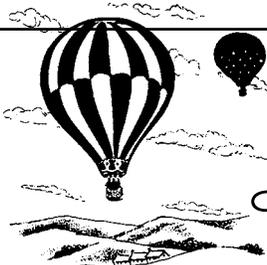


MIDCOAST MONTHLY MEETING
OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Damariscotta, Maine

NEWSLETTER



Life is short, and we do not have too much time to gladden the hearts of those who travel the way with us. So be swift to love, make haste to be kind.

Henri Frederic Amiel (Swiss philosopher/poet, 1821-81), contributed by Louise Gray

March

Wednesday	March 2	5 pm	Ministry & Counsel Committee meeting
Saturday	March 5	9:30 – 3:30	* VQM Gifts and Leadings meeting, Liberty
		10 am - 4 pm	* Being Peace Workshop, led by Linda Coté-Small
Sunday	March 6		Food Pantry Day—please bring items (or a check) for the basket in the meetinghouse
Sunday	March 13	9 a.m.	Religious Education Committee meeting
		Rise of worship	Second-Hour Discussion - Planning process: results of questionnaires
Sunday	March 20	rise of worship	Monthly Meeting for Business. Bring bag lunch
Monday	March 21	or asap thereafter	Call for April newsletter items
~ Advance Notice ~			
Saturday	April 2		* Workshop on Quaker Leadership, South Berkshire Monthly Meeting, Great Barrington, Massachusetts
Saturday	May 7	all day	All Maine Gathering, South China Church
Sat. - Fri.	July 2 – 8		Friends General Conference, Blacksburg, VA
Sat. - Thurs.	August 6 – 11		New England Yearly Meeting, Smithfield, RI

* 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**, 2nd month of 2005

based on draft minutes by Rob Patterson

Treasurer's Report

Paul Diamond reported we are approximately two-thirds of the way through our fiscal year. Committee expenses actually realized lag far behind budgeted amounts, as is typical in most years. Only \$533 has been expended out of a total of \$2825 budgeted. Paul urges all committees to think about projects which might need funding and get them started this fiscal year while we have available funds. Paul also requested that committees present their budget requests for next fiscal year to him by early March so that he can draft a proposed budget before he leaves on an extended trip.

It was suggested that we not focus too much on spending just because we have money available. In the area of operating expenses, it was noted that we have spent all but \$5 of our budgeted \$1700 for snowplowing and mowing. We have spent about half of our utilities budget but have a large portion of the heating season still ahead of us. Paul pointed out that, to the extent that we use green power, it cannot be pre-purchased, so that complicates planning.

The meeting has received bequests from three estates of deceased Meeting members. The bequests are from the estate of Chouteau Chapin, Pat Geiringer, and Bronson Clark, and total \$56,934. A large portion of these monies will be placed in the New England Yearly Meeting's Pooled Funds Account. The money will be transferred to that account at six-month intervals for reasons of investment prudence.

It was noted that rental income this fiscal year has been less than \$300.00 and suggested that the Meetinghouse Committee look at rental rates and consider an increase, as the rates have not been increased since the meetinghouse opened in 1995. Also, a report to Monthly Meeting on rental activity would be helpful so that we better understand how and to what extent the property is being used by the wider community.

Query #12

Peace and Reconciliation

Do you "live in the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars"? Do you faithfully maintain Friends' testimony against military preparations and all participation in war, as inconsistent with the teachings and spirit of Christ? Do you strive to increase understanding and use of non-violent methods of resolving conflicts?

Do you take your part in the ministry of reconciliation between individuals, groups, and nations? When discouraged, do you remember that Jesus said, "Peace is my parting gift to you, my own peace, such as the world cannot give. Set your troubled hearts at rest, and banish your fears"? John 14:27 NEB

Old Business

The Planning Process was addressed by facilitator Bill Spock. There have been 22 responses so far to the 83 questionnaires Bill sent to Meeting members and attenders. He would like to receive all responses by the end of February, to allow time for evaluation and collation of responses for the March 13th planning meeting. A Meeting-wide e-mail will be sent out to encourage timely response. Bill would like to have several readers/evaluators to help him tabulate and review the responses. The Havilands and Fousts volunteered to serve in that capacity. Linda Coté-Small urged that we not limit ourselves in how we get things accomplished; that we focus on "accomplishments and excitements" and that may bring with it new ways of doing things. Pete Haviland added that we need both the framework of committees to "keep the lights on, the floors clean, and money coming in," and the excitement and energy that is stirred by a worthy endeavor. Bill Spock said we must think about the opportunities we have rather than the problems we have.

Letter Regarding Iraq

Carmen Lavertu read to the Meeting a draft of a letter she, Ernie, and Pete cooperatively wrote to the president and our representatives in Congress about the continuing occupation of Iraq and the administration's use of force rather than diplomacy to achieve our international goals. The letter points out that the proposed federal budget for the next year calls for almost 40 times as much spending for defense as for the State Department. Bill Spock added useful editing suggestions to remove or avoid invective. It was agreed that the project is time urgent, and therefore the Meeting agreed to entrust final wording to the good judgment of Pete, Paul Diamond, and Andy Burt who will collectively review it again and prepare the final version. It will be signed by Rob Patterson as Recording Clerk since Jean will be out of town next week.

Ministry & Counsel

Deb Haviland has agreed to clerk the committee, and Laura Zylstra will be the assistant clerk. A new welcome brochure is being worked on for completion this spring.

The State of the Meeting Report was discussed. It is due to New England Yearly Meeting by the end of April. In the past we have held a special meeting to brainstorm this report, but the committee has decided they would like to try direct appeals to the Meeting community to share their thoughts. Holly Baldwin has agreed to be the volunteer coordinator for the committee.

The committee feels that more information is needed from Gretchen Hull, Andy Burt, and Anna
continued on next page

Monthly Meeting Notescont'd fr. p. 2

Needham, authors of the article in the newsletter about using the meetinghouse as sanctuary for AWOL soldiers or draft evaders (should a draft be reinstated). The committee suggested that an ad hoc committee be formed to look at all issues, but Monthly Meeting decided that we should await further information before moving in that direction.

A Pastoral Care Workshop at Woolman Hill will be attended by Sally and Jerry Wood in April. They will go with a letter of support from the committee.

Peace & Social Concerns

Carmen reported on the committee's recommendations for the disbursement of Worthy Needs Funds. Of a total of \$1,000, \$200 each will go to CHIP, People to People, the Food Pantry, Habitat for Humanity and Healthy Kids. All organizations were recipients of funds last year except for Healthy Kids, which is the only new recipient. It is a well-regarded program bringing basic health education and training to poor, young families. Carmen noted that the committee has no plans to meet again until directed by the Meeting. It is hoped that the planning work we are engaged in will address this issue.

Religious Education

Sally Tukey reported the committee wants to use the money raised by the children for purchase of a "core house" from Habitat for Humanity. Paul Diamond pointed out, however, that funds had already been solicited and received from some Meeting members to augment the Heifer Project gift that had previously been discussed and therefore the Meeting agreed that we should keep to the earlier plan while expressing to Religious Education that there is enthusiasm within the Meeting for helping to raise monies for Habitat as well.

Meetinghouse & Grounds

Pete Haviland reported they have met and appointed Steve Gorry as clerk. They will develop work projects for the spring including some interior and exterior painting. The lights in the social room will be addressed as will the fixing of the automatic exterior light. The committee has arranged for a free energy audit from the state.

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

**Religious Education Committee Meeting
Sunday, March 13th at 9:00am**

We are looking for grab bag ideas and instructions available for fresh spirited teachers. FMI: Patience Thomas, 563-8177.

A Peace and Social Concerns Bookshelf

By Carmen Lavertu

There is a book exchange located on the shelves of the P&SC bookcase in the First Day School/Social Room. The purpose of the bookshelf is to share the cost of reading to be well informed on peace and justice topics. These are books of current interest and not suitable for our permanent library. The books may come from our personal bookshelves as discards or may eventually need to be returned to their owners. Borrowers are asked to take what they can read in a fair amount of time and bring them back for others to share or to return to the original owner. For instance, I have put a book on these shelves that I value a great deal; it is *Revenge*, by Laura Blumenfeld. I very much want to share this book and want to know if others are as moved by it as I am, but I want it back. All the other books I have placed there are for sharing in perpetuity.

Let us study to be peacemakers. Let us study war so that we can abolish it.



**Call for Participation in
E-mail Study group**

By Betsy Terrell

After the official quarterly meeting was over, there was an opportunity for informal meetings among those who were interested in study groups, intervisiting, etc. I went to the e-mail study group, which was also attended by Maggie Edmondson and Ron Ball. There was a suggestion that we begin by studying Pendle Hill Pamphlets. We are in the process of setting up this group and are asking for anyone who is interested to e-mail me at captainbetsy@fastmail.fm. We will get started sometime in March.

Simple Is Good

The Hospitality Committee is looking for volunteers to provide LIGHT refreshments at the rise of Meeting. If you enjoy the custom of gathering over coffee and snacks, won't you make a modest contribution to this custom by signing up? Contact Pat Spock (729-0826 or wspock@gwi.net) to find the Sundays not already spoken for, and remember SIMPLE IS GOOD.

VQM Gifts and Leadings

Saturday, March 5, 9:30-3:30

At the home of Sharon Salmon and Charlie Hudson, Liberty, 589-3212. Bring a brown bag lunch. FMI: Maggie Edmondson, clerk Gifts and Leadings, 395-4790, edmondso@ctel.net

Study/Discussion Group on Consumerism

By Betsy Terrell

At the end of meeting for worship on February 13, Alice Lacy stated, "I have seen the enemy, and it is us." She was referring to consumerism in all its manifestations, and she asked if others would be interested in having a group (not a committee) to research and discuss this. In a brief talk with her and Rachel McGinness, I gathered that she felt some of the related issues include the following:

- buying things we don't need;
- buying American products or those from developing countries or other industrialized nations, and how to be more conscious in our decisions;
- giving away our excess possessions—the practice of voluntary simplicity.

In a short preliminary search online, I found a wealth of information and sources of study material. To quote just a few shocking facts:

"Globally, the twenty percent of the world's people in the highest-income countries account for eighty-six percent of total private consumption expenditures, while the poorest twenty percent consume a minuscule one point three percent." Quoted from Human Development Report 1998 Overview, United Nations Development Programme and from Global Priorities in Spending 1998, source: Consumerism, Volunteer Now! (a Web site set up by high school students in Toronto, www.volunteernow.ca)

Global Priority	Worldwide Spending in U.S.\$ (Billions)
Basic education for everyone in the world . . . . .	.6
Cosmetics in the U.S. . . . .	.8
Water and sanitation for everyone in the world . . . .	.9
Ice cream in Europe . . . . .	.11
Reproductive health for all women in the world . . .	.12
Perfumes in Europe and the U.S. . . . .	.12
Basic health & nutrition for everyone in the world . .	.13
Pet foods in Europe and the U.S. . . . .	.17
Business entertainment in Japan . . . . .	.35
Cigarettes in Europe . . . . .	.50
Alcoholic drinks in Europe . . . . .	.105
Narcotics drugs in the world . . . . .	.400
Military spending in the world . . . . .	.780

I believe that studying these topics will lead to taking action in our own lives and maybe some educational efforts too. Who knows? I have volunteered to coordinate the group, so would interested parties please contact me via e-mail captainbetsy@fastmail.fm or call 563-1831. We would like to have a preliminary meeting in mid-March.

P&SC Second-Hour Discussion . .cont'd from page 8

that we are going to lay down ALL committees, but that the meetinghouse will be taken care of and meeting for worship will continue to happen, what two or three things are the most important work of the meeting?" Answers: to witness for peace; spiritual growth; abolish all committees, create working parties; care of the earth; education of the whole community; care for whole as well as the parts—pastoral care; know one another more deeply (these last three for the community at large, not just within the meeting itself); discerning together for truth (listening corporately for the will of the spirit); mindfulness of Friends' traditions and respecting them; connecting with the wider Quaker community.

It was clear that some people are led to pursue social activism as their spiritual path, while others feel the need for a more contemplative approach. Clearly, there are strong feelings in both directions. In the end, I felt a sense of togetherness among those present, to seek together for the leadings of the Light and how it will manifest in our corporate and individual choices of action.

In the ensuing discussion, it was evident to me that the meeting is deeply divided both in the reasons people originally became Quakers, as well as in individual views of what are the essential elements of Quaker expression. Within this gathering, however, individuals were encouraged by the group to make deep expression of their frustrations and confusions, and some very emotional release took place. This kind of release, as we have been reminded by Barry Morley in his Pendle Hill Pamphlet, *Beyond Consensus*, is an essential step in coming to the sense of the meeting on any difficult issue.

Jonathan did a wonderful job of providing commentary that allowed us to try to see from a bigger, longer point of view (another essential step toward sense of the meeting). He said it seems one thing that has happened here is that some individuals have begun to feel themselves on the fringes, that this can happen when the structure gets stretched too far, and that perhaps spirit has been shut into the structure and needs to be freed. "I wonder if you know how many people there are here in this meeting whose very lives speak volumes." He went on to express that activism comes in many forms. Holding the center IS a form of activism. This strong spiritual center refreshes those who are outwardly activist. He reminded us that we need to challenge AND support one another. There was, to me, a palpable feeling of inner movement among all present and a commitment to seek together the leadings of the Light and how it will manifest in our corporate and individual choices of action.



Excerpts from the P&SC Meeting Report

By Carmen Lavertu

On-going Planning

Holly Baldwin and Andy Burt are making preparations for the Portland Homeless drama group. Linda is developing a new program in her "Envisioning a Peaceful World" project. She is inspired by the experience of East and West German peace vigils on both sides of the Berlin Wall in the 1980s, by the work of Elise Boulding, and Cathy Whitmire (Portland Meeting) was also suggested as a resource. An idea that we are noting for further discussion is to bring Perry O'Brien (conscientious objector) for a meeting/community event, sponsored with the Maine AFSC committee.

Worthy Needs

We reviewed the criteria that were set last year and agreed to continue along the same lines; e.g., to support local groups that serve the poor, giving special attention to groups in which Friends are involved. The allocation for this year is \$1000.

We recommend to the Meeting the following allocations: CHIP \$200, People to People \$200 (raising the amount from last year because of the particular difficulties at this time (details are in the last two committee reports and were brought to Meeting for Business), Ecumenical Food Pantry \$200 (this amount is reduced, noting that we have made individual contributions and will continue to urge Friends to contribute financially as well as with food donations). We recommend \$200 for Habitat for Humanity (Bath-Brunswick) to continue the support we gave last year, also \$200 for Healthy Kids, an organization that we have studied and find to be "worthy" for their much-needed service to poor families. We request the Meeting to look at the needs of Friends Camp at China Lake and the summer worship group at Vesper Hill in Rockport. We think these two are not strictly social programs, and we hope that the Meeting can provide assistance from the general budget. Finally, it is our hope that the Meeting will consider a fund-raising event for a current need (such as Indian Ocean Tsunami relief, or to a continued interest in Kakamega, the Ramallah School, or the Capetown project).

Workshop on Quaker Leadership

Saturday, April 2, 2005

at South Berkshire Monthly Meeting
Great Barrington, Massachusetts

A workshop to nurture, train, and support clerks of monthly meetings, quarterly meeting, and clerks of committees at all levels. Contact NEYM office by March 24, 2005, to let us know you are coming and/or need overnight hospitality. FMI: 508-754-6760 or neym@neym.org

Landscape/Maintenance Committees Changes and Challenges

By Claire Darrow

If you've read the list of committees and members for 2005 you are aware that things are a bit different this year. No landscape and maintenance committee members are listed. The thinking is that everyone in the Meeting is responsible for these committees and the work needs to be shared by all. The whole Meeting is being asked to volunteer for certain tasks and to lend their efforts to the jobs needing doing.

Along that line, a volunteer is strongly needed to guide the work of getting the Memorial Garden finished. It is a finite job—when it's done it's done. What needs to be done, as I see it, is to get the stone benches installed, replace a few dying trees, and figure out what to do about the mulch, which seems to be just encouraging weeds. Two people might work along together and share the responsibility of directing this work and getting others to help. There is money in the budget to meet the expenses involved. Please think hard and creatively and speak to me soon about it.

The Advices

Every human being is a child of God with a measure of God's Light. War and other instruments of violence and oppression ignore this reality and violate our relation with God. Let us keep primary, therefore, Friends' concern for removing the causes of war. Let us seek, through God's power and grace, to overcome in our own hearts the emotions that lie at the root of violence. At every opportunity, let us be peacemakers in our homes, in our communities, and in our places of work. Let us take care that we who declare against war do not nourish the seeds of war in our possessions. Friends are urged to support those who witness to their governments and take personal risks in the cause of peace, who choose not to participate in war as soldiers nor to contribute to its preparations with their taxes. Let us support in all possible ways the development of international order, justice, and understanding.

Finally, dear Friends, let us follow steadfastly after all that is pure and lovely and of good report. Let us be prayerful, be watchful, be humble. Let not failure discourage us. Let our whole conduct and conversation be worthy of disciples of Christ.

Newsletter Archive Available

Lee Coolidge has an extensive collection of newsletter back issues, including the early years, and she would be happy to give this to anyone who would like to have it. Call her at 563-1011.

A Full Day at VQM, February 5, 2005

By Betsy Terrell

Quarterly meeting was a real spiritual shot in the arm. I felt so revitalized! Saturday's Meeting for Worship was a combined programmed/unprogrammed format, since the co-sponsors of the event were Winthrop Center Friends Church, which is programmed, and Pondtown Meeting, which is not. It was a good mix, with Pastor Maggie Edmondson showing beautiful sensitivity and connection to the diversity of those gathered, including a good-sized group of children. The organ music and singing was, for me, an enjoyable addition.

Meeting for Worship for Business was packed with information. There was a good bit of discussion about socially responsible investing, and the treasurer was asked to check into the bank's policies. A small working group of interested Friends will explore the possibility of investing in the newly formed Four Winds Development Corporation, a venture of the Penobscot Nation which aims to improve the social and economic conditions of Maine's tribal members. It is supported by Friends Committee on Maine Public Policy. Other investment possibilities will be considered as well.

All Maine Gathering

Carole Beal announced that the 2005 All Maine Gathering will be held on Saturday, May 7, 9am - 4:30 pm, at the South China Community Fellowship Church (Rufus Jones's church) in South China. Vassalboro Quarter will host Falmouth Quarter. Meetings are asked to contact Joann Austin (austin-law@pivot.net, phone: 445-3333) to help provide soup and casseroles and volunteers to help set up and clean up. The program will focus on economic development plans for Maine Native Americans with a discussion of the Four Winds Development Corporation. Tom Ewell of the Maine Council of Churches will lead an informal session of question and answers. There will be an all-day program for children led by Ronda Nichols and Kathie Gass, as well as an intergenerational activity. Contact Carole Beal for questions about the program (carole@acadia.net or 374-5844). All are invited.

Fall Gathering

Request was made for input about the program for Fall Gathering, our annual Quarter-wide family weekend, which will be held this year on September 9, 10, and 11, at Friends Camp in South China. The Fall Gathering Committee will meet on February 24 at Sally Skillman's home in Belfast to hold the theme for 2005 in the Light. Planning will continue once each month through April. Contact Carole Beal (carole@acadia.net or 374-5844).

Schedule Change Considered

Monthly meetings were asked to discuss the possibility of a change to the quarterly meeting calendar to move the winter quarterly meeting out of February so

as to avoid the difficulties and frequent cancellations due to weather.

Economic Concerns

Dan Koehler spoke about the work of the Kennebec Valley Organization Sponsoring Committee (KVOSC). Did you know that in the Kennebec Valley region the number one and number two employers (not counting governmental organizations and non-profits such as hospitals) are Wal-Mart and Hannaford? It's very difficult to support a family on the wages paid for typical jobs in these two companies. KVOSC is described as "a faith- and values-based organization working to bring together people across lines of religion, geography, age, ethnic group, and economic status to take action on issues such as good jobs, affordable housing, and critical public services." The structure is being modeled after the InterValley Project, a New England network of groups which "combine citizen action organizing and democratic economic development." At this stage, KVOSC is engaged in "listening campaigns" consisting of one-to-one and small-group meetings to find out what issues are most pressing in the Kennebec Valley region. On May 1st, they will meet to discuss their findings and choose the issues they will first address. FMI: Dan Koehler, 873-5844 or dankoehler@hotmail.com.

Conscientious Objection

Perry O'Brien gave a long and moving talk about his personal journey of transformation from voluntarily joining the armed forces to filing for conscientious objector status and being discharged, to becoming a counter-recruiting activist. He is trying to get the message of what the military is really about to young people. He described how, when he first arrived in Afghanistan as a member of a medical unit, he felt really good about his work, thinking of himself as being "in the Peace Corps with guns." Through his own observations and talks with other members of the military, including intelligence agents, he came to the conclusion that war was not only not solving any problems, it was actually making more. For example, the work he was doing to patch people up wouldn't even be necessary if not for the destruction being caused by our own military. Fortunately, he met with an Army chaplain who told him of the possibility of filing for C.O. status even while IN the military, and he was out in 5 months. Due to his background as a philosophy major, he had the ability to write an excellent essay and defend his position. He said others who have filed have tried unsuccessfully for a year or more to get out. Perry has launched a Web site, and he is available to speak to groups of young people. He is selling beautiful framed photos taken during his tour in Afghanistan

continued on next page

to help fund his Web site. Perry can be reached at 207-772-0871 or perry.obrien@gmail.com His Web site is www.peace-out.com.

Young Friends Gathering

Kristna Evans, from Northshore Monthly Meeting in Massachusetts, spoke about the upcoming World Gathering of Young Friends (WGYF) to be held in August in Lancaster, England, to which she is a delegate. Besides assisting our own delegates from New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM), meetings in Northern Hemisphere countries are being asked to sponsor one or more delegates from a Southern Hemisphere country who might not otherwise be able to attend. The organizers feel it is crucial to have full representation from all Third World countries. Look for more on the WGYF in next month's newsletter.

Gifts and Leadings Committee

The newly formed Gifts and Leadings Committee will hold their first meeting on Saturday, March 5. Monthly meetings were encouraged to appoint one or two representatives, and individuals with a concern for this subject are also welcome to attend. At this point, Deb Haviland and Betsy Terrell are planning to attend from Midcoast. Contact Maggie Edmondson for more information (207-395-4790 or edmondso@ctel.net).

Afternoon Sessions

After a delicious lunch and a much needed stretch break, there was a presentation by the children, and then the adults regathered for the afternoon activity, small group worship-sharing. Jean Crawford and Carmen Lavertu have contributed their comments on this below.

From Jean Crawford

When I read in the Quarterly Newsletter that the program would include small-group discussion on the topic "What experiences in your life have led to the beliefs you now hold about God?" I was drawn to attend. We were asked to divide into groups of three or four Friends whom we did not know well. For an hour we shared our experiences. There are not many people with whom I have done such sharing. I think one reason is that we don't want to assume that others agree with our beliefs. Because of the careful wording of the topic we were able to talk about our experiences without reference to our beliefs. It was a wonderful hour. I was surprised by the similarities of experiences. One reason it went so well may have been that Maggie Edmondson had delivered a message during worship about her own experiences that have led to the beliefs she now holds about God. She reminded us that she holds them now, but that doesn't mean she will hold them tomorrow. This is a pastor who seems on a level with her congregation.

From Carmen Lavertu

This was a profound experience for the four of us in

our group, as we shared the things deep in our hearts that the assignment evoked. It was interesting that there were points of similarity in all four accounts of our spiritual experiences and also that we had different ways of expressing the meaning of the experiences and our choices of spiritual practice. When we gathered in the large group afterward, it was very evident that the participants in all the groups had had a profound experience of intimacy. There were no reports of what had transpired (as there would be in problem solving, for instance) but a sense of quietness was felt and only general comments about the quality and the meaning of the experience. It brought to my mind other group experiences that have served to advance my spiritual growth, and a sadness that it is not much part of my life at this time. Solitude is necessary for our spiritual practice, but talking or writing—language (Creation's gift to humanity)—is a great aid in revealing deeper facets of consciousness.

Final Thoughts

When we regrouped, Maggie led a sharing of our thoughts about this activity, and then we went again into worship as a single group. The deep silence which ensued was for me a dip into the well of true spiritual comfort and solace. It was a sharing and a feeling of feeding and being fed on such a deep level. It was one of those timeless spaces which could have gone on effortlessly forever.

However, time was still with us, and, too soon, we stood to join hands and sing, feeling renewed, informed, activated, and joy-filled.

Vassalboro Quarterly Meeting

VQM M&C Committee Meeting

By Deb Haviland

Carmen Lavertu and I attended the VQM Ministry & Counsel Committee meeting was held on Friday evening, February 4, prior to Quarterly Meeting. The meeting was held at Winthrop Friends Church and started with a wonderful potluck supper. There were about twenty people attending. I was asked to read Ruth Kaltenbach's memorial minute, which Midcoast had sent to them. I loved doing this since Ruth had been a dear friend from the years when we first moved to Maine. Ministry & Counsel recommended sending the minute on to the Permanent Board of NEYM because Ruth and her husband had been involved in the beginnings of The Meeting School in Rindge, New Hampshire. The clerk of VQM also sees Ruth's life as an example of the Quaker agrarian tradition. The Permanent Board decides if the minute will become a part of Yearly Meeting Sessions this August. Carmen and I enjoyed wonderful overnight hospitality with Margy and Steve Knight of Winthrop.

P&SC Second-Hour Discussion

By Betsy Terrell

On February 13th, Jonathan Vogel-Bourne led a second-hour discussion at the request of the Peace & Social Concerns Committee. The stated aim was “to consider the relationship between the Peace & Social Concerns Committee and the rest of the Meeting.” About 25 people attended.

Jonathan had us rearrange the benches so that they were in pairs facing one another, and then we all sat down by twos, our knees nearly touching. Three questions were given for consideration, one at a time. All the pairs discussed the first question for a few minutes, then Jonathan led a summarizing of what had been the main points of the pairs’ discussions. The pairs were rotated for each of the next two questions and the process was repeated.

The first question was, “How do you live out your understanding of Friends Peace Testimony?” Answers included: talking to people (and e-mailing) about peace; being peaceable; speaking out in political context (including writing letters); not getting upset with people; money spent for peace groups; doing away with the cause of all wars.

Jonathan asked if anyone discussed what Friends Peace Testimony is. Andy Burt spoke about John

Woolman saying that the seeds of war are in our pockets, and that peace must begin with each of us as individuals. Jonathan pointed out that “being peace” very often may begin with the experiences of inner silence in meeting for worship. He stated that there is only one testimony—to the love of God—and all the other testimonies come out of that. He suggested that perhaps we are moving away from our centeredness with an over-focus on doing.

The second question was, “Describe a time in your experience with this meeting when it was most vital.” Answers included response to crisis, such as the Ramallah project; gathered meeting; the process of raising the meetinghouse; group projects, such as raising the South Africa container project, Seeds of Peace dinner; book group; memorial service; wedding service; when a wise person spoke (spirit-led speaking and mentorship); allowing sense of the Meeting. It was stronger when the group had to move a lot (it was also smaller then). Several people brought up examples of past experiences of strong spirit-led mentoring or eldering and the lack of such input at present.

The third question was, “Assuming for the moment

continued on page 4

Midcoast Meeting of Friends
PO Box 714, 77 Belvedere Road
Damariscotta, ME 04543

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