

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



Hope is an orientation of the spirit, an orientation of the heart. It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out.

—Vaclav Havel
Contributed by Esther Cope

February

Sunday	January 30	9 am rise of worship	* Religious Education Committee meeting Conversation on Future of Meeting (rescheduled)
Wednesday	February 2	5 pm	Ministry & Counsel Committee meeting
Saturday	February 5	all day	* Vassalboro Quarterly Meeting, hosted by Winthrop & Pondtown.
Sunday	February 6		Food Pantry Day—please bring items for the basket in the meetinghouse
Sunday	February 13	9 am rise of worship	* Religious Education Committee meeting * Second-Hour Discussion on Peace & Social Concerns, a conversation with Jonathan Vogel-Bourne
Sunday	February 20	rise of worship	Monthly Meeting for Business. Bring bag lunch
Monday	February 21	or asap thereafter	Call for March newsletter items
~ Advance Notice ~			
Wednesday	March 2	5 pm	Ministry & Counsel Committee meeting
Saturday	March 5	10 am - 4 pm	* Being Peace Workshop, led by Linda Coté-Small

* 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

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

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

Visit www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org

The Entirely Unofficial MONTHLY MEETING NOTES, 1st month of 2005

based on draft minutes by Rob Patterson, Recording Clerk

Clerk Jean Crawford opened the meeting on 1/16/05, with a reading from Kierkegaard. A brief silence was observed. Nineteen Friends were present. Minutes of the December meeting were read and approved with several corrections.

Ministry & Counsel

Natalie Wriggins reported for the committee. There were 18 people at the New Year's Eve potluck supper at the meetinghouse, even more than had indicated attendance on sign-up sheets. Deb Haviland may clerk the committee this year. Clerk of Meeting Jean Crawford asked if the committee had given any consideration to the possibility of the meetinghouse becoming a sanctuary for AWOL military personnel resisting engagement in the Iraq war, as had been proposed by several Friends in a piece in the January newsletter. It had not been discussed. A discussion ensued about how we would make such a decision and what the meetinghouse would have to be able to provide to a person seeking such protection. It was agreed that the legal aspects of the matter would be a first consideration. A Friend suggested that the logical path for a request to take would be to have it reviewed initially by Ministry & Counsel and then be referred to other committees, such as Meetinghouse & Grounds as appropriate to deal with the logistics of such an undertaking. We shall make inquiry at Quarterly Meeting to

Communications Committee

List Updating

The Meeting is updating its e-mail chain and creating a new telephone chain. If you would like to change your status on the e-mail chain, please notify Diane Kirkman at diane_kirkman@hotmail.com. If you would like to participate in the new telephone chain, please notify Pat Spock. She can be reached by phone at 729-0826 or by e-mail at wspock@gwi.net.

Query #11

Social Responsibility

Do you respect the worth of every human being as a child of God? Do you uphold the right of all persons to justice and human dignity? Do you endeavor to create political, social, and economic institutions which will sustain and enrich the life of all? Do you fulfill all civic obligations which are not contrary to divine leadings? Do you give spiritual and material support to those who suffer for conscience's sake?

see if any other meetings have broached the subject.

Peace & Social Concerns

Holly Baldwin reported that the committee has not yet met in the new year. She indicated that there is no clerk as of yet and that the committee feels in a "muddle" while awaiting some guidance on what their role should be. Only four people showed up for the book discussion on *The Unconquerable World*, but a number of people have ordered the book, and so the discussion will be re-convened at a later date, after more people have had a chance to read the book.

Religious Education

Patience Thomas has volunteered to clerk, and the committee's first meeting of the new year will be at 5:30 on January 19th. Curriculum development will be the focus. The committee may circulate a volunteer list for teaching First Day School. Ideally, a "grab bag" of activities will be created that will allow a volunteer to come in on short notice and structure the time for the children. Parents say they want their kids to be comfortable, as they are in their own home. They need to feel some ownership of the space. The range of attendance at First Day School varies from zero to about nine children on any given Sunday. The children want to buy an "Ark" through the Heifer Project. This designation means a package offering of certain animals. They have about \$650.00; there appears to be a shortfall of about \$100 to purchase the ark. It was felt that the gap could easily be closed, either by separate donations from meeting members or, if need be, from Worthy Needs funds.

Treasurer's Report

Paul Diamond reported that we are now within \$1,500 of our budget goal of \$18,000 in contributions income by May 2005, and he feels confident, based on past patterns of pledging, that this target will be reached.

In addition, we are the beneficiaries of three bequests from deceased members, all of which should come to fruition this year.

Hospitality Committee

Pat Spock asked that the committee's annual budget allotment be raised from \$50 to \$200, so it may more realistically cover expenses of basic cleaning supplies and other necessary consumables. It was approved.

Other Business

Bill Spock discussed the Visioning session scheduled for next Sunday, the 23rd, at the rise of meeting. Bill has done a lot of thinking about how to help us move ahead with planning and goals. He discussed briefly the Meeting's strong and weak points. Finance and special projects, like the Rumallah sale, are noted

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successes. He calculated that there are some 80 jobs or posts among the various committees and representations we attempt to fill in any year. Those 80 jobs fall to a total of about 70 members and attenders, a significant proportion of whom are only modestly involved with the Meeting. Bill has prepared a two-page questionnaire which will be handed out to all in attendance at the Visioning session and will be mailed to those unable to attend.

Finally, Statistical Recorder Diane Kirkman gave the annual Statistical Report for 2004. At year end we had a total of 51 members which was a net loss of two. Females outnumber males by 2 to 1. The average number of people attending business meetings was 15 and Meeting for Worship averaged 33. This report is submitted annually to New England Yearly Meeting. A synopsis will be included in the newsletter.

The next Monthly Meeting for Business will be Sunday, February 20, at 11:30 a.m., bag lunch. All welcome.

Vassalboro Quarterly Mtg

Saturday, February 5th

Winthrop Center Friends Church

Hosted by Winthrop & Pondtown Monthly Meetings

Directions: From Augusta, go west on Rt. 202 toward Winthrop. Turn left on Winthrop Center Rd. (Rt 135). The church is 1 mile south of Rt. 202.

Schedule

- 8:30 Gathering
- 9:00 Opening
- 9:30 Worship
- 10:30 Meeting for Worship for Business
- 12:30 Lunch. Please bring salad, bread or dessert.
- 1:45 Intergenerational Activity
- 2:15-3:15 Small-group discussion on the topic "What experiences in your life have led to the beliefs you now hold about God?"
- 3:30-4:00 Intervisitation, Regional Study Groups, E-mail study groups, & Connecting through the Arts.
- 4:00 Close

QM Ministry & Counsel meets Friday evening, February 4, 5:30 pm. Potluck Dinner, Winthrop Center Friends Church. Overnight hospitality available.

Hospitality/Info: Pastor Maggie Edmondson, 359-4790, edmondso@ctel.net. **Clerks:** Bill Rosenbaum, Winthrop, 377-2582; Karen Burke, Pondtown, 377-8606, kmburke@ctel.net.

Religious Education

Where Are We Going?

by **Patience Thomas,**

clerk of Religious Education Committee

On Sunday, January 9th, a gathering of Ministry and Counsel, First Day School parents and the Religious Education Committee was called to look with care at the First Day School program and discuss how to strengthen it. The largest challenge for this program is variable attendance. The number of children attending on any given day ranges from nine to zero. Therefore, it is difficult to keep a consistent theme or curriculum going. It is also hard for teachers to be prepared.

Given the reality of this situation, the group recognized two priorities:

1. The children need to "feel comfort" in attending Meeting and First Day School.
2. "Curriculum" will center on values, possibly prompted through activities centered around nature, art, peace, and service. Delineating the means by which these priorities will be incorporated into the curriculum is the role of the Religious Education Committee. In addition, the combined group hopes that a larger number of Friends will volunteer to teach. One way of sharing and softening the responsibility of a few individuals is to develop a "grab bag" curriculum. More information about how one may contribute to this creative and cooperative idea will be forthcoming. Stay tuned!

There was a shared feeling that youth are the future of the Meeting. "This garden needs to be nurtured." Carmen suggested that one way to garner inspiration for Religious Education would be to attend the Quarterly Meeting in Winthrop on Saturday, February 5th. Decisions and requests of this committee will be communicated through announcements at rise of Meeting.

First Day School Update

By **Sylvia Tavares**

On Wednesday evening, January 19, the Religious Education Committee met, and this is what was determined. For February, we set up First Day School with themes for each Sunday of the month as follows: 2/6 Peace; 2/13 Love, cooking; 2/20 Nature and Crafts; 2/27 Art.

We invite anyone who's interested to join in. There will be a committee member to lead the group. We are calling this An Intergenerational First Day School, with the idea that all ages can participate, as we have in the past.

There are two future meetings scheduled for brainstorming the grab bag curriculum: Sunday, January 30, and Sunday, February 13, both at 9:00 am. Bring your ideas. Share your passion! There will be more brainstorming sessions scheduled as needed.

Maggie’s article, below, offers some logistical suggestions and a more complete description of the envisioned work of the Gifts and Leadings Committee.

—Susan Davies, Clerk, VQM Ministry and Counsel

We long to know, not just believe, that our meetings, as well as our individual lives, are filled with transforming, guiding power of the Spirit. We long to be part of a community which is at work in the world, helping to move it toward the vision of Shalom, toward the gospel call to bring peace, justice, and compassion into the structure of our society and our dealings with one another. And we are aware of how far short we all fall in yielding ourselves to God’s purposes for us. Yet God can work wonders with the willing heart. As we move forward with the formation of the “Gifts and Leadings” committee which was so enthusiastically approved at our last Quarterly Meeting, I am excited by its possibilities in helping us to focus that willingness, and love and desire to serve one another and the wider community.

I have a sense that we find difficulty in facing, accepting, and delighting in our own giftedness. Do we fear that to do so would betray a lack of humility? And yet when we accept our gifts and use them under the Spirit’s direction, we are, by one of those delightful paradoxes which fill the life of the Spirit, both joyfully empowered by it personally, and at the same time released from self-consciousness, absolutely aware that it is the workings of something beyond ourselves which moves through us to bless others.

How can we help each other to identify and claim our own giftedness? How can we encourage those who are spreading their wings and trying out the adventure of offering their gifts among us? How can we joyfully embrace the concept of servant leadership, recognizing the empowerment it offers us as individuals and as a community? What studies, workshops, retreats, experience of the wider Quaker family might help us

The Advices

Friends are called, as followers of Christ, to help establish the Kingdom of God on earth. Let us strengthen a sense of kinship with everyone. Let that sense of kinship inspire us in our efforts to build a social order free of violence and oppression, in which no person’s development is thwarted by poverty and the lack of health care, education, or freedom. Friends are advised to minister to those in need and also to seek to know the facts and the causes of social and economic ills and to work for the removal of those ills. Let us cherish every human being and encourage efforts to overcome all forms of prejudice.

explore the whole idea of gifts and of leadings? What encourages us to use our gifts and helps them to grow and develop? What discourages the use of our gifts and squashes them?

Our hope is that each meeting will be represented on the Gifts and Leadings committee, with one or two members, and we ask each meeting to discern who those people might be. I believe that the energy which has grown around the idea of this committee and around the vision of what our Quarterly meeting can be will move among us to carry this forward. For some of us, that vision is primarily of a body working together in the world for social justice. For others of us, that vision focuses more on deeper spiritual connection. Both spring from our desire to serve God and each other, and we need all perspectives. I believe that the Spirit will draw together people of varied gifts to serve on this committee—ideas people and some very concrete thinkers who will help us get down to the nuts and bolts of planning activities and setting up systems to assist our vision.

So please spend time between now and our Quarterly meeting in February, considering who might feel called to be part of this new committee, and then we will explore together the logistics of where we might meet (a location in Liberty has already been offered, but this may not be central enough for all) and how often. Because of the geographical distances between us, I anticipate this may be a couple of times a year, but again, we will discern this together, along with the length of meeting time—a half day? a fuller day? What will be on the agenda? I have some ideas to start us off, but I think it’s important for our agenda to be built by the committee, sensing our needs as individuals, monthly meetings and a Quarterly meeting community.

I see my job as clerking, not directing this group. None of us will grasp fully the directions in which we will move—that will be up to the Spirit. I look forward to the adventure with you.

—Maggie Edmondson, clerk of Gifts and Leadings

**PRINTED - WORDS
PAINTED - WORLDS**
Oils and Woodcuts by Sally DeLorme Pedrick
January 30 – February 26
Conversational Sundays
Jan. 30, Feb. 6 and 13, 1–4 pm
Wintertime Soups & Breads
The Library Art Studio
1467 Route 32, Round Pond, ME (207) 529-4210

Being Peace Workshop to be Held at Meetinghouse

"We must be the change we wish to see in the world."
—Gandhi

What is the peace we, as individuals, wish to see in the world? How do we bring this peace into our lives? In this day-long class we will ponder the question, "What is being peace?" We will explore teachings of prominent peace teachers such as Thich Nhat Hanh, Peace Pilgrim, and Gandhi. Through writing, being still, sharing, and creating, we will discover what "being peace" means to each of us as individuals, and, finally, we will define steps to take to be the peace we wish to see in our world.

Bring your favorite peace quote to share. All participants will receive a copy of *The Peace Book; 108 Simple Ways to Create a More Peaceful World*, by Louise Diamond, and *Peace Pilgrim; Her Life and Work in Her Own Words*, compiled by Friends of Peace Pilgrim.

Artist and teacher Linda Cote-Small is passionate about cooking and eating whole foods, which led her to 13 years managing food cooperatives, where she taught and worked collaboratively with staff and boards of directors. Since September 11, 2001, Linda has been led to teach about being peace, about compassionate living, and visioning a peaceful world.

On Saturday, March 5, 10 am - 4 pm, Linda will present her Being Peace Workshop at the meetinghouse under the auspices of the Union 74 Adult & Community Education Program. The course fee is \$35 for Union 74 residents, \$40 all others (includes books). Make plans to attend this important workshop. Bring a bag lunch. To register, send your check to Union #74 Adult & Community Education, 767 Main St. 1-A, Damariscotta, ME 04543



Ministry & Counsel and Peace & Social Concerns

Whither Midcoast Monthly Meeting and Its P & SC Committee?

By Holly Baldwin

Do any of these statements apply to you?

- Peace & Social Concerns is the heart of the Meeting.
- This Meeting gives me the strength and conviction I need to work on peace and justice issues.
- I pursue peace and social concerns issues on my own outside of Meeting.
- The topics of peace and social concerns are of little interest to me.

The Meeting is having a Second-Hour session on February 13, to consider the relationship between the Peace & Social Concerns Committee and the rest of the meeting. Jonathan Vogel-Borne, Field Secretary of New England Yearly Meeting, will join us to help us discern our path.

The Peace & Social Concerns Committee is struggling to understand its purpose and relevance to the wider Meeting. We believe the work of this committee is critically important to the life of the Meeting. Witnessing to peace and social concerns has been part of our tradition of Friends since the early days. But what does it mean to Midcoast Friends right now?

The stronger the unity of the Meeting on the purpose of this committee, the better it will be able to do the work of the Meeting and the stronger our peace witness can be.

We have the opportunity during this Second-Hour discussion to listen carefully and discern the path that the Spirit intends for us in our witness for peace and social concerns. Please join us in listening for that calling and finding the path that this committee—and this Meeting—can take.

You may begin by taking some time to prayerfully consider the following queries, and then share your thoughts with the Meeting on February 13. If you cannot be present on February 13, you may communicate your reflections with someone on Ministry & Counsel or Peace & Social Concerns.

- How central is the Peace Testimony to your life as a Friend? What of the other social concerns?
- How does the Meeting support your leadings related to peace and social concerns?
- How could the meeting support your leadings related to peace and social concerns?
- What is the value to you of "corporate witness" on these matters?



An Open Letter from VQM

Dear Friends,

At the November 6th Vassalboro Quarterly Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business at Midcoast Friends Meeting, Maggie Edmondson presented us with the idea of new type of nominating process for the Quarter. Friends approved establishing a new type of nominating committee for the Quarter. Below this message I have copied in Maggie's article, prepared for the upcoming newsletter, which describes the new committee, named Gifts and Leadings. In recent years VQM has approved a 3- or 4-member nominating committee at Quarterly Meeting for Business, with the understanding that the committee was to seek Friends to fill needed committee and clerking roles in the Quarter. Friends who were gathered at Midcoast agreed that changing the "nominating" approach so that it was primarily focused on recognizing and encouraging gifts and leadings could be of great value. The life of the Quarter could then more easily grow out of the evidence of the work of the Spirit as it is already shining through individuals in our midst. We recognized that such an approach had the potential to release a new bounty of energy and commitment for VQM. Because this process is a departure from the one we have practiced in recent years, we thought it was

important to more fully explain some of the reasons for it. We are asking you to relay this information to your monthly meeting.

In short, the Gifts and Leadings Committee would be much larger than the customary VQM Nominating Committee and would comprise one or more representatives from each of the monthly meetings in the Quarter. Drawing on the energy and discernment of a larger group of Friends than the traditional 3- or 4-member nominating committee can transform the work of the Quarter and is closer to the NEYM model. The nominating process is a large and extremely important task. By emphasizing this approach, we are acknowledging that we are in search of "gifts" and "leadings" in order to conform our corporate intent to the work of the Spirit as presently manifesting among us. To that end, we need to have people on the committee who really know the individuals within the monthly meetings and who are in a position to recognize "gifts differing" and to nurture and call out leadings towards important work that may not have occurred to us. We are asking you to explain this new nominating approach to your meeting and to decide on a representative to serve on this new committee.

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Midcoast Meeting of Friends
PO Box 714, 77 Belvedere Road
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