

# Reading Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

May 2017 Newsletter

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let all men know your forbearance. The Lord is at hand. Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” - Philippians 4:4-7, Revised Standard Version  
(For more on positive thinking, see Page 3.)

## May 2017 Calendar

**First Day, 5/21** Meeting for Worship. Opening Exercises, led by Judy Ballinger, 10 am

**Thursday, 5/25** Worship and Ministry Committee meets in the Penn Room, 6:30 pm. Jim Hiatt, contact.

**First Day, 5/28** Meeting for Worship. Opening Exercises, 10am

**PYM Annual Sessions  
July 26-30, 2017  
The College of New Jersey  
Ewing, NJ**

**Theme: Faith Magnified  
Register now at [pym.org](http://pym.org)**

## June 2017 Calendar

**First Day, 6/4** Opening Exercises, 10am. Meeting for Worship at 10:15am followed by the annual meeting picnic at Maiden Creek. Please bring a chair and a side dish to share.

**Monday, 6/5** Berks Peace Community meets at 7pm at the Meetinghouse

**Tuesday, 6/13** RMM and Exeter Meeting Friends prepare supper for Opportunity House folks at 6pm. Volunteers welcome. Beth Finlay, contact.

**First Day, 6/11** Meeting for Worship will be followed by Meeting for Business. Last day of First Day School until September.

**First Day, 6/18** Opening of worship at Maiden Creek. 6th Street Meetinghouse will also be open. Both begin at 10am

## Friends House Moscow: Current Conditions in Russia and the Work of Friends in the Region

Lancaster Meeting invites you to meet Julie Harlow of Friends House Moscow on Thursday, June 8, at either 3:30 or 7:00 p.m. at Lancaster Friends Meetinghouse.

Julie Harlow began working toward the fulfillment of the vision of a Quaker presence in Russia immediately after the collapse of the USSR in 1991. Active with the international governing board of Friends House Moscow since its inception, and currently the Clerk, she can share the challenges, disappointments and successes from its beginnings up to the current program. She also speaks

knowledgably about conditions in Russia based on research and personal experience traveling there since 1984.

Friends House Moscow is a small NGO in Russia, directed by an international board of Quakers to find and support Russian grassroots organizations. Most of the projects involve orphans, disabled children, CO's and translating Quaker literature.

Jane Keller, [janekeller102@gmail.com](mailto:janekeller102@gmail.com), contact.

**Reading Monthly Meeting, 108 North Sixth Street, Reading, PA - [www.readingfriendsmeeting.org](http://www.readingfriendsmeeting.org)**



## Notes of the Reading Monthly Meeting for Business First Day, May 14, 2017

Janet Lamborn, clerk    Jim Lamborn, recording clerk

Present: Ann Bodnyk, Heather Ehrlich, Jeanne Elberfeld, Chris Field, Peter Frank, Jim Hiatt, Betty and Taylor Lamborn, Roger Lawn, Jennifer Hanf and John Loomis, Jim Morrissey and Cys Sica

**Minutes**—approved with no changes  
(no treasurer’s report this month)

### Swatara Planning Committee needs a Volunteer

Jeanne Elberfeld needs help with Swatara planning for 2018 and 2019 when Reading Monthly Meeting is responsible for leading the planning. Meetings will be held monthly at the rise of meeting on the third Sunday of the month. The first planning meeting will be September 17.

### Shape Note Singing

Peter Frank asked the meeting to allow the Shape Note singers to use the Maiden Creek Meetinghouse Saturday, September 2. Permission was granted.

### Membership Transfer

Janet Lamborn read a letter from Lee Pickett requesting Reading Monthly Meeting transfer her membership to Durham (NC) Meeting where she now attends. Transfer approved. (Letter in page 4.)

### Considering First Day School

Roger Lawn asked, as an individual meeting member/teacher, that the meeting consider laying down First Day School classes for the older children as there are none currently attending. After much discussion it was decided that

the matter should be considered by the RE committee. That committee will then return to monthly meeting with its recommendation.

### Committee Reports

Worship and Ministry—Jim Hiatt, clerk, said the committee has two suggestions for forum topics: the “Relationship between Science and Religion”, presented by Taylor Lamborn and ‘Listening” presented by Charlie Gilbert.

Other suggestions made include: “Long Term Plans/ Maintenance of the Reading Monthly Meeting properties”, presented by the Trustees and “Quaker Speak Topics, e.g. “Outreach”. Any committee that would like to present a forum should email Jim Hiatt.

### Spring/Summer Calendar

The meeting considered and adopted calendar dates for events coming in June, July, August and September. All are included in the calendar on page 1.

- Heather Ehrlich



### Three Good Friends

L to R: B.J. Stillwell, Charmoine Jones, Janet Norton

Jackie Stillwell took this photo in April 2016 at Charmoine’s house. She remembers “Charmoine served us a surprise supper of soup and a delicious chocolate dessert. It was a wonderful party full of love and good memories. It was our last time together.”

A memorial service for Janet Norton was held at Maiden Creek Meetinghouse, May 13. Despite the rainy, cool day, many from the meeting and the Berks Peace Community turned out to fill the meetinghouse and remember Janet.

## The Power of Thinking Positively

from Charlie Gilbert

Have you ever wondered why things come so easily to certain other people? They seem to have all the right answers, all the best choices, and they don't worry. Their hair looks good even if they just got out of bed. When called on in meetings, they quickly figure out the correct solution to the problem. What makes their outcome so different than mine?

In the field of human behavior we're learning that these people aren't that physically different than us. And, they're not necessarily smarter than us either. The big difference is the positive perspective of these successful people. These are the ones who are less inhibited about chasing what they want. They're not held back by an earlier unsuccessful or embarrassing attempt. They've learned that "mistakes are for learning." In their journey they are looking ahead and not behind. They want to live for today and make the most of it.

How do they get that and, more importantly, where can I get some? "Positive affect" is the expression of a variety of positive evaluative sentiments or attitudes which help us in so many ways. We've come to understand that it promotes creativity and cognitive flexibility. Problem-solving is enhanced as problems are seen more clearly without the filter of negative thoughts and feelings. Positive feelings have the power to serve as a buffer against the damaging effects of certain neuroendocrine, inflammatory, and cardiovascular activities and they trigger adaptive hormonal responses to subsequent stressors. It serves to replenish resources such as cortisol, which is depleted when we experience chronic stress.

And the best news is that experiencing positive thoughts makes us even stronger in other ways. Believing that we can do something leads to perseverance – "Stick-to-it." Mastery helps us to keep an effective self-image which builds confidence. Eventually all of this positive thinking helps us to develop a challenge orientation to live in which we relish the opportunity to solve problems or achieve things. Thinking positively helps us to become more resilient and it's easier to bounce back from adversity.

One of the ways we can do this is to find the benefits that often co-occur with negative events. Cancer survivors often report a more positive relationship with family and friends. Trauma or assault victims often state that they are more appreciative of the need to help others. This often leads to meaningful involvement that lifts us from depressive and apathetic responses.

Oh, and one more thing: Positive affect is contagious! Hanging around positive thinkers is fun and we sometimes want to emulate their attitude. They tend to whine less and be more pro-active. When we look back on what we've done with the support of our optimistic friends we get a sense of being stronger and more effective. Often our hearts soar with positive regard and we share their level of motivation and inspiration to achieve our goals. That's how we become more like those people. Just remember the words of Helen Keller: "Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it."



Charlie Gilbert, author of the above article, is a licensed clinical social worker with a private practice in Annville, PA. For 24 years he was on the faculty of the Department of Psychiatry at PA State College of Medicine, Hershey Medical Center.

He and his wife, Debbie, are natives of Reading and have two children and four grandchildren. They joined Reading Meeting in 2013.

**Exploring the Canopy** The Friendly Readers have chosen The Wild Trees: A Story of Passion and Daring by Richard Preston as the book for our next gathering (possibly a picnic) in July. The date is not yet determined.

Let me know if you would like to have me order a book for you. I will try to order them through the FGC bookstore at Pendle Hill, and I believe they will be about \$17. Less costly used copies are available through Amazon if you would like to order there.

- from Chris Field

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**Letter requesting transfer:** In her letter to Reading Meeting Lee Picket wrote:

“Reading Meeting has been my spiritual home for almost two decades. Over that time, Reading Friends have nurtured my spiritual growth, tenderly supported me during difficult times and celebrated the joys of life with me. Many Reading Friends are also my close, personal friends. For obvious reasons, Reading Meeting will always hold a very special place in my heart.

However, I have moved to a new community and it is time for me to transfer my membership. I am thankful to feel a strong connection with Durham Friends Meeting, which offers a diverse group of people who will encourage my continued spiritual growth, a large variety of activities and many opportunities to serve others.”

(Best wishes, Lee. We miss you.)

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**Hold in the light** Fran Hoopes recovering from illness and Taylor Lamborn and Charlie Gilbert, recovering from surgery.

### **Gerrymandering—Threat to Our Democracy**

Join the Berks Peace Community for a potluck dinner and discussion about Gerrymandering. Sally Trump and Arthur Naylor of Fair Districts PA are the guest speakers, informing us of the threat of gerrymandering to our democracy and how we can support the uphill battle toward a PA constitutional amendment outlawing gerrymandering.

When: Monday, June 5

Where: Reading Meetinghouse

Potluck: 6pm and Program: 7pm

- from Blair Seitz, co-clerk

Peace and Social Concerns Committee

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**Congratulations** to the 120 Seniors at Ramallah Friends School, Palestine, who graduated this month. This is the largest class in the history of the school. 100% are enrolled in colleges and universities around the world, including Swarthmore College and Haverford College, PA.

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**FCNL** is hosting an Advocacy Worship in Phoenixville, 37N. Whitehouse Road, Thursday, May 25 from 6 to 9:30pm. The Campaign Theme for 2017 is “Rein In Pentagon Spending.” For more, visit [www.fcnl.org/updates/advocacy-teams-37](http://www.fcnl.org/updates/advocacy-teams-37).

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**Happy Birthday** to Betty Lamborn (5/21), Nan Morrissey (6/3), Charlie Gilbert (6/8) and Cynthia Felter (6/16).



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](http://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 June newsletter to Bonnie Knutsen, [bknutsen@ptd.net](mailto:bknutsen@ptd.net) by June 11. Submit address, telephone or Email changes to Carl Knutsen at [webagent@readingfriendsmeeting.org](mailto:webagent@readingfriendsmeeting.org).

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Treasurer: Ann Bodnyk

Clerk of Trustees: Taylor Lamborn

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