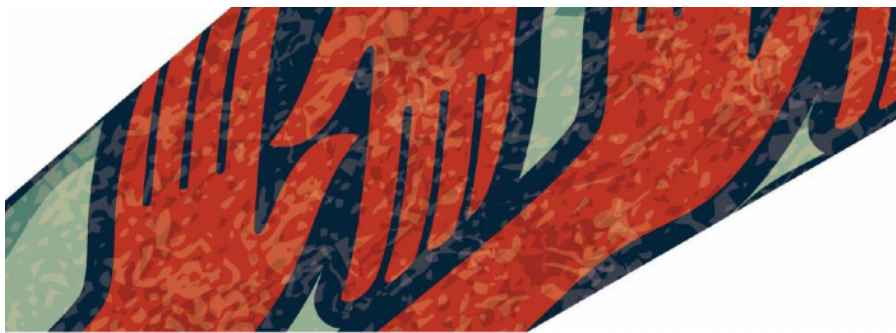
<https://www.racialequitytools.org/act/strategies/civic-or-community-engagement>

About Executive Director: Sarah is an attorney, educator, and author. A former Maine Assistant Attorney General, she was a criminal justice professor for 10 years, she is co-author of the Maine Law Enforcement Officer's Manual. She also held leadership roles in the League of Women Voters. Since 2012, she has lived in Georgia and has advised individuals, groups, and organizations across the country in matters related to the criminal justice system.



Update: Spring Living Faith Gathering

The April 8th Living Faith Gathering will focus on how Friends are living—and might more fully live—our faith in the world, helping us to make more real the Beloved Community to which all are invited. Through worship, workshops, small groups and more, we will increase our capacity for fostering relationships of healing and justice.



The daylong gathering will include:

Multigenerational community-building and get-to-know-you activities
Singing
Youth programming and child care

Programmed and unprogrammed worship
Experiential workshops on spirituality & activism
Fellowship and great food

We are planning workshops on topics such as:

War tax resistance
Supporting the Quaker Initiative to End Torture
Visioning new strategies for Peace & Social Concerns committees
and more!

Avoiding burnout
Faith & work
Immigrant justice

Online registration will open in early March.

Questions? Email the planning team at livingfaith@neym.org



NEW ENGLAND
YEARLY MEETING
OF FRIENDS
QUAKERS

All Maine Gathering of Friends

Hosted by Vassalboro Quarterly Meeting
Saturday, May 6, 2017 at the
South China Community Church
246 Village St, South China, ME 04358

An Opportunity for Quakers from around Maine to come together for an Open-Hearted Inquiry into Racial Identity (with time for Worship and some Quarterly Meeting Business) All are welcome!

Questions? Contact Janet Hough (VQM Co-Clerk) janet.hough5@gmail.com (207) 271-3211
For child care, please contact Janet Hough by 8 PM on Sunday, April 23.

Schedule for the day

8:30 am Muffins and Coffee/Tea
9:00-10:00 Meeting for Worship
10:00-10:15 Welcome & Introductions
10:30-12:00 Meeting for Worship for Business
(Falmouth QM & Vassalboro QM will meet separately)
12:15-1:15 Lunch: VQM Friends will provide soup and bread.

1:30-3:00 Program: An Open-Hearted Inquiry into Racial Identity

Have you ever felt unsettled or uncertain in conversations about racial identity? Racial justice and racial healing are on many minds today, yet within the cultural setting of the United States, and within the Religious Society of Friends, we do not always find welcoming entry points into the conversation. Come join Julie de Sherbinin and Susan Davies and discover that what can seem like a dreary and charged topic is truly filled with opportunities for liberation and joy. Julie and Susan co-led a 2015 racial identity series for Vassalboro Friends Meeting.

3:00-3:30 Clean-up & Adjourn



Report from Adult Religious Education Committee

ARE Committee Members: Judy Spross and Sandi Jensen, co-clerks; Muriel Allen, Arthur Fink, and Rhoda Renschler (Welcome Rhoda!) Please contact Judy Spross (617-872-8817 or at jaspross@gmail.com if you have questions or input for the ARE committee.

February ARE classes

On February 12, 2017, we held the first of two classes on Contemplative Writing, facilitated by Theresa Oleksiw. We asked Theresa to focus on themes of darkness and light, informed by the vocal ministry we have heard over the last few months which spoke to spiritual, political and personal themes of darkness and light. For those who couldn't be at our class, here are the Bible reading references Theresa used and the writing prompts she offered. For each prompt write for 10 to 20 minutes. This writing is for you so don't worry about punctuation, grammar etc. Such writing can help us access one's inner voice. Those who were able to participate were moved by the experience of contemplative writing and the sharing afterwards.

Writing prompts for February 12, 2017:

Isaiah 50:10 Who fears God, walks in darkness and has no light. Trust in the name of God.

Write about a time you trusted God

Micah 7:8 Rejoice against me, O mine enemy; when I fall I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light onto me.

Write about a time you were in darkness and could not see the light/hope. How did you reach the light?

We finished the class by referring to Psalm 37:1-11, patience and confidence in God

Additional suggested prompt:

John 1:5 and the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

Write about a time you stayed in the darkness in order to walk through it to experience or see the light.

On February 26, 2017 Muriel facilitated a class in our continuing Quaker 101 series. The summary and a handout from her class are at the conclusion of our report, on page 11.

March ARE classes

The second ARE class on *Contemplative Writing* is on Sunday, March 12, 2017 from 8:45 to 9:55 AM which will be facilitated by Theresa Oleksiw.



On Sunday, March 26, 2017, Arthur Fink will facilitate a class on Friends and Business. Here is his invitation to those who might be willing to talk with him about this topic as he prepares: "All of us patronize businesses. Some of us work at businesses, or are in business for ourselves, or are managers. Professionals are in business, as are artists of all sorts.

How does our life in the Spirit relate to our lives as we connect with business?" These are ideas we'd like to explore that in an Adult Religious Education Program on March 26. He is seeking a few members or attenders who could offer some reflections on this question, with particular attention to those dilemmas that are not easily resolved. If you are interested contact Arthur "to clarify the experience you'd like to share, the questions that live most strongly in you." He can be reached at arthur@arthurfink.com or by phone at 207-615-5722.

Quaker 101:

Continuation of the Schisms that Rocked the American Quaker World in the 1800's

Schisms were again the focus of the Quaker 101 class held on Sunday, February 26, 2017. In this class, Muriel Allen helped us explore the rise of Revivalism. We examined how this movement changed Quaker faith and practice with its evangelical approach and, ultimately, a fundamental bent both before and after the Civil War. We were introduced to some of the major protagonists of this era such as David B. Updegraff and Joel Bean. Using the survey below consider and sift through the changes for yourself. Were they improvements or not? If you had been a Quaker during the Revivalist Era, which changes would you have elected to approve and which ones might you have rejected?

Assessing Your Comfort Level for Change in the Meeting (from ARE 2/26)

All things that are alive change and the Society of Friends has made some changes over the years. Sometimes these were changes in cherished traditions and Friends wondered whether to speak out against them or accept them. The following is a list of changes, some hypothetical, some actual but all different from the practices currently established in Portland Friends Meeting.

Rate them 1-10 based on the degree of difficulty they would represent for you personally. Would they be "1" OK with You. Or "5" This Doesn't Feel Like the Quakerism I Know. Or "10" This Change Sounds Very Serious to Me. I Better Be at Business Meeting! Or some degree in between?

CHANGE

[] Silent Worship	is replaced by	Pastoral Ministry
[] Belief in Continuing Revelation	is replaced by	Strict Adherence to the Bible
[] Focus on Welcoming Visitors	is replaced by	Serious Attempts to Convert Them
[] Baptism of the Spirit	is replaced by	Baptism by Immersion
[] Belief that there is That of God in Everyone	is replaced by	Only those Who Accept Christ as their Savior Can be Saved.
[] Sinking Down to the Seed	is replaced by	Emotional Encouragement to follow a certain course
[] Kindness and Tolerance toward the Beliefs of Others	is replaced by	Disparagement of the Beliefs of Others
[] Clearness Committees	are replaced by	Hour appointments with the minister.
[] NEYM	changes	The Quarterly Meeting that PFM belongs to
[] Sense of the Meeting	is replaced by	Straight-up Voting at Business Meeting

After you have completed the survey, consider the following queries that Muriel provided.

- 1 Could anything make you say, as some might have claimed during the Revivalist Era, "The Society of Friends is dead!"?
- 2 How does not having a specified creed make Quakers vulnerable? Does the absence of a creed make Quakers strong?
- 3 The early Friends had threshing sessions (different from contemporary Quaker threshing sessions) in which they hoped to separate out those who could become good Quakers. Most early Friends knew the Bible well. They preached to crowds mainly from Romans and John, books they thought most closely reflected their own philosophy. Brinton talked about people who are Quakers even if they don't know it yet. With this context, consider these queries:
 - a. Were you one of the Quakers Brinton described?
 - b. Does this early kind of conversion differ from the revivalists?
 - c. Does this use of the Bible differ from the revivalists?

Compare your answers with those attending ARE. Top cherished beliefs and Practices @PFM were 1. Belief in Continuing Revelation. 3. Kindness & Tolerance Toward the Beliefs of Others. 4. Sinking Down to the Seed. 5. Sense of the Meeting at Business Mtg. They were all within a few points of each other. Did you agree? Sense of the Meeting is one practice common to all Quaker Meetings even today.

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Address Service Requested

Next newsletter deadline:
Tuesday, April 4th, 11:59pm

submissions: pfmnewsletter@grantwinners.net

