

Reading Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

March 2017 Newsletter

“This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: 'Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.’” Jeremiah 29: 4-7

(Editor's translation: Bloom where you are planted.)

March 2017 Calendar

First Day, 3/19 Opening Exercises led by Jim Hiatt, 10am. Gifts and Loans Committee meets in the Penn Room at the rise of meeting. Heather Ehrlich, contact

Tuesday, 3/21 Peace and Social Concerns Committee meets at 7pm in the Penn Room. Blair Seitz, contact

Thursday, 3/23 Worship and Ministry meets at 6:30pm in the Penn Room. Jim Hiatt, contact

First Day, 3/26 Opening Exercises led by Janet Lamborn, 10am. Meeting for Worship, 10:15am. Lancaster Meeting is hosting a public forum on “Climate Change and Your Health” at 12 noon. Alan Petersen, MD will present the scientific data and those of others on what we can do to try to prevent climate change from ending life on earth as we have lived it and enjoyed it. Friends are also invited to Meeting for Worship at 10am.

PYM Spring Continuing Sessions

Arch Street Meeting House

Saturday, March 25, 12:30pm - 9:15pm

Come for the gathering of 100 meetings, interactive workshops, PYM business in late afternoon followed by a Burrito Bar (dinner reservation required) and evening of song. Learn more at pym.org/continuing-sessions/

April 2017 Calendar

First Day, 4/2 Opening Exercises, 10am. Meeting for Worship at 10:15am will be followed by Potluck. All are welcome.

Monday, 4/3 Berks Peace Community meets at 7pm at the Meetinghouse.

First Day, 4/9 Meeting for Worship at 10:15am will be followed by Meeting for Business.

Tuesday, 4/11 RMM and Exeter Meeting prepare supper for Opportunity House folks at 6pm. Volunteers welcome. Beth Finlay, contact.

Key Links

Caln Quarterly Meeting

www.quakercloud.org/cloud/caln-quarterly-meeting

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

www.pym.org

Friends General Conference

www.fgcquaker.org

Friends Committee on National Legislation

<http://fcnl.org>

Reading Monthly Meeting, 108 North Sixth Street, Reading, PA - www.readingfriendsmeeting.org



Notes of the Reading Monthly Meeting for Business First Day, March 12, 2017

Janet Lamborn, clerk Jim Lamborn, recording clerk

Present: Judy Ballinger and Blair Seitz, Ann Bodnyk, Heather Ehrlich and John Rivera, Jeanne Elberfeld, Chris Field, Jennifer Hanf and John Loomis, Fran and Darl Hoopes, Tom Hughes, Bonnie Knutsen, Roger Lawn, Nan and Jim Morrissey, Joe Morrissey

Minutes The Meeting approved the minutes of the February 2017 Meeting for Business, only after a lengthy, occasionally tense, discussion of the sentence “The Berks Peace group may continue to hold meetings, but no open forums (*after dark*).”

Blair Seitz, co-clerk of the PSC committee and an active member of the Berks Peace Community, questioned the need for this limit on attendance. He said that not having open forums at the meetinghouse impinges on our efforts to witness to our faith and outreach to the community. The PSC and Peace Group want to sponsor an open forum on Saturday evening, April 22, to host the speaker, Anton Flores, an immigration expert from GA, who is traveling to Lancaster, PA that weekend to speak on detention center issues.

The restriction on open forums stems from the Trustees concern for the safety of visitors in an unfamiliar building after dark in case of a power failure. The Berks Peace Community has met in our meetinghouse for years and knows the building well.

John Hayden, a member of Lancaster meeting and an engineer, is preparing a long-range maintenance plan for the meeting that includes needed safety upgrades, i.e. crash doors and Exit lights over the doors. He hopes to have it ready by the end of March, but as Ann Bodnyk pointed out, John is doing us a valuable *volunteer* service and we need to wait patiently for his report.

Friends debated the problem from many angles. Some raised litigation concerns. Some urged us to complete these safety upgrades by April 22. Others suggested we leave the

doors unlocked for this evening and place lanterns near the exits. Could we reschedule the time and venue for Mr. Flores’ visit? When does the sun go down on April 22? Eventually, the meeting decided to stay with the plan the Trustees have adopted but recommended making these safety fixes a high-priority item.

The Treasurer’s report was approved. (It was a quiet money month).

Ministry of Outreach

Janet Lamborn led us in a worship sharing session based on the query “What are we doing to invite persons not in membership to attend our meetings for worship and to encourage their continued attendance? How does the Meeting welcome visitors? Are we sensitive to the needs and hesitations of each visitor?”

Thoughts shared: PYM Outreach group has funds to support meeting outreach projects. There is a FGC booklet on outreach in the library. We could post QuakerSpeak videos on our Face Book page and our website or make our own QuakerSpeak videos. Jeanne Elberfeld raised the question “What is our goal in outreach?” She noted that most new Quakers come to our faith in their middle years.

Announcements

Swatara Weekend registration is now open. Early Bird discounts for registration end April 6. Registration ends April 18.

- Bonnie Knutsen

Exeter Meeting News

Exeter Meeting Friends First Day School was pleased to welcome guests from the Universalist church last First day. Exeter is hoping for further exchange of worship and ideas.

Jennifer Gittings Dalton is recuperating at home after being hospitalized in Reading hospital. Visitors are welcome. (Please telephone to make arrangements)

The Teen and Tweens group will meet again on the first Sunday of the month, April 2, to answer modern day queries on Care of the Meeting, Care of ourselves and Care in our homes and at school.

A Hymn sing at 10am will be followed by a Tween and Teen

discussion and Worship. Potluck lunch will be for everyone at 11:30am.

A clean up/work day will be held inside and outside the Meetinghouse on Saturday, April 8, starting at 9am. Bring your favorite tool--everyone is invited.

Exeter Meeting is "testing the waters" to see if there is interest among the Quarter youth for a work camp experience with the Lakota Indians at Pine Ridge, S Dakota, under the guidance of Brad Ogelovey. The cost may be \$800 per person. Contact Dave Wallace or Jed Smith for further information.

- Shirley Smith

Remembering Janet Norton, 1923—1917

Janet Norton was a gift to Reading Meeting since she moved to Berks County in 1950. Born Janet Elizabeth Horton on December 4, 1923 in Philadelphia, her mother, Elizabeth Pierce Horton, was a Quaker and her father a Presbyterian minister who owned a printing business. She grew up in both faiths but usually attended the Presbyterian church.

When she was in college, Janet intended to go to medical school, but the war intervened. She studied biochemistry at Temple U., Ursinus College and the University of Pennsylvania, then worked as a chemist at Dupont. While there, Janet worked on solving problems in the production of a new product, water-based paint. After coming to Berks County, she sold real estate from 1950 to 1955.

Janet started attending Reading Meeting in September 1950. Though she had weathered two failed marriages, she married the love of her life, John R. Norton in 1955. They moved to Centerport, PA in 1957. John adopted Janet's two young sons, David (now deceased) and Roger, and became active in Reading Meeting. Janet said she never understood how she could be so lucky as to have married John and she was always grateful to Darlington Hoopes, Sr., for encouraging her to marry him. Along with her two boys, Janet raised her sister's child, Janey, from birth through third grade, and for occasional short periods after that.

When John retired in 1972, the family bought a cabin on Swans Island, Maine, where they summered for years. Janet loved all outdoor activities, particularly hiking, camping and swimming. She also loved the color blue and chocolate.



Christmas Tea, 2010

Music was important to Janet from the time she discovered the piano at age 5. Chopin was her favorite composer. When Janet came to Reading Meeting in 1950, she wanted music to be a part of Opening Exercises. Friends agreed but insisted the piano be kept in the North Hall. In time the piano found its way into the meeting room and

Janet accompanied Friends for over 50 years. She played with a beautiful spirit that is hard to define, but Reading Friends would recognize instantly.

In the 1970's she clerked the committee that published the Quaker songbook, *Songs of the Spirit*, through Friends General Conference. Another meeting member, Jack Hanf, played an active role in helping Janet create the Songbook.

Janet served as clerk of Reading Meeting, as a Trustee and on various committees, particularly Care and Concern. For years, she was the meeting representative to PYM. She established the newsletter in the early 1950's and edited it from then through 2011. When her children were young, she persuaded the Meeting to open Maiden creek for summer worship so the children could play outside while Friends worshipped. The practice of summer worship at Maiden creek continues to this day.

Working with Nan Morrissey, Barbara Foust and other community leaders, Janet helped establish the Rehab Workshop for the physically and mentally handicapped. It was so successful that it outgrew the Meetinghouse and became Threshold, still serving our community today. Janet was active in the founding of the Berks Peace Information Center and the Berks Intercultural Alliance. She held leadership positions in Berks County's League of Women Voters, the ACLU, the Mental Health Association and the Centre Township PTA.

Janet died at home on February 18 and was buried at Maiden creek on February 22. She is survived by her son Roger Norton, granddaughters Elizabeth and Sarah, two great-grandchildren McKenna Elizabeth and Conor John Brennan, (Elizabeth's children) and her niece, Elizabeth (Jane) Jett, Sacramento, CA. A memorial service will be held at Maiden creek in the Spring.

Active in the peace movement her entire adult life, Janet left a written message that she "encourages friends and family to remember her by supporting peace activities in whatever way they deem productive".

- Lee Pickett, Taylor Lamborn, Bonnie Knutsen



Reading Meetinghouse, 2004

John Marquette gives invocation at Pennsylvania State Senate

At the Pennsylvania State Senate session held on October 18, 2016, John Marquette, a member of Lehigh Valley Meeting in Bethlehem, PA, delivered the invocation message as the designated Senate Chaplain. This was the first time a Quaker gave the invocation since at least 1999—the oldest year represented in the PA Senate’s digital records.

Marquette used Jeremiah 29 (see page 1) as his base and also included the words of William Penn that are inscribed in the State Capitol’s rotunda. After introducing and reciting both the Bible passage and the Penn quote, Marquette continued, “Remember too that Penn practiced the Quaker principle of seeking that of God in everyone. Take a moment, then, to look for the Divine in your neighbor, in your friends, and in those with whom you find yourself in disagreement.”

Marquette is grateful for the experience. “Sometimes, it’s important to have someone offer a moment of spiritual dimension to an occasion. I never realized it might be me. And all that is thanks to my meeting, my discipline, Faith and Practice and our testimonies.”

Ed Note: the above is reprinted from an article in the March 2017 Friends Journal. John often attended Reading Meeting before a change in employment caused him to move to Bethlehem.

Hold in the Light Betty Lamborn, recovering at home and the family of Janet Norton who died at home February 18.

The Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) asks us to hold in the light all who are traveling to Stony Point, NY to attend the 2017 Section Meeting, March 23-26, and the many Latin American Friends who cannot attend because their visas were denied.

Friendly Geocache Brings Visitors

You may remember that Tom Hughes and Chris Field, working with First Day School, established a geocache on our grounds in November 2015.

Since then 66 visitors have logged their success in finding the little container filled with trinkets and their delight in finding a Quaker meeting in the heart of the city. To read their comments see https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC66C6P_a-friendly-cache

(Note: a geocache is an outdoor treasure hunting game using GPS-enabled devices. The “treasure” is usually an item, like a container, holding a number of other items that has been hidden at a location whose coordinates are posted on the Internet.)

Tackling the problem of gerrymandering

The TV program, *Centering on Peace*, will discuss the topic of gerrymandering on Tuesday night, April 11 at 9pm. The show is hosted by the Berks Peace Community. You can watch anytime on bctv.org (select ‘On Demand’ and then search for ‘Centering on Peace’) or YouTube (search for ‘bctv.org’ and then search for ‘Centering on Peace’.)

Happy Birthday to BJ Stillwell, 3/25, Marie Ryan, 4/2, Blair Seitz, 4/2, Alan Porter, 4/3, Judy Ballinger, 4/6 and Judy Geiser, 4/16.

Support our Meeting Mail your contribution to:
Reading Monthly Meeting, c/o Ann Bodnyk
PO Box 148
Kutztown, PA 19530-0148



Please join us for worship every Sunday: Opening Exercises, 10am, Meeting for Worship, 10:15am. First Day School begins at 10:30am. We are an unprogrammed meeting, a member of Caln Quarter and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. For more information, call 610-372-5345, visit us on Face Book or our web site, www.readingfriendsmeeting.org.

The Reading Monthly Meeting Newsletter is published at our website and in print 10 times a year by the Communications Committee. Send news for the April newsletter to Bonnie Knutsen, bknutsen@ptd.net by April 9. Submit address, telephone or Email changes to Carl Knutsen at webagent@readingfriendsmeeting.org.

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