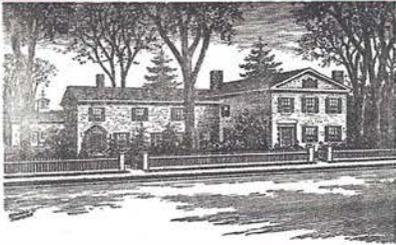


September 2016
NEWSLETTER



173 N. PROSPECT ST. BURLINGTON VERMONT 05401

Burlington Friends Meeting

BFM hosts Racism Workshop October 15th

BURLINGTON FRIENDS MEETING is pleased to offer a day-long workshop on Racism in our Society, Saturday, October 15, at the Meeting House, for everyone in our Meeting. The hours are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., with a potluck lunch. This workshop is free. The description and workshop leaders are listed below.

Please RSVP to Ruah Swennerfelt at <ruahswennerfelt@gmail.com> by September 15. The workshop is limited to 35 people. If we don't have 35 registered by September 15, we'll offer the remaining spots to Friends in nearby Meetings, so be sure to register on time!



Vanessa Julye

This is work we have committed to do and we began by reading *The New Jim Crow* last winter. Burlington Friends also supported Ruah's attendance at the White Privilege Conference in Philadelphia in April. This is important work for us and I hope you will consider attending.

Ruah Swennerfelt
Co-clerk, BFM Ministry & Counsel

Workshop focus

Structural racism touches and implicates everyone in our society

What are some of the systems our ancestors established centuries ago that we maintain today? How do they continue to affect us today? What if anything can we or should we do to change these structures? Why are several Yearly Meetings in the United States of America devoting their time and energy to examine White Privilege? What are Friends doing to address White Privilege and Supremacy?

Workshop leaders

Vanessa Julye

Nurturing Ministries Coordinator
Ministry on Racism and Youth Ministries
Programs, Friends General Conference

Lena Glickman

Ministry on Racism Support Specialist
Quaker Voluntary Service Fellow



Lena Glickman

SUNDAY MORNING, October 16 Vanessa Julye will give a talk. 9 to 10:30 a.m. All are welcome. Childcare will be provided.

- Structural racism touches and implicates everyone in our society
- What are some of the systems our ancestors established centuries ago that we maintain today? How do they continue to affect us today? What if anything can we or should we do to change these structures? Why are several Yearly Meetings in the United States of America devoting their time and energy to examine White Privilege?
- What are Friends doing to address White Privilege and Supremacy?

Visit us at <www.burlingtonquakers.org>

Recent events at Burlington Friends Meeting



Volunteers for Peace

Once again, Burlington Friends Meeting hosted more than a dozen young people from North America, Europe, Asia, and Africa who came to Burlington to do community organizing work. One Sunday in June, BFM Friends joined them in a potluck meal after Meeting, and got to know one another through queries written on slips of paper drawn from a jar. Example: *“What do you like most about the country you’re from?”* In response to comments by a young man from Poland, BFM attender Stella Penzer (red hat, lower left) sang a Polish folksong that she learned when she was a young girl living in Poland.



Clerking: It’s More Than Just Meeting for Business

Burlington Friends Meeting will host a workshop on clerking with Jan Hoffman and Jackie Stillwell on Saturday, October 29, 2016 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. There is no admission charge, and all are welcome.

- What part do clerks play in nurturing a faith community where worship feeds the work and work feeds the worship?
- How are the specific disciplines of meeting for business grounded in our faith?
- What disciplines of worship apply in meetings for business? What additional disciplines are needed?
- What joint responsibilities do we share in meeting for business?
- What are the "nitty gritty" responsibilities of clerking before, during and after meeting for business?

In this participatory workshop Jan and Jackie hope to address these questions and any others you may bring. These can range from general questions like “What is ‘unity’ anyway?” to “How might one respond to a chronic objector?” to “What do I do when my faith in the process gets wobbly?”

This workshop is free and open to Northwest Quarter and anyone else who would like to come. It will be held in Burlington at the Meeting House, 173 N. Prospect St. Snacks, a light lunch, and tea / coffee will be provided but please bring a water bottle and other personal necessities with you.

Contact Abby Matchette at abby.matchette@gmail.com to RSVP and with any questions.

July 8, 2016 Burlington Friends Monthly Meeting for Business

Attending: Louis Cox, Jeanne Plo, Paul Hood, Stella Penzer, Martha Penzer, Elinor Yahm, Holly Gorton, Linda McKenna, Lyna Lou Nordstrom, Tom Sharpley, Charles Simpson, Jane VanLandingham, Linda Kay Stone, Jean Hopkins, Jean McCandless, Jonathan McCandless, Hedi Misouni, Abby Matchette, Christopher McCandless.

Presiding Clerk: Jeanne Plo

Recording Clerk (acting): Louis Cox

Inspirational reading by the clerk

“Faith into Practice in Social Concerns: Religious Experience Comes First,” from NEYM *Faith & Practice*, P. 176–177

Welcome and announcements

David Miller, who is away this week at a conference in Bufflao, N.Y., has announced that he will have to step down as co-clerk, as he and Sophie Quest are in the process of separating and he plans to move back to Canada in the near future. The Gifts & Service Committee will begin work soon to find a replacement.

This is a huge loss for Burlington Friends, and we wish to explore what we can do to support David in recognizing and appreciating his work and influence among us. There are strong feelings to be addressed in this matter, as well as practical matters of adjusting to the loss of the central role that David has played in this Meeting. We want to respect the privacy of David and Sophie, especially since they were married under the care of this Meeting. But our desire to hold them in the Light leads us to ask more about how the Meeting has attended to the difficulties that led them to the decision to separate. The co-clerk of Ministry & Counsel said that a clearness committee has met with David and Sophie a number of times over the past several months. Some Friends noted today that the underlying issue is what it means to take a marriage under the care of the Meeting, a question that will never be fully answered but can lead us to better support couples in the future. This work is important for the health of the Meeting, not just in times of crisis. An earlier Meeting pamphlet on care for marriages in the Meeting might be revisited. The clerk asked that these concerns be considered by Ministry & Counsel in its coming meetings.

While feeling sorrow over the separation, one Friend said the way this matter is being handled has restored his faith in the Quaker process that guides Friends in such matters.

This point in the agenda there was to have been discussion of a draft paper that David Miller has been working on, about “The Great Transformation” or

systemic change that human society must undergo soon in the face of many serious global, and how Friends can speak to that issue. However, in view of the news of the personal transformation that David and Sophie are undergoing, it was decided to postpone the discussion of David’s paper on planetary transformation. When David returns for a visit, we will ask for his participation in the discussion, at a time that is convenient for him and us.

Ministry & Counsel—Linda McKenna

After Meeting on Sept 25, 2016 there will be a welcoming party at Bill Williams and Holly Gorton’s house. There will be refreshments, as well as help from guests to move and stack a pile of firewood that was dumped in the wrong place.

—Holly Gorton, part of a clearness committee for Ruah Swennerfelt read the draft of a letter in approval and support for Ruah’s leading to work within the international Transition Town movement, particularly among faith communities. The letter, dated June 12, 2016, asked BFM Friends to support and unite with Ruah’s concern for a transition to a post-petroleum world that is both joyful and sustainable. The clerk will use the clearness committee’s letter to draft a Travel Minute for Ruah.

Proposed Travel Minute: [see draft] Approved.

—Friends approved the appointment of Jean Hopkins as representative to the Burlington Area Ministerial Alliance (BAMA) and expressed support for her work on the alliance’s concern for human trafficking.

Friends are also holding Linda McKenna in the light as she is about to undergo carpal tunnel surgery, followed by knee surgery in the fall. The Meeting may need to provide practical as well as spiritual support. During recovery, Linda will be prevented from driving, and even minor things like combing one’s hair can be very difficult.

Treasurer’s Report—Christopher McCandless

Friends expressed appreciation for the addition of grid lines that makes the Treasurer’s report easier to read.

—Contributions are at 31 percent, and at the half-way point in the year we generally ought to be at 50 percent, however, Friends are seasonal creatures who tend to give at the end of the year in November and December, so this is very typical and the Treasurer is not worried at this point.

—Ministry & Counsel spent \$979 of its \$500 budget, but that figure includes expenses related to the special program by Peterson Toscano expenses;

July 2016 business, next page >>

>> **July 2016 business**, from page 3

otherwise they are close to their targeted expense.

—At the bottom of the report it shows that BFM spent more than taken in so far; however \$5,000 is a carry-over from last year. The Treasurer said he is always open to suggestions for how to show this kind of information in ways that are more understandable.

—Property: Outside-group usage fees are down somewhat, but the Property Committee is doing well in terms of budget projections. An unexpected bill for repairs and maintenance of the Bassett House, almost \$6,200 for in-house work, nevertheless was lower than a commercial bid for the same work.

—We have about \$5,000 less than at the beginning of the year, but we just deposited \$6,000 on July 1, so we're about where we were six months ago.

—Under Friends Concerns, Small Potatoes has a balance of \$1,300, which reflects many generous donations from Small Potatoes supporters. Mary Chambers has received help for her studies at Mt. Holyoke College; tax-deductible contributions can be made again to that concern, which would be greatly appreciated by the family. Layla Rafaoui recently graduated from Guilford and has applied for scholarship funds from Yearly Meeting for graduate school. It is not known at this time whether there will be a need for Friends to contribute again to a concern for Layla's school expenses.

Friends accepted the Treasurer's report.

Peace, Justice, & Earthcare—Elinor Yahm.

Building on Ruah's new *Rising to the Challenge* book, as well as the urgings of FCNL and Kabarak Call of the World Gathering of Friends, Peace, Justice, and Earthcare has scheduled a potluck meeting for September 18th to discuss what the Meeting could do to be more sustainable. This meeting will be followed by another meeting to talk about what we can do personally to live more sustainably. There seems to be a lot of interest in exploring new ways of thinking as well as specific steps that can be taken.

Clerk's Committee:

There will be a General Clerking workshop at Burlington Friends Meeting on Saturday Oct 29, led by Jan Hoffman and Jackie Stillwell. The workshop is open to the whole of the Northwest Quarter and anyone else who would like to come. We have talking about having a "clerking" workshop, but what Jan and Jackie want to talk about is how Friends do business together, how we all have clerking responsibilities. We are all interconnected in the business process. It is good news that Jan has agreed to come out of semi-

retirement to do this. Photos and announcement about the workshop will be provided for the newsletter and website.

Property Committee—Christopher McCandless

The item of interest to the whole Meeting is the issue of parking. The Meeting was notified a few months ago that neighbors have complained of its failure to comply with a City zoning ordinance prohibiting parking on the grass. A parking plan is needed to be approved by the City to allow continued use of six spaces along the southern edge of the driveway. Gravel has been spread in parking spaces in the past, but that is not sufficient to comply with City zoning requirements, the code enforcement administrator has ruled. First we have to document 15 years of relatively continuous use of that area for parking, as grounds for pleading an exception to strict enforcement of an ordinance that was enacted only a few years ago to discourage parking on lawns at college student housing. The Meeting needs testimonials from witnesses to be presented at a meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals. If approved, six more parking spots would be a great benefit to the Meeting and its tenants.

There will be a Volunteers for Peace potluck Sunday, July 17th, 12:30 p.m.

Other announcements.

At the Rokeby Museum in Ferrisburgh, there will be an exhibit of Stephen Foster Stevens's Quaker-style furniture this afternoon. Other announcements are posted on bulletin board. There is a job opening at Friends Meeting at Cambridge (Mass.) in religious education. Also the Young Adult Friend Engagement coordinator of New England Yearly Meeting interesting in talking with Burlington Friends. This is a good opportunity for BFM, considering all the universities and colleges in the area and the fact that we have no real outreach program for college students.

NEYM sessions will be held August 6th through 11th in Castleton, Vt. Friends can register online. Those in need of financial help may talk to BFM treasurer.

Cuba Yearly Meeting is celebrating its 116th anniversary this year. Burlington Friends might be able to send our special greeting if not a representative. Also, Cuban Friends are going to be at YM sessions.

The meeting for business concluded at 2:15 p.m. with silent worship. •

Burlington Advocacy Group of FCNL

FRIENDS COMMITTEE on National Legislation (FCNL) has been forming advocacy groups all over the country to lobby federal legislators about the issue of mass incarceration and mandatory minimum sentences. They trained a group of volunteers from the Burlington area during last June and July.

About ten people went through the four sessions of FCNL Advocacy training. Most of these volunteers came from sources outside the Quaker community. Catherine Bock and Elinor Yahm were the two from our Meeting who completed the training.

The first lobbying event took place in late August, when the group met with George Twig from Representative Welch's office. We all felt that the meeting went very well and that we were on our way to developing a working relationship which was one of our primary goals. There is a meeting planned with Diane Derby from Senator Leahy's office on Sept 13th. Both Welch and Leahy are supporting sentencing reforms and have co-signed relevant bills. This is an issue that has bi-partisan support and could come up this session.

I think all who went through the training and remain involved with the FCNL staff have been very impressed. We plan to continue letting the Meeting know what is happening and would certainly welcome additional participation and suggestions.

—Elinor Yahm

Welcoming for Bill & Holly

COME AND WELCOME new members to our community—Holly Gorton and Bill Williams. **It's a potluck and a kid-friendly event!**

When and where: 2 p.m., Sunday, September 25th, at their home, 11 Varney Rd., Jericho, Vt., not very far off Route 15. For driving directions try MapQuest. Their home number is 899-2891. We could arrange to carpool from the Meeting to their home and back.

Bill and Holly had firewood delivered, but it was dumped in the wrong place on their property. The right place is not too far from where the wood is. So, those who are able will have fun moving the wood. The rest will be setting up the meal. And we'll all have fun together.

Sometime during the afternoon Holly and Bill will share some stories of their lives.

—Ruah Swennerfelt, 802-922-2259
<ruahswennerfelt@gmail.com>

Ministry & Counsel Retreat

MINISTRY & COUNSEL enjoyed a beautiful day at the home of Ruah Swennerfelt and Louis Cox in July. The sun shone and the breeze blew and the reflections and ideas swirled around us. We began by offering our personal strengths and gifts and we included a wide range of passions. Among them are building community and furthering equal rights and justice for all, maintaining a strong spiritual presence including at mid-week worship, careful and thoughtful listening to all voices among us, non-violence and conflict resolution and a search for guidance which can and will lead us into a co-mingling of spiritual understanding and action. As a group, we also hope to strengthen our ties to the wider Quaker community including the Quarterly and the Yearly Meeting.

We enjoyed a summary of NEYM sessions and the Bible Half-Hours, which were led by Doug Gwyn. He inspired all there to “be the hands of God” and to proceed into radical faithfulness. Issues which he included over the course of the days included climate issues, the inclusion of those called into radical witness, and the place of white supremacy in colonization. These are issues that our committee will continue to focus on during the next few months.

As well as mid-week worship, which is in the care of John Sharpless, we have initiated a Worship Group at The Residence at Shelburne Bay, to meet on the fourth Thursday of each month. All are welcome at 10:30 a.m., where there will be 30 minutes of worship and 30 minutes of discussion.

It may be of interest to Friends, that we have three Friends who have generously accepted the responsibility of visiting friends in the hospital. Jean Hopkins, Jeanne Plo, and David Hamblin have all completed the requirements necessary and can be called upon any time for spiritual support while in the hospital.

Some future topics that we are addressing include;

—White Privilege (workshop on October 15 with Vanessa Julye),

—A multi-week course/conversation on the history and practice of Quakerism

—Organizing a “friendly sixes” structure

—Further instruction and support for Advance Directives and other “end of life issues”

—Linda McKenna

2016 New England Yearly Meeting Epistle

Dear Friends everywhere,

We send you joyful greetings in the name of our inward Teacher, known among Friends today by many names.

New England Yearly Meeting held its 356th sessions August 6-11, 2016, at Castleton University, Castleton, Vermont, exploring the theme, “Being the hands of God—a Call to Radical Faithfulness.”

A parallel call is found in a poem attributed to Teresa of Avila:

*Christ has no body now on earth but yours,
No hands but yours,
No feet but yours.*

*Yours are the eyes through which Christ’s
compassion looks out at the world.*

*Yours are the feet with which He is to go about
doing good;*

*Yours are the hands with which He is to bless
people now.*

As a unifying thread running through most of the week’s programs and activities, the theme of radical faithfulness reminded us that what we are doing together as a Yearly Meeting is holy work. In these unsettled but holy times of crisis and decision we can be the hands of God only when we place ourselves in the hands of God.

In the reading of memorial minutes for New England Friends who had passed away recently, we were mindful of George Fox’s advice to be “patterns and examples” of Spirit-filled lives and thus become blessings to the world. Many of those Friends were exemplary not just for their lifelong dedication to good causes, but also for their willingness to become instruments of divine will—even when that path promised to be difficult, discouraging, and costly.

Yearly Meeting programs and activities took us deeper, into the radical commitment and openness that are required if we are to be transformed to minister to a broken and suffering world. The wide range of topics and current issues that we considered during the week all led to the basic questions: “What are we called to do about this

concern as individuals and faith communities?” “What barriers—both personal and organizational—are holding us back from this work?” “What are specific steps that we need to be taking, now?” Plenary speakers, Yearly Meeting staff, and anchor groups offered many rich insights in response to these questions.

In discerning what we are called to do, Quaker Meetings typically begin by naming and nurturing their members’ diverse gifts and trying to match them with appropriate committees and offices. But “living in radical faithfulness” draws us back to something closer to the call for inner and outer renewal that early Friends heard and obeyed. This point was illustrated in Bible Half Hour stories in which God chose seemingly unqualified people as servants and sent them on unexpected missions that required inner calm under harrowing conditions.

An authentic leading, in contrast to a personal preference or private agenda, may come to us as a surprise, as something absurd, or counterintuitive. It can be baffling or mysterious because it arises from a deeper place than most humans’ sense of morality and purpose can fathom. In an authentic leading, one does not carry a strong stake in the outcome. In the end, a leading is a leading; God demands obedience whatever the cost and difficulty and whether we initially feel qualified.

Some barriers to radical faithfulness were noted during the week. We may wrongly assume that a divine leading involves only things of earth-shaking significance. We may in our weakness choose personal comfort and security over the promises and risks of change, hoping for a crown without a cross. We may stay silent out of fear of failure, ridicule, or opposition from defenders of the status quo.

We may waste opportunities for radical faithfulness by waiting too long for perfect knowledge or perfect abilities. Protecting

NEYM 2016 Epistle >>

>>NEYM 2016 Epistle, cont.

ourselves from the full range of our deepest feelings—from despair to anger—may prevent our hearts from being “cracked open” and made accessible to the leadings and power of the Spirit. These very human reactions are learned, and we must unlearn them to move forward.

Other barriers to moving forward in radical faithfulness are old habits, outdated thinking, and rigid structures. We work best, we learned, when our organizations are nimble and flexible, pruned of dead wood and crowded branches that block out the light.

Our youth and youth leaders were a vibrant and inspiring presence among us. Also, Friends from Vihiga and Malava Yearly Meetings in Kenya, Cuba Yearly Meeting, and Miami Friends Church visiting New England brought a powerful Christian witness.

With great tenderness we explored such difficult issues as unacknowledged white privilege and insensitivity to gender diversity. But we also recognized the many ways we do foster inclusion and diversity. We continue to feel great sorrow for the victims of conflict and violence at home and around the world, and we look for ways that we can be healing forces.

New England Yearly Meeting made a significant commitment to take concrete steps in the coming year to address the global climate crisis, in response to a call from world Friends at the 2016 FWCC World Plenary in Peru. Several Young Adult Friends in our Yearly Meeting who had participated in the 2015 New England Climate Spring conference were instrumental in guiding this proposal through our meeting for business.

Racial tensions and wounds persist in ourselves, in the Religious Society of Friends, and in our country. Many are complicit in a culture of white supremacy that hinders white Friends’ ability to respond appropriately, openly, and compassionately to people of color. We were led to map out some of the concrete steps we will take to begin recovering from this grievous shortcoming in our Quaker bodies and faith communities.

We came to a fuller appreciation of the role

of the beloved community in identifying and cultivating our gifts. Working in relationships empowers us while keeping us from outrunning our Guide. Even when we are physically isolated, we know that we are supported and loved by our community. Working together also brings us inner peace by relieving us of the burden of feeling responsible for every problem.

With greater clarity about what it means to be the “hands of God,” New England Friends concluded this year’s sessions with a renewed sense of energy, purpose, and urgency.

The harvest is great but the workers are few. May we tend faithfully to the portions we have been given and leave the rest to all the other living hands of God. Even a tiny pebble dropped into the middle of a pond eventually has an impact on the shore. May we open our hearts, our minds, and our eyes to the work that God wants us to do and with humility begin doing it now.

In the Light
New England Yearly Meeting
of the Religious Society of Friends

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. argued that it is actually pathological for any person to become well-adjusted to a world of injustice, violence, and exploitation, even when this reality is hidden and obscured from our view by our schooling, our segregated communities, or the corporate media. He went on to say that if psychologists want to make a meaningful contribution to mental health, they should find ways to help ordinary citizens deepen their capacity for creative maladjustment. As he puts it, “It may well be that our world is in dire need of a new organization: the International Association for the Advancement of Creative Maladjustment.”

—Steve Chase, *Revelation and Revolution, Answering the Call to Radical Faithfulness, Pendle Hill Pamphlet 431*

Burlington Friends Meeting September 2016
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 a.m.	Ruah Swennerfelt, 425-3377
Each Wednesday	Midweek Worship—noon	John Sharpless, 871-5195
2nd & 4th Sundays	Children's program—10:45 a.m.	Abby Matchette, 765-618-8936
Each Sunday, on request	Childcare during worship and other Meeting events	Louis Cox, 425-3377
Sept. 11, 2016	Meeting for Business—12:45 p.m.	Jeanne Plo, 233-6377
Sept. 25, 2016	Kickoff for BFM First Day School	
Oct. 15, 2016	Workshop on Racism	Ruah Swennerfeld, 922-2259
Oct. 29, 2016	Clerking Workshop	Abby Matchette <abby.matchette@gmail.com>

Send newsletter submissions to Louis Cox <jlouiscox@gmail.com>