

Second Month

MIDCOAST MONTHLY MEETING
 OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS
 Damariscotta, Maine
NEWSLETTER

February 2009



And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

--1 Corinthians 13:13 (NKJV)

What if the mightiest word is love?
 Love beyond marital, filial, national,
 love that casts a widening pool of light . . .

--from "Praise Song for the Day" by Elizabeth Alexander

February

Sunday	Feb. 1	Rise of Meeting Following Potluck	Potluck Lunch Peace Center Meeting
Wednesday	Feb. 4	5:30 p.m.	Ministry & Counsel
Saturday	Feb. 7	8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.	*Vassalboro Quarterly Meeting, Vassalboro
Sunday	Feb. 8	Rise of Meeting	*Book Discussion Group
Sunday	Feb. 15	Rise of Meeting	Monthly Meeting for Business
Sunday	Feb. 22	Rise of Meeting	*Book Discussion Group

March

Sunday	March 1	Rise of Meeting	*A period of reflection and response on NEYM Peace Minute followed by Potluck Lunch
Sunday	March 15	Rise of Meeting	Monthly Meeting for Business

*Look inside for more information regarding these items.

~Calendar events are held at the meetinghouse, unless otherwise noted.~

Sunday Meeting for Worship is held at the meetinghouse, 77 Belvedere Rd., Damariscotta, 10:00 a.m.
 Meetinghouse phone: 207-563-3757. Directions: Take US Route 1 to Damariscotta and turn onto Belvedere Rd.
 (left if coming from the south, right if coming from the north--Miles Home Health Care building on the corner).
 The meetinghouse is the second building on the right, .2 mile from the corner.

Moving? Changing your e-mail address? Don't forget to let us know. Please remember that when you receive the newsletter by e-mail, you save the Meeting money and you lighten our workload. To receive the newsletter by e-mail, kindly send a request to Diane Kirkman at diane_kirkman@hotmail.com. Thanks!

For newsletters, important links, & a current calendar, visit our website: www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org.

Highlights

Monthly Meeting for Business—First Month 25, 2009

Correspondence – Beacon Hill Friends' online Quaker Studies course is hosting a session on the Book of Mark January 25-February 21. See Beacon Hill's website for details (http://www.bhfh.org/qsp/qspOnline_09.html#Home).

Meetinghouse & Grounds – The key to the meetinghouse that was kept outside was lost and has been replaced. It is now in a new location. Please call Deborah Haviland or Karen Cadbury for more information. The clerk is also having a number of new keys made. Please let Deborah Haviland know if you would like one for your personal use.

Peace & Social Concerns - The committee is lacking a clerk this year. The idea of combining this committee with the Peace Center Steering Committee was raised.

Religious Education – The children favor sending funds raised at our Christmas party to Heifer International to sponsor ducks.

Old Business – The *ad hoc* Committee on Memorial Stones hopes to present us with a plan by April.

New Business – The **Minute on Peace** adopted by New England Yearly Meeting at its 2008 Sessions (see page 3 of the November newsletter (<http://www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org/pdf-files/11news08.pdf>)) called upon "all meetings to consider this minute during the coming year and to identify how to take action on the concerns raised. We also call on New England Friends to gather in a called Meeting for Worship in early 2009 to address the concerns raised in this minute." Midcoast Friends will consider the minute during a half-hour session immediately following Meeting for Worship on Sunday, March 1. [*Ed. note: See item this newsletter, page 3.*]

The schedule for the **Book Discussion Group** has been changed for a trial period to try to include more people. The group will meet at the rise of meeting for worship on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month. [*Ed. note: For details see page 3.*]

A **volunteer to close meeting for worship** is needed for the month of April.

The next meeting for business will be on Sunday, February 15, at the rise of meeting. All are welcome. Please bring a bag lunch.

The entire pending minutes of the January session are available at the Meeting website www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org and on the bulletin board at the meetinghouse.

ADVICES

MEETING BUSINESS--In meetings for business, and in all duties connected with them, seek again the leadings of the Light; let our utterances be brief and without repetition. Let us keep from obstinacy and from harshness of tone or manner and admit the possibility of being in error. In the affairs of the meeting community, let us proceed in a peaceable spirit, with forbearance and warm affection for each other.

QUAKER MISSIONS STAMP PROJECT

Midcoast Friends has contributed a large number of cancelled stamps since Mattapoisett Meeting (MA) began this ministry 12 years ago by. I recently called Mattapoisett Meeting to make sure the program was still active and spoke to Brad Hathaway, who now heads up the project. He assured me that our ongoing participation is very much appreciated. There will be a new report soon, but the 2007 report showed that \$54,000 had been distributed to 84 "Good Works" projects since the program's inception. The largest beneficiaries were Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) and Right Sharing of World Resources, but a multitude of Quaker service organizations and missions have benefited.

Thank you, Midcoast Friends, for saving stamps, and please continue to do so. Our meeting has a web page, <http://www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org/stamps.htm>, where you can find the latest report and some tips for saving the most valuable stamps.

--Carmen Lavertu

VASSALBORO QUARTERLY MEETING
February 7, 2009

- 8:30 a.m. Welcome. Coffee and goodies.
9:00 a.m. Meeting for Worship
10:00 a.m. Presentation by Dick Kelly: The Role of Art in the Society of Friends



A presentation and discussion of how art expresses itself in a religious community that celebrates simplicity. Historically, Friends have plain, simple houses of worship. Friends initially disapproved of virtually all graphic arts, but over the years, Friends' understanding and acceptance of art has broadened, and art is now seen as an important expression of human creativity.

The presentation will trace, through projected images, the evolution of Quakers' understanding of artistic expression, especially in graphic arts and architecture. Following the formal presentation, small groups will share how art is expressed in their meetings and their lives. Friends are encouraged to bring examples of their artistic expression to share with others. [See 1:15 p.m. below.]

Special Youth Program by Anna Dulin: Art in Textiles

Young people will experiment with knitting for service projects. Anna will share her experience raising sheep and spinning.

- 12:00 noon Luncheon--soup, turkey, and drinks provided. Please bring salad or dessert.
1:15 p.m. Sharing of Arts & Crafts by Friends (bring something of your own!).
2:00 p.m. Meeting for Business
4:00 p.m. Adjournment

Vassalboro meetinghouse is at 48 S. Stanley Hill Rd., 1/4 mile east of the junction with Rt. 32 in downtown East Vassalboro. Please call 207-923-3572 if you get lost. And, yes, the building is fully accessible.

QUERIES: 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?

THE BOOK CLUB is reading *Silence and Witness* by M. Birkel and will be covering chapters 3 and 4 during the next meeting, on February 8. We are changing the time to the rise of meeting in order to enable more people to come. Discussions at every meeting have been extremely interesting. Please join in! We meet on the 2nd and 4th Sundays.

NEYM Peace Minute

New England Yearly Meeting has instructed us to participate in a discernment process as we seek the way forward in the 21st century for our "living" Peace Testimony. A mid-April "Called Meeting" will be held in Portland to address this, and monthly meetings are to hold meetings before that. On March 1, immediately following meeting for worship (before the monthly potluck) Midcoast Meeting will have a period of reflection and response on the NEYM Peace Minute (see the text on page 3 of last November's newsletter (<http://www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org/pdf-files/11news08.pdf>)).

A Planning Committee, composed of members of the NEYM Peace & Social Concerns and Ministry & Counsel committees, is preparing queries to guide the discernment process in both Midcoast's March 1 meeting and the mid-April Called Meeting. Carmen Lavertu, a member of the Planning Committee, invites your concerns and inquiries at either clavertu@gmail.com or 354-9556.

Visiting Our Very Own Quaker School

by Nancy Appel Boothby,

Retired Friends School Elementary Teacher/Attender, Midcoast and Eggemoggin Monthly Meetings

How surprised I was, when I first visited Moorestown Friends School over 30 years ago, to hear children laughing with natural delight as they played at a sand table in the hallway. I remember thinking, "Can children actually laugh and enjoy learning in a SCHOOL?" Visiting Friends School of Portland during its January 16th open house rekindled that particular memory, and so much more.

On that sub-zero day, about 30 hardy souls hailing from Maine meetings (Portland, Windham, Midcoast, Eggemoggin, Belfast, and Vassalboro), as well as two from the New England Yearly Meeting Permanent Board, were treated to a rich day of a simple gab-and-get lunch, a self-paced tour of the multi-age classrooms (two grades grouped together as in 1st/2nd and 3rd/4th), participation in the school's Martin Luther King, Jr.-inspired assembly, and lastly an informative Power Point presentation and discussion lead by Head of the School, James Grumbach, assisted by founder and curriculum coordinator/language-arts teacher, Mary Tracy. We learned the history of the school (now in its third year of operation) and its mission statement, core values, sound financial status, and unique "place-based" curriculum woven into a Quaker approach to educate its nearly 70 students, pre-kindergarten through eighth grade.



FPS is situated in the elementary-classroom space of the former Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing on Mackworth Island in Falmouth. As the morning's sea smoke had dissipated by the time I arrived, driving over the causeway and wooden bridge, I had a clear view of Casco Bay, the spectacular setting of the school, surrounded by Maine winter waters and seabirds. I felt a warm, open friendliness upon entering the school building, and this atmosphere permeated my day there; all adults are called by their first names, and the children, held in the highest esteem, were genuine,

welcoming, and open to conversation. Engaged learning was reflected in the hubbub of classrooms and proudly displayed on child-eye-level hallway bulletin boards. The assembly, which culminated with a musical and full audience-sung rendition of "We Shall Overcome," was natural, enthusiastic, poignant, and fun, yet another reflection of being in a Quaker environment. The nurse from the next-door-neighbor school for the deaf stood at the side of the stage and signed the whole event, this being a natural occurrence, as all FSP students receive American Sign Language lessons and the older students share experiences and even classes with their hearing-impaired neighbors. Clearly the school's core values were in evidence: simplicity (uncomplicated routines, uncluttered space, and careful use of resources), community (caring teachers, daily class meetings, cooperative learning, and service projects), integrity (clear, open communication and high expectations for learning and behavior), and peace (listening, reflecting, cooperative conflict resolution). As a recent *Portland Press Herald* article, "Learning the Quaker Way," mentioned, FSP "stresses tolerance and respect for all people, promotes investigation of ideas and the search for truth, and emphasizes spiritual rather than religious education."

Our Quaker open house culminated with some time for reflection and worship sharing. I was struck by the ease with which attendees voiced their enthusiasm and appreciation for having such an educational environment here in our own state, by the depth of understanding of the importance of providing this Quaker setting for the greater Portland area, for the critical and enormous support from many of the state's meetings, and of course by some deeply moving thoughts on the coming celebrations for the life of Martin Luther King, Jr., and the inauguration of our 44th President. I myself came away knowing that I would definitely prioritize some time to get directly involved with the school. There is truly nothing quite like a Friends school for engaging meaningfully with children.

If you are interested in knowing more about the school and how you too could become involved (bringing some of your personal gifts to their classroom studies or donating to or helping behind the scenes with upcoming events to raise money for their large scholarship fund, for example), I encourage you to speak directly with James Grumbach at 207-781-6321 or visit the school's website: www.friendsschoolofportland.org.

FROM THE MAINE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES: Farms and Fisheries--Local Fairs Provide Public with Opportunity to Purchase Local Foods

You don't have to wait for the farmers' market to reopen to buy your favorite local foods. Attend a **Community Supported Agriculture and Fisheries (CSA/CSF) Fair** in your community and learn about CSAs, become acquainted with local seasonal foods, buy a share in a farm's weekly harvest, and discover how you can grow a relationship with a Maine farm and/or fishing boat. Community Supported Fisheries will also be represented on **Sunday, February 8, from 1 to 4 p.m., at the following venues:**

Belfast--Unitarian Universalist Church of Belfast, 37 Miller St.
Brunswick--St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 27 Pleasant St.
Newcastle--Second Congregational Church, River Rd.

These events are co-sponsored by the Maine Organic Farmers & Gardeners Association (MOFGA), the Maine Council of Churches, and Slow Food Portland, with additional support from the Eat Local Foods Coalition and local organizations at each site. Admission is free for farms and the public. Farmers will bring products from their farms to sell in addition to their CSA shares. Light refreshments featuring local seasonal foods will be served.

For more information, please visit the Council website at www.maineCouncilofchurches.org.

Friends,

Give thanks and rejoice that on the second day of the new administration, President Obama issued three Executive Orders that end the CIA abuse of detainees, close U.S. secret prisons, and provide the International Committee of the Red Cross with access to detainees. We are thankful that our prayers and faithful attention have been answered. We appreciate the national leadership of the National Religious Coalition Against Torture (NRCAT).

Let us remember Midcoast Friends Meeting's Testimony on Torture:

- Fall 2005. The Peace & Social Concerns Committee wrote "Regarding Prison Conditions at Guantanamo: A Letter of Protest" addressed to our elected leaders, newspapers, and neighbors (see page 7 of the November 2005 newsletter, <http://www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org/pdf-files/11news05.pdf>).
- May 2006. The Meeting wrote a "Minute on Torture" that went to Congressional representatives and was published in local newspapers (see page 7 of the June 2006 newsletter, <http://www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org/pdf-files/06news06.pdf>).
- May 2006 and 2007. Supported "QUIT--The Quaker Initiative to End Torture" Conferences at Guilford College, North Carolina.
- Spring 2006. Endorsed the NRCAT declaration (available at http://www.nrcat.org/storage/nrcat/documents/cbt_-_declaration_of_principles_6may08_final_pdf_2.pdf).
- March 2007: Presented a "Workshop on Torture."
- Summer 2007: Hung the banner "TORTURE IS WRONG."
- October 2007: Showed the film *The Ghosts of Abu Ghraib*, a public program with Midcoast UU.

(To read the Executive Orders, please go to: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/executive-orders-to-date>.)

--Carmen Lavertu

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are my friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in my name He may give you. These things I command you, that you love one another.

-- *John 15:12-17 [NKJV]*