



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

If you want to identify me, ask me not where I live, or what I like to eat, or how I comb my hair, but ask me what I am living for, in detail, and ask me what I think is keeping me from living fully for the thing I want to live for.

—Thomas Merton

January

Saturday	Dec. 31	9 a.m.-3 p.m.	Silent Retreat, facilitated by Holly Baldwin. Bag lunch.
Sunday	Jan. 1		Food Pantry Day
		during worship	New Year's Day candle lighting and worship sharing
Tuesday	Jan. 10	6-8 p.m.	AFSC Maine Committee on Youth and Alternatives to the Military
Thursday	Jan. 12	7-8:30 p.m.	Lincoln County Peace and Justice Coalition
Sunday	Jan 15	8:30-9:45	* Creative Listening dialog, facilitated by Holly Baldwin
		rise of worship	Monthly Meeting for Worship for Business. Bag lunch.
Sunday	Jan. 22	8:30-9:45 a.m.	* Discussion of NEYM <i>Faith and Practice</i> revision draft
		rise of worship	Welcome party for new member Katrina Rickermann
Sunday	Jan. 29	8:30 a.m.	Building & Grounds Committee meeting
		8:30-9:45 a.m.	* Discussion of NEYM <i>Faith and Practice</i> revision draft
		rise of worship	Informal meeting for peace and social concerns sharing and networking
			Meetinghouse inside workday, followed by potluck

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

Friendly Reminders

Moving or changing your E-mail address? Don't forget to notify the newsletter of your changes.
Electronic subscriptions via E-mail are environmentally friendly and cost the Meeting nothing.
To receive your newsletter via the Web, E-mail a request to Nancy Terrell Hall at moonlite@lincoln.midcoast.com

Back Issues of the Newsletter and Meeting Information are available at: www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org

Visit www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org

The Entirely Unofficial **MONTHLY MEETING NOTES**, 12th month of 2005

based on draft minutes by Rob Patterson

Clerk Jean Crawford read a Bible passage followed by a brief silence. There were 14 members and attenders present. The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved with minor corrections.

Ministry & Counsel

Deb Haviland reported for the committee. A clearness committee met with Katrina Rickermann and found clearness for her membership. Ministry & Counsel concurred and heartily recommended Katrina for membership in Midcoast Monthly Meeting. The monthly meeting approved. A welcoming reception will be planned.

The committee recommended that Quaker Dialogues resume once a month on the third Sunday of the month from 8:30 till 9:45 a.m. before Meeting for Worship. The meeting approved. The first in the new year will be held on January 15th. Holly Baldwin will facilitate.

New England Yearly Meeting is engaged in a revision of the chapter on worship in *Faith and Practice*. They would like comments from monthly meetings on their draft by early February. Ministry & Counsel would like to engage more people in this process and has suggested that meetings be scheduled on January 22nd and 29th, 8:30 till 9:45 a.m., to allow for discussion. The meeting approved.

The idea of having a greeter to welcome visitors to meeting for worship and to control the noise level and flow of late arrivals into the meeting room was discussed. The notion that Meeting for Worship begins when the first person enters the worship room needs to be emphasized as does the importance of never entering the room while someone is speaking. These practices can be insured by the use of a greeter who would join the other worshipers when the children leave for First Day school. A prominent sign on the worship room door would prompt those coming later. It was agreed that we would try having greeters. Ministry & Counsel will develop guidelines and write a brief article on greeters for the Newsletter. Betsy Terrell will devise a sign. Those interested in volunteering to greet should speak to Deb Haviland. (Volunteers to close Meeting for Worship are also needed.)

Gifts & Leadings

Carmen Lavertu reported for the group. They have been working but do not yet have a slate to propose for the coming year. Karen Cadbury plans to call a meeting in the new year to discuss the future of Peace & Social Concerns. The clerk suggested that Gretchen Hull should be kept abreast of the plans for any such meeting, as she is actively working on ways to keep these concerns prominent in the life of the Meeting. The bulletin board display for noting gifts and lead-

ings will stay up through December 18; then the regular bulletin board will go back up in a improved grid format being planned by Carolyn Miller. While some now serving have agreed to stay on until replacements come forward, others have declined to continue serving in their present positions.

Old Business

Claire Darrow reported that Meetinghouse & Grounds is reviewing Paul Diamond's proposals regarding meetinghouse use, rental policies, and the like. They hope to present new guidelines to the February business meeting. The heat programming system was discussed. It seems that our current programmable system is difficult to use and only two members are currently capable of setting the thermostats correctly. Claire believes that easier systems are now available and that we should consider investing in one.

Andy Burt described interesting developments regarding solar energy for the meetinghouse and publicity of the meeting's steps to increase its energy efficiency.

Carmen Lavertu is interested in our furthering the work of the organization Bread for the World. Anyone interested should speak to her. There is specific need for a volunteer to urge state legislators to act to reduce hunger.

The notion of a Christmas party (or the lack thereof) dies hard. Deb Haviland suggested that we at least have special refreshments on Sunday, December 18th, and that was agreed. The anniversary gathering on November 20th was a big success. There were about 50 people present, and over \$600 was raised for Pakistani relief. The money will be given to the Pakistani doctor at Miles Hospital who makes periodic trips to assist in the relief effort. The brunch was wonderfully organized and executed by Pat Spock. Bill Spock noted that we are in an attempted transition from a process-led business style to a "gifts and leadings" style. He noted that the "old style" of committee work and dedication was needed to make the gathering a success; though, in the end, many contributions to the event did materialize from individual leadings. It was noted that we need to appreciate the fact that some activities of the meeting are better suited to one style or the other.

Vigils for the Christian Peace Team hostages were led at the meetinghouse by Andy Burt, Linda Coté-Small, Holly Baldwin, and Gretchen Hull. Friends also participated in vigils on bridges.

The next Monthly Meeting for Business will be Sunday, January 15, at the rise of meeting. A brown bag lunch is suggested. *All are welcome to attend.*

Revision of Faith and Practice Chapter on Worship

By Deborah Haviland for Ministry & Counsel

New England Yearly Meeting has sent us the new draft chapter on worship and asks that meetings send comments back to them by early February. Ministry & Counsel has read the chapter and feels it would be good to have planned times for members and attendees to participate in this discussion. These will be Sundays, January 22 and January 29, both 8:30 - 9:45 a.m., before Meeting for Worship. There will be copies of the draft chapter on the credenza by mid-December for anyone to take home and study. If we need more than fifteen copies, more will be made. Please sign your name on the list when you take one.

Chouteau and the Rainbow

By Claire Darrow

It was a summer Meeting for Business held at Chouteau's fabled barn, sometime in 1993, when Midcoast Meeting finally got the go-ahead to build our meetinghouse. We had gathered, fed well, as always, and settled into the silence before taking up the agenda for our meeting. After that wonderful velvet silence, we commenced to labor together on the tasks ahead.

Suddenly, Chouteau looked out the window to the east, over the trees and water to the sky and exclaimed, in her best stage voice, "Just look out there! There's a rainbow!" Of course we all crowded around the two windows there and sure enough, there was a lovely rainbow, clear as a bell, with a fainter one hovering nearby. Someone said, "It's a sign that we are supposed to take this great leap of faith and build our meetinghouse, no matter how large the obstacles seem to be at this moment." We agreed, took a last look at the rainbow and then settled back in our seats, confidently taking up our work with gladdened hearts, sure of our way at last.

If you have more memories of this occurrence, please send them to Claire Darrow (cdarrow@awi.net) so she can add them to this one.

"The good words we say and the good deeds we do are not ours: They are the words and deeds of the One who brought us here. In that spirit, I hope you will write this on your wall: When a great ship is in harbor and moored, it is safe, there can be no doubt. But that is not what great ships are for."

—Clarissa Pinkola Estes

Greeter for Meeting: A Concern for Quaker Practice

By Deborah Haviland

Ministry & Counsel recommended at the December monthly meeting that we have a greeter in the foyer for the first ten to fifteen minutes of meeting. The committee feels there is a need to have someone welcome new people who attend meeting for the first time. We also brought forth the concern that it is important that we all become more aware of the Quaker practice of not entering the meeting room when someone is speaking. We are aware that it is more difficult to center down when people enter at different times and that noise in the foyer can be disruptive during the beginning of meeting. The greeter will ask people who come after meeting has started to wait quietly in the library or on the hall bench for ten to fifteen minutes. At the right time or when the children come out, everyone will go into the meeting room together. We will have a sign on the door for people arriving after that time, reminding them that meeting has started. If persons do enter when someone is speaking, it is appropriate to stand inside by the door until the speaker is finished and then go to a seat. There was a full discussion by those attending monthly meeting about this recommended change. It was agreed to implement these suggestions for the spiritual health of our meeting.



Query #9

Stewardship

Do you revere all life and the splendor of God's continuing creation? Do you try to protect the natural environment and its creatures against abuse and harmful exploitation? Do you regard your possessions as given to you in trust, and do you part with them freely to meet the needs of others? Are you frugal in your personal life and committed to the just distribution of the world's resources?

To the Midcoast Monthly Meeting of Friends

By Katrina Rickerman

My name is Katrina Rickermann. I am 20 years old and a resident of Waldoboro, Maine, where I have lived off and on for the past 2 years. I will be attending the University of Maine in the fall and recently graduated from NARS (North Atlantic Regional High School) in Lewiston, Maine. I have attended the Midcoast Meeting whenever possible, and feel very comfortable there. I especially am fond of the main sanctuary, where the wide open spaces and natural lighting lend a very peaceful tone to the room, and during warm months the windows stay wide open and those meditating upon God's words can hear his creations fly, flutter, and buzz by.

Over the past several years I had been searching for a faith that fits the principles I already believed in. I believe that violence is inherently evil, though defense of one's family, faith, and self is not. I believe that God's voice can be found inside oneself if one cares to listen, and that His voice is what is commonly known as a "conscience." You could say—and would be quite correct!—that I consider the gentle needling of one's conscience to be God saying, "Hey, stupid! That's not what I would want you to do!" or perhaps "Maybe you should give Mom a hug, she needs it." Once I realized this, I discovered just how often my conscience spoke to me—daily, frequently more often—and how impossible it was to ignore now. I mean, would you tell God you were too busy to listen? Not likely, unless you wanted to become a human lightning rod.

I was, at this time, still searching for a faith, when my mother told me about Quakers. She explained how they believe all peoples are equally close to the Lord, and that ministers have no greater connection to God—though, in my belief, perhaps some of them listen more closely than others. This means that the best way to understand God's work...is to just listen. This was perfect! I began to learn about Quakers and found out that some Quakers believe in Christ and others

don't, and although this creates schisms, they aren't nearly so bad as those in some other religions. I learned that official business was broken down to the smallest levels, so one doesn't have to get permission from 7.926 special people before running a can drive! I like this. Things get done faster, and more efficiently, and this system is democracy at its finest. Reminds me of Old America, Revolutionary War old, when the voice of the people was truly heard and not drowned out by greed and politics.

The Quaker belief in non-violence in particular spoke to me. I am at heart a peaceful person. I study and practice the Martial Art Shotkan Karate, as one can learn at high rank and ability how to avoid, disarm, or neutralize an attacker without needless deadly or serious, irreversible harm. This really speaks to me. I am not afraid of violence, I understand it exists and is part of our world though I hold to the idealistic belief that someday it will be abolished—but only if those like us, conscientious objectors, stand up and are recognized and do not falter in our quests for peace. The current war the U.S. is fighting I am totally against, and whenever I hear "let us pray for our troops" indeed I do pray—that they come home, soon, and that this meaningless war is ended NOW.

I decided officially to consider myself a Quaker last summer after attending Chop Point Camp in Maine; the counselors working there helped me to come to conclusions about my faith. I have finally found a faith that I accept wholeheartedly with my mind and heart; now I wish deeply to have a place to call home spiritually. Please, I would very much like to be officially accepted as a full-fledged member of the Midcoast Meeting and join you all in service and worship as often as I can. Will you please accept me as one of you? Thank you.

May all your days be filled with the Lord's grace,

Katrina Rickermann

After a clearness committee met with Katrina Rickermann, Ministry & Counsel heartily recommended Katrina for membership in Midcoast Monthly Meeting, and this was approved at December's Meeting for Business. A welcoming reception for Katrina will be held at rise of worship on January 22.

The Advices

Friends are advised to consider our possessions as God's gifts, entrusted to us for responsible use. Let us free our time and our abilities to be able to follow the leadings of the Spirit. Let us cherish the beauty and variety of the world. Friends are urged to speak out boldly against the destruction of the world's resources and the difficulties that destruction prepares for the future generations. Let us guard against waste and resist our extravagant consumption, which contributes to inequities and impoverishment of life in our own and other societies. Let us show a loving consideration for all God's creatures. Let kindness know no limits.



Marian Halo Dwyer, September 23, 1929 - May 11, 1994 by Glenn Dwyer

Marian Halo Dwyer was born to Near Eastern parents who had emigrated to the United States after the political and human tragedy to Christians and Armenians in the former Ottoman Empire during the period between 1915 and 1923. Her Armenian mother was a laboratory technician for the city of New York and worked for 32 years in the Department of Health. Her Assyrian father worked for the New York Department of Justice as an interpreter of Arabic, Turkish, and Persian for the courts. Marian attended Hunter College, graduating with degrees in theater and music. She worked in various jobs in New York, from gift wrapping items at Alexander's to minor secretarial jobs on Wall Street. She married Frank Dwyer, a China Burma India war veteran and, thanks to the G.I. Bill, a fellow Hunter alum. Together, they set up a household in Yonkers, he as a supervisor for Schaeffer Brewing, while she stayed home and raised their children and studied sculpture. She met and studied with Jacques Lipschitz and William Zorach at this time while studying at an art class she took "on a whim."

She moved with her family to Newark, New Jersey, where Frank worked for New Jersey Bell, and after the birth of their third child, she became more concerned about her husband's heavy drinking. She became a member of Alanon, where she learned more about the disease of alcoholism and the alcoholic. With three children, ages two, seven, and eleven in tow, she moved herself into a small summer camp located in Bristol, Maine, in August of 1967, a week before race riots broke out and devastated downtown Newark.

In Maine she worked as a second grade teacher and substitute in the school system, and she attended many churches. She met Naomi Michaelson through her school experiences, thereby coming into contact with Nancy Booth, Chouteau Chapin, Bill Bonyun, and the "Treasure Hunt" circle of co-workers. It was Chouteau and her husband, Stewart, who invited her to attend a "small meeting of Friends (with a capital F)" and shepherded her and her family to meetings in the homes of Midcoast Meeting families—the Schmidts, the Chapins, the Colbys, the Ortloffs, and later, to Skidompha Library (home of Midcoast Meeting for many years).

At that time, Meeting was a far more locally active/focused community. The founding of People to People was a tremendous responsibility, driven by Nancy Booth, and Marian played a small role. She also participated with Friends in calling out for accountability in regards to the Vietnam War. Chouteau would stand at the barricades, and Marian (when time permitted) would stand with her. Nancy would sit at

the bake sales in front of (then) Yellowfront, and Marian would sit with her. As Meeting grew, as younger families became excited with the anti-war movement, and as elders needed help with attending, Marian was there to welcome them, cooking and making newcomers and travelers feel welcome in what was a taciturn and sometimes stand-offish region. Marian would contribute her talents and her wisdom to families. On many occasions, she opened her home, situated by a popular swimming hole, for use as a changing station for mothers with infants or as a telephone booth for people making calls.

After the end of the Vietnam era, Marian became more active in local issues again, but in 1978, again led by the Chouteau's example, she left on a month-long trip for Rio Caliente in Guadalajara, Mexico. She enjoyed Mexico so much she returned two more times. There she worked on her art, which was influenced by the Toltec works she encountered.

In Maine she also was very active in town politics and had a tremendous influence on the formation of the Great Salt Bay School (her work, "the Frog Princess," is on display there, as testament to her efforts tending that way).

Being one "who tread lightly on the earth, seeing that of God in everyone," she decided to leave Midcoast Meeting to pursue a more musical congregation and left to sing with her longtime partner, Allen Hind, a Christian Scientist. She often said, "Love is when two people live with each other and care for one another till their hair grows white." As a duo, they traveled to Calabria and Sicily in Italy, as well as to Milan and the Tasze community, located in the Northern Alps, singing and playing piano for Armenian relief after devastating earthquakes.

Nancy Booth recalls her singing "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning" while riding in Naples, much to the pleasure of the local Neapolitans, who cried "Bravo."

After a long battle with breast cancer, Marian passed away quietly while being given foot massages and listening to tagalog chimes, surrounded by candlelight, with her family present. Her ashes were scattered in the falls at Damariscotta Mills.

She is survived by her daughter Alison and granddaughter Caralyn, of Nobleboro, her son Glenn and his wife Jayne and granddaughter Olivia, of Newcastle, and her son Robert and his wife Sally, who live in the Boston area and summer in Bristol.

My Experience of “Creative Listening” with Friends

by Willow Rowntree

Before Rowan and I left Maine in November, we joined in two sessions of “Creative Listening” with Friends at Meeting. “Creative Listening” was originally developed by the Claremont, California, Friends Meeting. They wanted to find a way to deepen personal relationships within their meeting.

The process is simple: a leader asks a question about a specified type of experience, each member responds in turn by describing such an experience of her own, no questions are asked or overt responses made, and silence is kept between speakers. Each speaker shares only his experience and feelings; no analyses or explanations are given. The listeners respond silently in kind, making no analyses or judgments. Rather, they experience the story as told by the speaker, accepting the feelings expressed.

At the time, I was surprised by the power of this simple listening process. Our agreement to give only silent responses created a freer exchange than I’ve ever had in a group. As a speaker, I was freed from anticipating how others might respond: from questions they might ask, explanations they might want, analysis or sympathy they might offer—any of which might take my experience off in a direction not my own. As a listener, I was also free. I could “retire my mind” and hear the speaker, knowing no overt response was

expected or desired.

The result of this freedom was for me a rich, vibrant purity of connection. The varied stories I heard still resonate and have become part of my own experience and feelings. I can close my eyes today and see again the faces of each person in the circle and remember, if not their exact words, the emotional truth of their stories. What a gift!

As I reflect on my experience of “Creative Listening,” I’ve been helped by Howard Brinton’s *Friends for 300 Years*, which I’ve recently been reading for the first time. Brinton says that George Fox’s epistles show that “... the Light first appeared to Friends in terms of *feeling and experience* (my italics)...”; also the Word has “... been partially revealed since the beginning [of Creation] in every creative act.” Brinton’s words give me an idea of where the power of “Creative Listening” comes from. “Creative Listening” is an act of mutual compassion that creates recognition and celebration of the Light that shines in each person’s story. What resulted for me, once all the stories were told, was illumination of a new, ongoing, communal story that I believe is at least part of the Word ever-coming into the World.

Rowan joins me in sending Advent wishes for love and peace.

Midcoast Meeting of Friends
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