

3rd Month

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

March 2008



You, LORD, are my shepherd.
I will never be in need.
You let me rest in fields of green grass.
You lead me to streams of peaceful water, and you refresh my life.

--from Psalm 23 (CEV)

Rest your heart in God, let yourself float on the safe waters, loving life as it comes, with all the rough weather it may bring.

-- Brother Roger

March

Sunday	March 2	Rise of Meeting	Potluck Lunch.
Sunday	March 9	11:30 a.m.	Peace Center Meeting
Tuesday	March 11	7 p.m.	*Film: <i>Sand & Sorrow</i>
Sunday	March 16	Rise of Meeting	*Meeting for Worship for Business. (First half-hour will be Worship Sharing on the State of the Meeting.)
Tuesday	March 18	6 p.m.	AFSC Maine Program on Youth and Militarism
Wednesday	March 19	4-7 p.m.	*A Time to Grieve the Suffering and Loss of the People of Iraq
Saturday	March 29	6 p.m.	*"Semi-Potluck" & Visit with Sylvia Graves of FUM, Vassalboro MM Meetinghouse, East Vassalboro

April

Sunday	April 6	Rise of Meeting	Potluck Lunch
Sunday	April 13	Rise of Meeting	Meeting for Worship 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--Meeting for Business

Second Month 17, 2008

Correspondence--Two letters requesting consideration for membership have been received. They are from Paul Diamond and Vincent Frazzetta. Both were welcomed by the meeting and referred to Ministry & Counsel.

The meeting's **Statistical Report**, prepared by Diane Kirkman, will soon be submitted to the yearly meeting.

Meetinghouse & Grounds--The committee hopes Friends will make use of its new suggestion book, located on the small table in the rear of the vestibule.

Finance--Over the past five years, annual financial contributions have decreased 21 percent. The committee is preparing for recommendation to the meeting for business a policy on reserves and an updated capital budgeting process.

Ministry & Counsel--The committee's request that the March monthly meeting begin with approximately one-half hour of worship sharing on the state of the meeting during 2007 was approved. Friends approved a revision to the memorial minute for Jerry Wood as requested by Jerry's family.

Peace & Social Concerns--The committee is considering co-sponsorship at the meetinghouse of a film series with the Civil Rights Team of Lincoln Academy. There will be a commemoration at the meetinghouse of the fifth anniversary of the beginning of the war in Iraq.

Peace Center--The Steering Committee has established preliminary areas of concentration: 1) delineation of responsibilities of the Peace Center from those of the Peace & Social Concerns Committee, 2) climate change as a source of conflict, 3) countering militarism in schools and generally in American culture, 4) providing Alternatives to Violence training in the community, and 5) creating a community rapid-response team to be prepared in case of national emergency.

Old Business--In response to a request from FCNL (Friends Committee on National Legislation), we will schedule a worship sharing or discussion during April to help prioritize Friends lobbying work for the 111th Congress (2009-2010).

The **next meeting for business** will be on Sunday, March 16, at the rise of meeting. All are welcome. Please bring a bag lunch.

NOTE--The entire minutes may be found on the Meeting's website www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org and on the bulletin board at the meetinghouse.

QUERIES: PERSONAL CONDUCT--*Do you live with simplicity, moderation, and integrity? Are you punctual in keeping promises, careful in speech, just and compassionate in all your dealings with others? Do you take care that your spiritual growth is not sacrificed to busyness but instead integrates your life's activities? Are your recreations consistent with Quaker values; do they refresh your spirit and renew your body and mind?*

Appeal to Help CHIP This Winter: Many of our neighbors are suffering this winter because of the high cost of home heating. Government funds and assistance by the oil and propane distributors have been exhausted. Midcoast Meeting helps CHIP (Community Home Improvement Program in Lincoln County) through Worthy Needs contributions and the proceeds of our Holiday Sale (\$200 this year). It is never enough. This appeal is to all of us as individuals to see if we can make further contributions. Please send whatever you can to Nancy Booth, P.O. Box 6, Newcastle, ME 04553 or bring it to Meeting. Make checks payable to CHIP.

--Nancy Booth, Midcoast Meeting's representative
CHIP Board of Directors

ADVICES--Personal Conduct: Let us bring the whole of our daily lives under the ordering of the Spirit. Let our faith free us from crippling fears so that we may live adventurously. In relations with others, let us exercise imagination, understanding, and sympathy. Let us live and work in the plainness and simplicity of true followers of Christ.

In view of the evils arising from the use of tobacco and intoxicating drinks and from the abuse of drugs, Friends are advised to consider whether they should refrain from using them, from offering them to others, and from having any share in their manufacture or sale. We should not let the claims of good fellowship or the fear of seeming peculiar influence our decision.

Let us maintain integrity in word and deed. Holding to the simplicity of truth, let us keep free of oaths. Remember how widespread and diverse are the temptations to grow rich at the expense of others, and how apparently harmless indulgence often leads by degrees to wrongdoing. Let us avoid and discourage every kind of betting and gambling and commercial speculations of a gambling character.

Friends have always held that the sacred nature of a sexual relationship is affirmed only in marriage. In recent times, however, some Friends have found such affirmation in other contexts. Let us be certain, in any case, that we hold up to the Light any sexual relationship we may be considering and reject any relationship that may violate the integrity or spiritual welfare of either of the partners or of others. No relationship can be a right one which makes use of another person through selfish desire.

We Need Your Input for the State of the Society 2007

Another year has rolled around, and New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM) is reminding us to begin the process of writing the State of the Society Report for our meeting for 2007. This report assists the Quarterly Meeting and NEYM when they undertake to write the State of the Society reports for our quarterly meeting and the yearly meeting.

They are asking us to write our report with careful reflection upon the responses to the following queries:

1. Are your worship and meeting grounded in a strong relationship with and seeking after God's will? Does ministry arise in response to God's movement in your community? Are community business and action reflective of the presence of God?
2. Does your meeting nurture spiritual growth and development? Are there awareness and a "living into God" that are relied on and called upon in times of crises and challenge to individuals and the community as a whole?
3. When conflicts arise do you seek to respond in unity with God? Even during conflict, can community members live in love, truth, and connection that indicate unity with God even while you grapple with how to go forward?

Ministry & Counsel invites you to participate in a worship sharing on this topic for the first half hour of the monthly business meeting on March 16. If you are not able to join us that day, your reflections are welcome; we encourage you to write your thoughts on the board at the back of the meeting room.



Film on Darfur: *Sand and Sorrow*, a film by Paul Freedman narrated by George Clooney will be shown at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, March 11, at the Meeting House. The showing is a program of the school's Civil Rights Team. There will be a talk on Darfur prior to the showing and a Q&A session afterwards. For details about the film, please visit the website www.sandandsorrow.org.

An Invitation from Vassalboro MM

Dear Friends:

You and members of Vassalboro Quarterly Meeting are invited to join us for an evening of fellowship, good food, and sharing on Saturday evening, Seventh Day, Third Month, 29, 2008, 6:00 p.m. at the meetinghouse in East Vassalboro. (Saturday, March 29th)

The occasion is the visit of Sylvia Graves, General Secretary of Friends United Meeting. She is visiting various Meetings of New England Yearly Meeting. She and Jonathan Vogel-Borne will be our guests at what we trust will be an opportunity for her to get to know something of the vitality and character of Quakers in New England. The session will be informal and designed for as much interchange of thoughts and ideas as possible.

Supper will be a "semi" potluck; the basics will provided by our Hospitality Committee, while we are asking visiting Friends to bring a salad, bread, or dessert.

Sincerely,

On behalf of: Jim Ramsey, Clerk, Vassalboro Monthly Meeting; Dick Kelly, Vassalboro MM Representative to NEYM; and Holly Weidner, Clerk, Vassalboro Quarterly Meeting Ministry & Counsel

RSVP--Not necessary, but it would be helpful in planning for food. Contact Dick Kelly at kelly8981@roadrunner.com or 207 622-8792.

Ed. note: Carmen Lavertu says, "This is an important meeting in our dialogue with FUM on their personnel policy."

MEMORIAL MINUTE: Jerome Hoxie Wood (1933-2006)

Jerry Wood was a faithful attender of Midcoast Meeting for eleven years. He died of a heart attack in Charlottesville, Virginia, on November 13, 2006. He and his wife, Sally, moved to Southport, Maine, in 1994 and soon found a spiritual home at Midcoast Friends Meeting. Jerry posed his questions thoughtfully and found his place among us with grace, understanding, sincerity, and good humor. He became a gift to the Meeting, for which we remain grateful.

Among activities he participated in were Peace & Social Concerns and Ministry & Counsel and book group discussions. His pastoral interests and skills showed up in many ways, and our community benefited from his love and expertise. He was expecting to apply for membership in 2005, as Sally had already done. However it was not to be, when it became clear that they were needed in Charlottesville to assist their daughter Ruth and grandchildren Nathaniel and Laura. After a few months, they closed the Maine house and packed up their things to make their move permanent by buying a house with Ruth. They became regular attenders at the Friends meeting in Charlottesville.

Jerry was born in Fall River, Massachusetts, August 19, 1933. The next year, his parents became multigenerational members of the family homestead in West Warwick, Rhode Island. They were the fourth generation of Woods to occupy the house. Multigenerational living was thus an early part of Jerry's life and helped lead the Woods to their decision in Charlottesville. After schooling at Tabor Academy and Springfield College, Jerry prepared for the Ministry at Andover Newton Theological School. As a United Church of Christ minister, Jerry served congregations in Worcester, Northfield, Worthington, Peru, and Plainfield, Massachusetts, and following his move to Maine, he served in Edgcomb. The family notes that due to his disenchantment with the institutional church, he became involved in other ministries, such as becoming chaplain to the Hampshire County Jail in Massachusetts.

He enjoyed swimming, canoeing, and kayaking with his family and friends. In addition to Ruth and her two children, he and Sally have two sons, Stephen and Thomas, their wives, and six other grandchildren.

Jerry's faith was strong and his words spoke to the Truth. We miss him and honor all he gave us.

Approved 2nd Month 17th 2008 by Midcoast Monthly Meeting, Deborah P. Haviland, Clerk

BIBLICAL REFERENCES ON PEACE

In January we received the following letter from Eden Grace, Field Officer for Friends United Meeting/Africa Ministries. This was one of the early messages received from Kenya after conflict broke out there. Eden's husband, Jim, spoke to us in November, during our Vassalboro Quarterly gathering held at our meetinghouse.

Saturday, 26 January 2008

Dear Friends,

In this morning's session, the Section on "The Gospel as Central to Peace and Non-Violence" made very strong comments on the failure of Friends to teach and preach the Christian message of peace to our own members. The group compiled a list of biblical references as an aid to preaching, and the conference approved circulating these references as widely as possible, to encourage pastors to bring the message to Friends at the local level. Attached is the handout we are trying to put in the hands of every meeting in Kenya. Please circulate it widely among Friends in other countries. Thanks!

Blessings,

Eden

Biblical Themes for Peace and Justice ***Resources for Preaching and Teaching***

Biblical themes

- ❑ Jesus' own teaching, for example in the Sermon on Mount
- ❑ The universal love of God, not just for one community.
 - John 3:16
 - Ephesians 2:13-22
 - Galatians 3:26-28
 - 2 Corinthians 5:17-18
 - Luke 4:24-30
- ❑ The prophetic vision of a world of peace and justice for all people
 - Isaiah 2:2-5
 - Isaiah 65:17-25
 - Micah 4:3-5
- ❑ Transformation of power from worldly power to Godly power
 - Exodus 14:13-14
 - Kings 6:8-23
 - Kings 7:3-7
 - 1 Samuel 26:8-9
 - Judges 7:1-24
 - Ephesians 6:10-17
 - 2 Corinthians 10:3-4

- ❑ Redemptive suffering, the mystery of the cross
 - Isaiah 53:1-12
 - Luke 9:22-27
 - Philippians 2:5-11

Pathways to Peace

- ❑ Truth
 - Be committed to the Truth. John 8:31-32
 - Cease fire. Ephesians 4:26-32
 - Use non-violent means. Matthew 5:9, 39
 - Negotiate in good faith. Matthew 5:8, 37
 - Accept mediation. Matthew 18:15-16
- ❑ Justice
 - Fairness, lack of exploitation. Psalm 12:5
- ❑ Peace
 - Biblical vision of a society with both truth and justice. Isaiah 65:17-25
 - Psalm 85:10-13

Developed by the Kenyan National Quaker Peace Conference, January 2008

For your calendar: On March 15, there will be public demonstrations, both locally and in Washington, D.C., to mark the fifth year of the Iraq War. For details about local events, visit Bridges for Peace (<http://www.peacebridges.org>) or From Every Village Green (www.everyvillage-me.us).

New England Yearly Meeting Committee for Ministry & Counsel and Some of Its Functions by Louisa Gray

Faith and Practice describes the purpose of this committee to be "responsive to leadings of the spirit throughout the Yearly Meeting and endeavor to foster the spiritual growth and strengthen the religious life of the membership." About eight day-long meetings of this committee are held in different locations throughout New England each year ranging roughly from New Haven, Connecticut, to Hanover, New Hampshire; Northampton, Massachusetts, to the Cape; and of course, throughout Maine. There is a good mix of programmed and unprogrammed meetings with representatives appointed from each meeting and some members-at-large and visitors attending. Because the distances between meetings are so great, attendance fluctuates. It's been my experience over the years that one of the most central responsibilities of this committee is a great deal of the planning involved in the programming for all spiritual life including meetings for worship, special speakers, and workshops for each year's Gathering or "Sessions" during the summer. For many years recently, this wonderful five-to-six-day retreat has been held on the spacious and comfortable campus of Bryant College in Rhode Island. Throughout the year, working parties on racism, sexual ethics, spirituality, spiritual nurture, traveling ministries, and many other varied committees meet almost monthly. There is always a time during the Ministry & Counsel monthly meetings for individual members to share current "Joys and Concerns" regarding their monthly meetings. Such topics may include, for example, declining membership, an increase in number of children, progress of their Friends schools, or plans for a move to another meeting location.

Each fall, this committee has a special weekend retreat. For the last several years, it has been held at the China Lake Conference Center. This past November, the focus was on the issues that arose in the Yearly Meeting Sessions regarding FUM's hiring practices. Melody Brazo, a social justice and diversity consultant and member of Fresh Pond MM in Cambridge, centered her activities around relationships, diversity, and spirituality, showing a provocative film and providing materials which stimulated deep, thoughtful responses from all those attending. It was generally agreed that this sensitive and complex situation needed to be tenderly regarded and given time to "season." Trust in waiting patiently and having faith in our Quaker process was emphasized. Steps were discussed which could be taken in our individual meetings including providing resources and stimulating further discussions among members.

I would like to continue to encourage other members and attenders of our meeting to attend the Yearly Gathering and to consider the responsibility of representing Midcoast Meeting on NEYM Ministry & Counsel.

A Time to Grieve the Suffering and Loss of the People of Iraq

On March 19, Friends and the public are invited to mark the five-year duration of our country's war in Iraq. The meetinghouse will be open from 4 to 7 p.m. for a meeting of prayer and contemplation. Out of silent prayer, we will express our deep sorrow and heaviness of heart for the deaths of so many people in Iraq and the harm to their families and homes. Pictures and narratives of their suffering will be available for contemplation. Light food and beverages will be provided for a rest break.

For further details, please contact Carmen Lavertu or other members of the Peace & Social Concerns Committee.



LIBRARY NEWS

The Library Committee will be ordering books for the library in early spring. If you have any suggestions please leave them in the box on the piano or speak to Theta Torbert or Deborah Haviland.

From *A Very, Very Brief History of Quakerism*:

PART III

Three major "brands" of Quakerism and several unaffiliated meetings:

Today, there are three major groups of Friends, each emphasizing different aspects of Quaker faith and practice:

- Friends General Conference is mostly unprogrammed and liberal in outlook.
- Friends United Meeting includes both unprogrammed and pastoral Friends meetings and is broadly Christian.
- Evangelical Friends International is mostly pastoral and evangelical.

There are also independent Yearly Meetings (both liberal and fundamentalist) and a few Yearly Meetings in the conservative tradition.

PART IV

Very brief history of Friends United Meeting:

In 1887, a conference of representatives from all yearly meetings who had maintained some sort of connection with London Yearly Meeting was called to meet in Richmond, Indiana. New England Gurneyites were well represented. The delegates at this conference discovered they shared many common concerns: peace, evangelism, legislation, foreign missions, education, Bible schools, the welfare of minorities, and publications. It was clear that Quaker witness might be more effective if some of these concerns were undertaken together rather than separately. This was the beginning of FUM, and New England Friends were there.

In 1902, after two more conferences, a formal organization was established and called the Five Years Meeting of Friends in America. Rufus Jones (born and raised in South China, ME, and a professor at Haverford College in PA) was deeply involved. He was one of a group of influential Gurneyite Friends who were Christian but skeptical of revivalism, emphasized the love and example of the life of Christ over salvation, and stressed continuing revelation. Jones advocated the formation of Five Years Meeting under a Uniform Discipline.

From the beginning there has been tension among Friends with varying beliefs on evangelism, conservatism, and the infallibility of the Bible versus reliance on the Inward Light, but I'm not going to go into that now. You just need to remember that within FUM we had three major strains of Quakers with different philosophical and spiritual beliefs, all convinced that they were the true followers of George Fox.

In 1963, Five Years Meeting became Friends United Meeting and began to meet every three years. The next Triennial will be in North Carolina in July 2008.

[*Ed. note:* This excerpt, courtesy of Carmen Lavertu, is the second from Ann Dodd-Collins's presentation at VQM on the history of the Religious Society of Friends. More excerpts will appear in upcoming newsletters. Full copies are available at the meetinghouse or by e-mail from Carmen (clavertu@gmail.com) or Diane Kirkman (diane_kirkman@hotmail.com).]

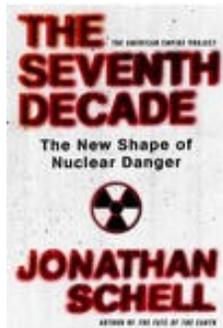
Psalm

The only psalm I had memorized was the 23rd
and now I find myself searching for the order
of the phrases knowing it ends with surely
goodness and mercy will follow me
all the days of my life and I will dwell
in the house of the Lord forever only I remember
seeing a new translation from the original Hebrew
and forever wasn't forever but a long time
which is different from forever although
even a long time today would be
good enough for me even a minute entering
the House would be good enough for me,
even a hand on the door or dropping today's
newspaper on the stoop or looking in the windows
that are reflecting this morning's clouds in first light.



by Stuart Kestenbaum, from Prayers & Run-on Sentences. © Deerbrook Editions, 2007

Book Review: *The Seventh Decade: The New Shape of Nuclear Danger*, Jonathan Schell (Metropolitan Books)



A new book by Jonathan Schell (*The Fate of the Earth*, *The Unconquerable World*) arrives just in time to educate us about the shape of the nuclear threat and what the dialogue should be about it in this election year. This book is a careful and eloquent account of nuclear energy and bombs from the Manhattan Project through all "the decision makers" from Truman to Bush Two. Serious backsliding on this matter has occurred since the 1986 Reagan meeting with Gorbachev at Reykjavik. *The Seventh Decade* amounts to a "change" blueprint for the next administration's nuclear policy. Kissinger, Schultz, Perry, and Nunn clearly spelled out a non-proliferation proposal in an article in the *Wall Street Journal* in January 2007*, but Schell goes further. He believes the starting point must be abolition. With the firm aim of abolition in mind, it would be easier for leaders and diplomats to outline the steps needed to get there. There should be no question that all Friends will fervently get behind such an abolition movement.

The Reagan/Gorbachev abolition idea failed at Reykjavik because the Russian leader would not buy the American president's plan for SDI ("Star Wars"). But, Reagan's vision is a stirring one, as recorded in the Reykjavik papers (quoted by Schell):

Ten years from now, he would be a very old man. He and Gorbachev would come to Iceland and each of them would bring the last nuclear missile from each country with them. And they would give a tremendous party for the whole world. . . . He would be very old by then, and Gorbachev would not recognize him. The President would say, "Hello, Mikhail." And Gorbachev would say, "Ron, is that you?" And then they would destroy the last missiles.

*Copies of this article are available at the meetinghouse.

--Carmen Lavertu