

Third Month

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

March 2010



Pray without ceasing.

-- 1 Thessalonians 5:17 ((KJV))

Prayer does not mean asking God for all kinds of things we want, it is rather the desire for God Himself, the only Giver of Life.

-- Sadhu Sundar Singh

March

Thursday	March 4	1:30 p.m.	Ministry & Counsel, Suzy Hallet's home
Saturday	March 6		Friends Committee on Maine Public Policy, Alford Center in Waterville (snow date March 13)
Sunday	March 7	Rise of Meeting Following Potluck 12 noon	Potluck Meetinghouse & Grounds Committee Meeting *Quakerism Study Group
Thursday	March 11	1:30-3:30 p.m.	*"Beyond Copenhagen: What You Need to Know Before It's Too Late"
Friday	March 12	12 noon	Pastoral Care Committee, Carmen Lavertu's home
Sunday	March 14	After refreshments	FCNL Priorities Discussion
Sunday	March 21	Rise of Meeting	Monthly Meeting for Worship for Business
Sunday	March 28	11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.	Right Relationship Book Discussion Group

April

Sunday	April 4	Rise of Meeting 12 noon	Potluck *Quakerism Study Group
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Upcoming

Sun.-Sat.	July 4-10		*FGC (Friends General Conference) Gathering: "Accepting Gifts of the Spirit," Bowling Green, Ohio
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*Look inside for more information regarding these items.

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

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

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

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

Highlights--Monthly Meeting for Business--February 21, 2010

Minutes of the January 17, 2010, Monthly Meeting were approved.

Correspondence from NEYM was read informing the meeting that NEYM would not ask for State of the Meeting reports this year. There was also a **note of thanks from David Cadbury**.

There were **two featured committee reports**, from Hospitality and Library. The meeting will hear in-depth reports each month, and the brief written description presented by the committee will be in the newsletter. Next month the Meetinghouse & Grounds Committee will be featured.

The **Library Committee** recommended the meeting consider not keeping the piano so the space could be used otherwise. There was not agreement about this and the Meeting agreed to an article in the newsletter welcoming people to use the piano. This will be considered again after due consideration of all alternatives.

Meetinghouse & Grounds reported that we now have an annual contract for cleaning and servicing our heating system, including a review of the new thermostats and their adjustment.

Religious Education asked the Meeting to approve the reading of a brief story after meeting for worship on the topic of "earthcare." This will be on the first Sunday of the month before potluck. Meeting approved doing this after worship is closed and before introductions and announcements.

The Clerk informed the meeting that Joyce Young had given us some **educational materials on fragrance and healthy air quality**. Friends agreed that these materials be put on the credenza for circulation so that people can become informed.

Meeting approved with thanks the offer from **Kate Nordstrom to provide three to four small pillows** for use in the meetingroom.

The **next meeting for business will take place Sunday, March 21**, at the rise of meeting for worship. All are welcome. Please bring a bag lunch. The entire pending minutes of the February 2010 session are available at the Meeting website www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org and on the bulletin board at the meetinghouse.

ADVICES--MEETING FOR WORSHIP

Consider with care how God reaches us in meeting for worship. To every Friend is given a share of responsibility for the meeting. Friends are advised, therefore, to be diligent in attendance at meetings and in inward preparation for them. Let us be concerned to enter reverently into communion with God and with one another, to yield ourselves to the influence of the divine presence. Then what is evil in us may be weakened and the good raised up.

God calls each one to the service of the meeting; let us be obedient and faithful, whether by word, by song, or by silent waiting, and let us receive the messages of others in a tender spirit.

Meetinghouse Library

The Library Committee is mulling over some ways to expand the library and make materials more accessible. One of the thoughts of the committee is that the piano is not used much and perhaps could be removed to make way for more shelving. This suggestion came to February monthly meeting for discussion. There was agreement that the Meeting would like members and attenders to know that it welcomes more use of the piano. Another fact brought up was that the credenza is designed to come apart so that the shelves in the rear can be placed elsewhere and would fit where the piano stands. These ideas will be looked at another time when all alternatives can be considered. We hope you will share your thoughts with the Library Committee about these ideas or any other suggestions.



**Testimony of Friends Committee on Maine Public Policy
Presented by Richard Kelly of Vassalboro to
Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
February 17, 2010**

Re: LD 1611 An Act to Ensure Humane Treatment for Special Management Prisoners

The humane treatment of prisoners is a fundamental concern of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) throughout Maine. In fact, with this goal in mind Quakers several centuries ago in dealing with offenders in society developed the concept of isolation as a way for prisoners through meditation and prayer to come to a new and better relationship with society. But over the years this concept was abandoned and isolation became a form of punishment within the prison system. This bill, with its clear limitation on the use of special management (solitary confinement) as regards the treatment of prisoners, takes a positive step.

The bill embodies at least four critical requirements regarding the policies of our corrections system: It assures that there are minimum standards for the assignment of prisoners to special management units, that those standards limit the amount of time an individual can be assigned to a special management unit, that there is regular review of the on-going need for such assignment, and that it is explicitly clear that individuals with serious mental illness may not be assigned to a special management unit.

Additionally, we support the provisions of the bill which call for hearings on continued stay in special management units, allow the prisoner to be present at the hearings, and assure that the prisoner can be represented by an attorney and call witnesses.

Solitary confinement is not a desirable public policy when it is used as punishment. Such use should be eliminated in totality.

We recognize, however, that isolation of disruptive prisoners may be required for the safety of other prisoners or staff. There also may be times when a prisoner feels threatened by placement in the general prison population. In these situations, we support the individual being assigned to a special management or similar unit until such time as the individual can return safely to the general population.

We especially support the language in the bill which requires that all prisoners assigned to a special management unit be evaluated by a licensed mental health professional in private within 48 hours of placement and at least every 7 days thereafter. We suggest, however, that there is a disconnect between the basic statement of policy and the timeline of its application as it applies to individuals with serious mental illness. We support the basic statement: 'A person determined to be suffering from a serious mental illness may not be confined in a special management unit.' Our concern lies in the potential for an individual with serious mental illness being confined in the special management unit for up to 7 days or even 14 days under certain circumstances. We urge the Committee to require that individuals with a prior record of serious mental illness never be assigned to the special management unit, and those diagnosed with a serious mental illness while in the special management unit, be moved out of the unit within 48 hours of the diagnosis. Our concerns in these areas arise from our recognition of the need for appropriate treatment options for individuals suffering from mental illness and our recognition of the increasing number of individuals with mental illness who are being incarcerated in the jails and prisons throughout Maine. We note the direction of the Governor's proposed budget as regards to funding for services for individuals with mental illness in the State and are concerned that, as services which individuals depend on are reduced because of reduced funding, the population of individuals with mental illness in our prisons will rise. The prisons are not equipped to provide the rehabilitative treatment which these individuals need. We suggest that special management units are even less appropriate places for individuals with mental illness to be held because isolation has been shown in the past to increase the symptoms of some mental illnesses.

Friends are urged to contact their representatives, asking them to support this important fairness issue in the Department of Corrections, a major focus of the FCMPP.

--Carmen Lavertu

NEW ENGLAND YEARLY MEETING: THE JUBILEE YEAR

by Deborah Haviland

New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM) is our wider faith family, and we belong to it through our relationship to Midcoast Monthly Meeting. Monthly meetings bring concerns to quarterly meetings, and when appropriate these concerns are forwarded to yearly meeting. In turn, NEYM can bring concerns back to quarterly and monthly meetings.

One example of this process is The Jubilee Year, the 350th anniversary of NEYM--the laying down of forms and ideas that no longer have life among us and taking up the call to deepen our worship to be more faithful and effective in our witness for peace and justice. I did not really understand the meaning of the word "jubilee" until I read a quote by Lloyd Lee Wilson, written in 2003 and quoted in Catherine Whitmire's book *Practicing Peace*. I read it at our February monthly meeting and quote it here so that it perhaps might help others understand this term:

A key vision for God's commonwealth is the biblical Jubilee--where everybody has enough and nobody has too much; where debts are forgiven and people are restored to their ancestral lands. Jubilee was a periodic redistribution of wealth, to prevent some people from staying wealthy at the expense of others.

When we accumulate an unfair portion of the world's wealth while so many others are poor, ill, hungry and without resources or opportunity to improve themselves, we deny the vision of Jubilee and refuse to live into the Commonwealth of God, which is now coming into being on earth.

What the Hospitality Committee Does

After discussion among committee members and at the February meeting for business, the Hospitality Committee has determined that the following reflects our current responsibilities in the life of the Meeting:

- Prepare and monitor the refreshments sign-up sheet
- Inventory and purchase, or get donations for, paper supplies for kitchen, social hour, and lavatories
- Inventory and purchase soap, detergent, plastic wrap and bags, trash bags, foil
- Inventory and purchase tea, coffee, juice, 1/2 & 1/2, & sugar
- Facilitate Friendly Eights
- Arrange for refreshments at Meeting events such as Quarterly Meeting, new members' welcome parties, birthday celebrations, and other special occasions.
- Upon request, assist with receptions following memorial services held at the meetinghouse.
- Keep refrigerator clean and discard unclaimed and out-of-date food.
- Organize kitchen cupboards and hospitality storage area.
- Wash kitchen towels, tablecloths
- Occasionally purchase new tablecloths, towels, etc.
- Keep track of expenditures, request reimbursement, determine budget request for fiscal year
- Remove kitchen and bathroom trash
- Keep notebook of events with details of planning and execution

HAVE YOU SEEN . . . ? Kindly check at home to see if you might have any of the missing Meeting tablecloths--and let the Hospitality Committee know if you do.

THANK YOU!

QUERIES--Meeting for Worship

Are meetings for worship held in expectant waiting for divine guidance? Are you faithful and punctual in attendance? Do you come in a spirit of openness with heart and mind prepared for communion with God? Do both silent and vocal ministry arise in response to the leading of the Holy Spirit? Do all other activities of your meeting find their inspiration in worship, and do they, in turn, help to uphold the worshipping group?

2010 FGC Gathering: "Accepting Gifts of the Spirit" Bowling Green, Ohio, July 4-10

~Financial Assistance Information~

The Gathering is a dynamic spirit-filled week for all ages. Meetings recognize that Friends return from the Gathering spiritually nourished and with a fuller sense of what it means to be a Friend. In 2009, FGC was unable to meet all the requests for financial assistance to attend the Gathering. In 2010, they are depending on meetings to partner with FGC to help more Friends attend. First-time Gathering attenders are eligible for FGC scholarships if they receive aid from their meeting or if FGC receives a message from the meeting indicating that it does not have scholarship funds but confirms the Friend is active in the meeting. Friends requesting scholarships should register early (April 1-11). Please see Deb Haviland for more information.

QUAKERISM STUDY GROUP will take place on March 7 at noon, following the monthly potluck. We will be discussing our experience of *Transforming Power for Peace* by Lawrence S. Aspey and Karen Eppler. For our April 4 meeting, we will be discussing our experience of *Plain Living: A Quaker Path to Simplicity* by Catherine Whitmire. If you are interested in participating, contact Linda Coté-Small.

Earth Care FolkTale Reading--On the first Sunday of each of the next few months, following worship and before introductions, announcements, and the monthly potluck, someone will read aloud an earth care story related to the current topic being discussed by the Right Relationship study group and the First Day School.

FROM THE AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE WEB SITE, March 3

Mourning the Human Cost of War: Last week, during a time of escalating violence in Afghanistan, the 1000th U.S. troop died in the war in Afghanistan, the so-called Operation Enduring Freedom. Peace supporters from San Francisco to Des Moines to Philadelphia held vigils and events commemorating the military and civilian casualties and calling for an end to war. These events garnered news coverage that brought the human cost of war back into public attention. To take part in future activities to end the war, [join our Wage Peace email list](#).

Action Opportunity: Support a Nuclear Weapons-Free Future: As President Obama and the U.S. Senate begin to negotiate the future of nuclear weapons treaties, please take a moment and sign our petition for a nuclear weapons-free future. AFSC is working with Peace Action and many peace groups to show our government leaders that much of the public wants our country's nuclear strategy to move toward nuclear abolition. Show your support, so future generations will not live in fear of nuclear proliferation. [Sign the petition online today](#).



"I didn't know anybody, but I made friends, and I cried when I left," said a first-time camper. Other campers describe it as "The best two-weeks of the year!" And as one parent put it, the "inclusiveness, kindness, and generosity are valued greatly by our family." And if those weren't reasons enough to consider Friends Camp, there is affordability: One week of Friends Camp is only \$395.00 and two weeks is just \$760.00. Visit the Friends Camp web page (www.friendscamp.org) for loads of information--including how you can earn a tuition discount by telling others about Friends Camp.

"Beyond Copenhagen: What You Need to Know Before It's Too Late"

The Coastal Senior College has reserved the meetinghouse for this public program on Thursday, March 11, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. The presenter, Fred Cichocki, Ph.D., will illustrate his talk on global climate change and its long-term consequences with a video presentation, and there will be time for discussion. Before coming to Maine (where he is now affiliated with Chewonki), Dr. Cichocki taught biology and ecology at universities in Canada and the United States and was curator at the West Palm Beach Museum of Natural History. Friends are especially invited to participate. For more details, please call Carmen Lavertu at 354-9556.

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