

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



*T*oday is a gift, and that's why it's called *The Present*.

—seen on a bumper sticker

April

Wednesday	April 6	5 p.m.	Ministry & Counsel Committee meeting
Fri.-Sat.	April 8-9		* AFSC Peace & Justice Conference: Hope and Hard Work: Another America Is Possible, Cambridge, MA
Tues.	April 12	7 p.m.	* Perry O'Brien speaks at the Skidompha Library, Damariscotta
Thurs.	April 14	7 p.m.	* Meeting of the Lincoln County Peace and Justice Coalition
Sunday	April 17	rise of worship	Monthly Meeting (please bring brown bag lunch)
Monday	April 18	or asap thereafter	Call for April newsletter items
Sunday	April 24	rise of worship	Meeting workday for grounds (also June 5, July 27)
Fri.-Sun.	April 29-May 1		* Recognizing Gifts, with Jan Wood, at Woolman Hill, Deerfield, MA

~ Advance Notice ~

Sunday	May 1	rise of worship	* Second-hour Discussion - Planning process continued
Saturday	May 7	all day	* All Maine Gathering, South China, ME
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, 3rd month of 2005

based on draft minutes by Rob Patterson

Clerk Jean Crawford opened the meeting with a reading from *Simpler Living, Compassionate Life*. A brief silence was observed. There were 17 Friends present. Minutes of the last meeting were read and approved.

Meetinghouse & Grounds

Claire Darrow reported for the committee. Workdays are scheduled for April 24th, June 5th, and July 24th. A volunteer is being sought to help with completion of the Memorial Garden. It will require more planning than hands-on work.

Proposed Budget

Bill Spock reported for Paul Diamond who was away. The proposed budget for fiscal year 2005-6 is \$15,575. This is just \$225 more than the current year's budget. Committee expenses are reduced in the new budget to reflect the fact that most committees tend to under spend their allotted funds. Contributions remain the same at \$5125 while Operating Expenses are being increased by \$850 to cover rising costs of insurance, plowing and other routine expenses. Revenue will be down a bit, and we have a trend of declining surplus, but we are in good fiscal condition. The Meeting expressed its gratitude to Bill and Paul.

Conscientious Objector/ Sanctuary Issues

Gretchen Hull spoke of the political possibility of reinstating the military draft in this country. She suggests that we go on record in a public manner offering to be a repository for formal statements of conscience. She has borrowed some wording from a similar offer made by a Meeting in Wyoming. Meeting members suggested that we also offer to speak with persons indicating a desire for consultation about their conscientious

Vassalboro Quarterly Meeting

Gifts and Leadings

By Betsy Terrell

On March 5 there was an all-day meeting of the Vassalboro Quarter Gifts and Leadings Committee. Midcoast was represented by Deb Haviland and Betsy Terrell. This was an extremely exciting, deep, and moving day of connection and exploration. The committee is in the process of seeking new ways to name, support, and encourage individuals' gifts and their expression within our Meeting communities. This is groundbreaking work, and, like our own planning/visioning process here at Midcoast, it is proceeding slowly, with much time for prayerful reflection and waiting on the Light. The full transcript of the report on that day, written jointly by Maggie Edmondson, clerk, and Diana White, recording clerk pro tem, will be included with the upcoming Quarterly Newsletter, and I encourage all to read it.

objection to war. With some modifications, the text of the offer was approved for publication in New England Friend and local newspapers. It will also be put on our Web site.

Gretchen, Andy Burt, and Martha Gottlieb have met to discuss the idea of offering the meetinghouse as a sanctuary for war objectors. They will report to us when they have collected the necessary information. One Friend suggested we use the organizing "umbrella" of the Meeting but actually house such persons in our own homes rather than at the meetinghouse.

Giving Winds Fund

This is a capital campaign under the stewardship of the Maine Council of Churches for the Native American Housing and Small Business Revolving Loan Fund, a portion of the Four Directions Development Corporation. It was discussed at Quarterly Meeting as a way to invest in the future of our tribal neighbors in Maine. The Finance Committee will be advised of the existence of this fund and asked to consider whether it makes sense for some of our investment capital.

Ministry & Counsel

Holly Baldwin reported the committee is seeking input for the State of Society report. In years past we have had after-meeting sessions to brainstorm the report, sometimes preceded by specific written queries. This year the committee has proposed a potluck supper on April 1st at 6 p.m. to elicit thoughts and feelings about what should go in the report. This was approved and will be mentioned in the newsletter together with several queries proposed by New England Yearly Meeting.

Jerry and Sally Wood will be attending a workshop on pastoral care at Woolman Hill from April 1st through the 3rd. Holly is going to Lancaster, England, in August to participate in the World Gathering of Young Friends.

Planning Process Report

Jean Crawford reported for Bill Spock that fourteen people attended the meeting on March 13th. Please see her report on page 3 for details.

The next Monthly Meeting for Business will be Sunday, April 17, at 11:30 a.m., bag lunch.

All welcome.



March 13 Second-Hour Discussion

A continuation of planning/visioning process

By Jean Crawford

The most recent session of the Planning Process took place on Sunday, March 13, during the second hour. Fourteen Friends attended. Facilitator Bill Spock reported that 40 of the 86 self-assessment questionnaires sent out were returned. By far, the replies gave the highest priority to the area of spiritual growth. They indicate that offering a place of spiritual welcome is our greatest gift. The second highest priority was given to pastoral care.

There were many comments suggesting that our present committee structure needs simplification and reform. The present structure is seen, not only as not serving our top priority of offering a place of spiritual welcome, but of disserving that priority. Some would-be worshipers stay home rather than risk being subjected to committee requests.

Deb Haviland offered the following queries to assist us in our ongoing process:

1. Do we look to the future with a glad heart that honors our diversity and centers in the testimony of our love of God?
2. Do we envision the future by experiencing the living silence as we listen and explore our hearts?

The next meeting for the Planning Process will be Sunday, May 1, during the second hour. Friends will be asked to divide into small groups and discuss three questions:

1. How shall we simplify and reform our organizational structure?
2. How shall we care for and strengthen our gift of spiritual welcome?
3. What will be our specific objectives for the next weeks and months?



Query #1

Spiritual Life

Do you live in thankful awareness of God's constant presence in your life? Are you sensitive and obedient to leadings of the Holy Spirit? Do you seek to follow Jesus, who shows us the way? Do you nurture your spiritual life with prayer and silent waiting and with regular study of the Bible and other devotional literature?

All-Maine Gathering, May 7

The All Maine Gathering will be held on Saturday, May 7, 2005, at the South China Community Fellowship Church (Rufus Jones's church) in South China, Maine, from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Vassalboro Quarter will host Falmouth Quarter. The program will focus on economic development plans for Maine Native Americans. Many Maine people voted to defeat the proposed tribal casino in 2003, but many also said they would like to support alternative tribal economic development. Tribal members have expressed their dismay at the seeming hypocrisy of opposing the casino at the same time that the state expands its own gambling incomes. If you personally opposed the casino, this is an excellent opportunity to find out how you can help the tribes in creating viable alternatives. The Four Directions Development Corporation (FDDC), which offers loans for housing and small business development to members of all four Maine tribes, is such an alternative and is being actively supported by the Maine Council of Churches.

Our speaker for the All-Maine Gathering will be FDDC executive director Susan Hammond, a member of the Penobscot tribe and the tribe's former housing director. Susan will introduce us to Penobscot culture and its current challenges through a video and will discuss the mission of the FDDC. (For more information on the FDDC, go to www.fourdirectionsmaine.org and/or www.maineCouncilofchurches.org.)

There will also be an all-day program for children led by Ronda Nichols and Kathie Gass, as well as an intergenerational activity. Meetings are asked to contact Joann Austin (austinlaw@pivot.net, phone: 445-3333) to help provide soup and casseroles, and for volunteers to help set up and clean up. Contact Carole Beal for questions about the program (carole@acadia.net). Hospitality: Jacqui Clark, 622-1429, mediate@mediateresources.com. More details and directions to S. China Church are in the Quarterly newsletter, available in the meetinghouse.

Prayer for Peace

If there is to be peace in the world,
There must be peace in the nations.
If there is to be peace in the nations,
There must be peace in the cities.
If there is to be peace in the cities,
There must be peace between neighbors.
If there is to be peace between neighbors,
There must be peace in the home.
If there is to be peace in the home,
There must be peace in the heart.

—Lao-Tse

from *BeliefNet.com*

"Prayer of the Day" for February 29, 2005

Peace and Justice News

By Gretchen Hull

Perry O'Brien will be speaking at Skidompha Library on April 12 at 7 pm. This remarkable young man spoke at Quarterly Meeting about his personal journey of transformation from voluntarily joining the armed forces, being sent to Afghanistan, and subsequently filing for conscientious objector status while still in the service. He was fortunate enough to be discharged and has become a counter-recruiting activist.

His talk will be given at the library rather than at the meetinghouse in order to include a wider audience, hopefully including teens and their families. On March 19, the anniversary of the beginning of the war in Iraq, many of us took part on the bridges in the simultaneous reading of the names of US soldiers and Iraqi citizens who have lost their lives during the past two years as a result of our invasion and occupation. Later, my daughter Margaret and I read the names on a street corner in Portland as well. The list of 1,524 US names reported fills about 150 printed pages, while the equivalent listing of the estimated 100,000 Iraqis killed makes a stack of paper that is five feet tall. We will continue to read them. Bridges for Peace continues to meet each Sunday, 12 to 1, locally on the Damariscotta Bridge (www.peacebridges.org)

I continue to work on the Maine AFSC Committee on Youth and Alternatives to the Military. Recently the committee decided to form a regional subcommittee that includes our area from Wiscasset to Rockland. We will be scheduling a meeting of this regional committee in April. I am looking for individuals who would like to get involved in our "adopt a school" program to deal with issues around the military recruitment in our high schools. If you are interested in working with us, please contact me (563-5416 or peacebridges@peacebridges.org).

The Advices

Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts, which are the leadings of the Holy Spirit. It is God's redemptive love that draws us, a love shown forth by Jesus in all his life, on the cross, and in his abiding presence. Friends are advised to make a quiet place in their daily lives for prayer and communion with God and to be constant in the reading of the Bible and other devotional literature.

Let us cherish the seed of God in ourselves and in others, that we may be open to new revelations of truth. Let us look to our meetings to guide and stimulate our spiritual growth.

Open Letter Regarding Conscientious Objector Status

The following letter was approved for publication and distribution by the March Meeting for Worship for Business. It has been sent by Gretchen Hull to the Lincoln County Weekly, Lincoln County News, Wiscasset News, Boothbay Register, Coastal Journal, Camden Herald, Free Press, and Kennebec Journal, and also will be sent to the Monthly Meetings of Maine.

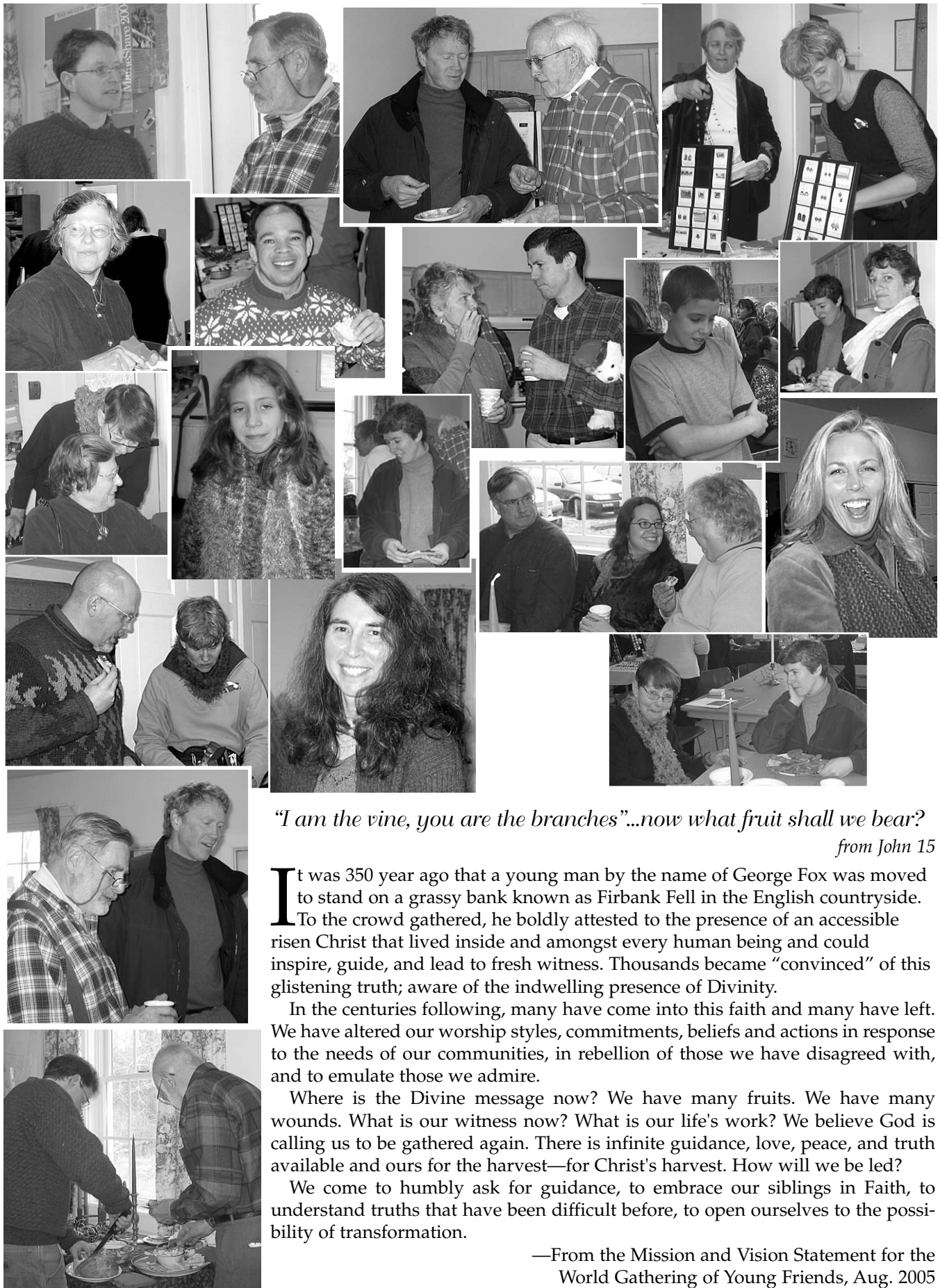
In the historical tradition of Quakers, and its commitment to a testimony of peace, reconciliation and non-violence, the Midcoast Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends wishes to inform the residents of Maine that it continues to offer a safe depository for any formal statements of conscience expressing individual opposition to the participation in war. Persons wishing to file such statements should send them by registered mail to: Midcoast Friends Meeting, PO Box 717, Damariscotta ME, 04543.

It is expected that this service will be of value primarily to individuals who, for whatever reason, may wish to document their claim to status as conscientious objectors to war. This is of particular value to persons who are vulnerable to conscription for military service. The Midcoast Meeting of Friends, having offered this service for many years, is led to reissue this invitation because of the political possibility of a renewal of the draft in the near future, the present efforts to establish war as a permanent institution within U.S. society, and an ongoing movement toward the militarization of American culture. Those who wish to talk about the decision to make a formal statement are invited to contact the Midcoast Meeting of Friends at 207- 563-3757.

Gretchen Noyes-Hull
for the Midcoast Monthly Meeting,
Jean Crawford, clerk

"Support Peace" Ribbons

At rise of worship on March 13, Guy Marsden offered ribbons similar to the "Support Our Troops" ribbons often seen on cars; the difference being that these ribbons are blue and say "Support Peace." This is a quote from the Web site where they are sold: "A New Symbol of Unity in a Turbulent Time: Support Peace.org is a work in progress. Your open minds and progressive dialogue will nurture our wisdom and build a foundation. The Support Peace Ribbons are a visible point of departure intended to initiate dialogue, create unity, and express an alternative message. It is that unity and discourse, which gives us hope. Join with us to become an architect in our evolution." (www.supportpeace.org) Thanks to Guy for alerting us to this effort and for generously sharing ribbons with those of us who took them home and put them on our cars.



Thanks to Pat Spock for taking these photos at the 2004 Christmas celebration

*“I am the vine, you are the branches”...now what fruit shall we bear?
from John 15*

It was 350 year ago that a young man by the name of George Fox was moved to stand on a grassy bank known as Firbank Fell in the English countryside. To the crowd gathered, he boldly attested to the presence of an accessible risen Christ that lived inside and amongst every human being and could inspire, guide, and lead to fresh witness. Thousands became “convinced” of this glistening truth; aware of the indwelling presence of Divinity.

In the centuries following, many have come into this faith and many have left. We have altered our worship styles, commitments, beliefs and actions in response to the needs of our communities, in rebellion of those we have disagreed with, and to emulate those we admire.

Where is the Divine message now? We have many fruits. We have many wounds. What is our witness now? What is our life's work? We believe God is calling us to be gathered again. There is infinite guidance, love, peace, and truth available and ours for the harvest—for Christ's harvest. How will we be led?

We come to humbly ask for guidance, to embrace our siblings in Faith, to understand truths that have been difficult before, to open ourselves to the possibility of transformation.

—From the Mission and Vision Statement for the World Gathering of Young Friends, Aug. 2005

The Cost of War

The Midcoast Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends in Damariscotta, Maine, on February 20, 2005, approved the following letter. This letter was sent out to the local papers for publication but has yet to appear in print. It was also sent to the appropriate government officials.

To our President and Representatives in Congress, to our loving families and friends and neighbors in our Maine communities:

Two years ago, we wrote of our misgivings about the use of military force in Iraq.

After two years of death and destruction, the lack of evidence that our nation's rationale was either accurate or wise has confirmed our belief in the wrongness of war generally, and especially as an effective means of containing or eliminating "terrorism." Though the United States has spent in military costs abroad the equivalent of \$100 million for each victim of the 9-11 attack, there may be more terrorists today than before that appalling day.

On January 30th the Iraqis had the courage to vote their aspirations as a nation. We have witnessed the indestructible spirit of a people who will create their own destiny, even while civil war threatens and foreign occupation continues. We hope and pray that they will not be disappointed in their courageous advance to democratic rule.

We write at this time as Congress begins consideration of the Administration's 2006 budget proposals, as well as the separate request for funds to continue the military occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan. We note

that the 2006 budget proposals combined would provide nearly 40 times more money for the Department of Defense than for the Department of State. This is a disparity, in our view, that reveals much about our national purposes and priorities. We must balance our reliance on military might with augmented diplomatic efforts, thus empowering others to reach their own goals in harmony with ours. The recent tsunami may offer further opportunities to emphasize this principle.

Many voices from the Middle East and elsewhere in the world tell us that our government's policies do not match its rhetoric. Their desires for freedom and self determination are patterned on how others see our nation, not from the speeches of our political leaders.

May we therefore promise the Iraqi people that the courage they showed us on January 30 will be followed by a timely end to our military occupation of their country. Specific goals should be delineated so that a measured withdrawal can be experienced. We urge our government to put forth nonviolent means for exercising democratic citizenship and cooperative endeavors with the other governments of the world.

On behalf of the membership, in Peace and Love,
R. Patterson, Recording Clerk

Woolman Hill Conference

Recognizing Gifts A Retreat with Jan Wood April 29-31, 2005 at Woolman Hill Deerfield, Massachusetts

"While our gifts can bloom untended like wildflowers, recognizing and naming them can be an act of cultivation that allows our gifts to be even more fruitful. During this weekend we will explore the many shapes of giftedness. We will identify some of the ways God's empowerment is flowing through our lives, and we will consider how we can intentionally celebrate and foster our gifts."

Jan Woods, a recorded Friends minister, is the director of GOOD NEWS associates in Seattle, WA, and author of *Christians at Work, Not Business as Usual*. She may be reached at www.goodnewsasoc.org. For registration: www.woolmanhill.org or 413-774-3431. This retreat is co-sponsored with New England Yearly Meeting Ministry and Counsel.

AFSC Peace & Justice Conference

Hope and Hard Work: Another America Is Possible April 8, Friday evening April 9, Saturday, all day

Held at MIT (Building 34, Vassar Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts) The keynote speaker on Friday night is Phyllis Bemis of the Institute of Policy Studies. The Saturday morning sessions present the Bush agendas:

- The Iraq War, the "War on Terrorism," and the Making of the American Empire
- Privatization and Public Policy from Social Security to Medicare
- Corporate Globalization: CAFTA to the WTO

The afternoon sessions will be strategy workshops. The cost of the conference is \$30 (\$20 for students and low income); lunch is included.

FMI: e-mail jgerson@afsc.org

Web: www.afsc.org/pes.htm

Carmen Lavertu and Gretchen Noyes Hull are enrolled in this conference. Call them for travel plans.

I wondered how the Standard Offer includes nuclear power, since the Wiscasset plant is no longer operating. Andy explained that all of New England is on the same grid, like a common pool. Whatever amount of green energy is contracted for, that amount has to go into the pool, which is how MeIPL is working to "green" the pool. Keeping power demand steady (not rising), through efforts to economize, also helps green the pool.

Maine actually produces more power than it uses and has cleaner power producers than some other states in the region, for example, hydro power and burning of biomass (scraps from forest products). Some of these were off line for a while, but are now completely back on because of the higher demand due to green initiatives in Massachusetts and Connecticut. (Massachusetts and Connecticut just passed a renewable portfolio standard, which means they must have a certain percentage of green power.)

MeIPL also sells Green Tags, which are tax deductible and support the development of wind power. You can find more information about the work of MeIPL at www.meipl.org.

Living Off the Grid

In 1989 Andy and Steven moved back to Maine from Ann Arbor, Michigan. Their strong commitment to renewable power led them to use only solar power in their house. Stephen worked as a research technician improving the energy efficiency of solar panels, so they had another incentive. They considered connecting to the grid in order to feed back their excess power into the power company, but they decided the expense of putting in the lines was too high. Also, they did not want to disturb the beautiful tree canopy along their road.

For the first few years, they lived in the basement, while building their timber-frame saltbox home above them. They use only wood for heat. The long roof of their house is highly insulated, providing both warmth and coolness. The solar panels on the roof have three settings for the angle of the sun at different times of the year.

I wondered how much less power they use, compared to the average household. Do they need to restrict their usage? Andy listed the appliances they have including a computer (thin screen energy-efficient model), laser printer, color TV, VCR, DVD player, and a radio. Andy continued, "We have a gas range and a refrigerator that run off propane. The refrigerator can also be run with electricity and, in the summer when there's plenty of sun and power and we're at home, we do that to save gas. We also have an on-demand hot water heater that runs off propane. Our well pump which runs every day or two, fills a pressure tank in our basement, and then, when we turn on the hot water faucet to take showers or wash dishes, water flows through the small heater attached to the wall and makes hot water. We could leave a hot water

faucet on all day and never run out of hot water before we ran out of propane!!"

The Burts currently have no washer or dryer, using the laundromat instead, and hanging laundry outside to dry whenever possible. "We do intend to get a high efficiency/low water clothes washing machine in the future...an efficient dishwasher is something we are considering too," says Andy.

All their lights are compact fluorescents. They are careful not to leave anything on which is not in immediate use, and they use only one appliance at a time. They do have a back-up generator and try to use it minimally; in summer it's almost never necessary. In winter, it is used occasionally, mainly to keep batteries from getting too low. (If you let the batteries run down too low, it affects their long-term efficiency.) They may use the generator once or twice a week for a few hours when there is a long cloudy period.

As another example of Andy's commitment to living gently on the earth, all their batteries are secondhand, recycled, and even their solar panels are models which are discards, ones which are not good enough to be sold commercially. "We do have more solar panels that we plan to install on the roof of a barn/garden shed sometime in the future," continued Andy. "These are some of the same kind that we already have that were sent to us by one of Stephen's co-workers at the photovoltaics research and production facility where Stephen did research near Detroit."

Efficiency Maine

Another of Andy's many initiatives, an energy audit has been arranged for the Midcoast meetinghouse as a service of the Public Utilities Commission. As you may already know, the meetinghouse has used biofuel for heating since 2003 (supplied by Frontier Energy in South China, Maine, www.frontierenergy.org/ or 866-267-9293). It is powered by electricity from Maine Renewable Energy (sourced entirely from hydro- and biomass-generated electricity www.energymaine.com/ or 866-408-4591). MeIPL has a grant for helping congregations to learn about and install solar panels on churches as examples for the community at large. Andy is committed to having our Meeting at least bring people together for an informational workshop on solar power. The meetinghouse would be an ideal location for a solar demonstration because there are no trees blocking the roof's southern exposure and because of its low power demand.

"Midcoast could be a beacon for the future," said Andy, as we finished our conversation. She sees her present work as her link to the future, caring for future generations and what happens to the earth. "We need to start talking for all living beings, the interconnected web of life. As Kenneth Boulding said, we are on the spaceship Earth. We have limited resources. You have to live what you want to see in the world."

A Conversation with Andy Burt

By Betsy Terrell

On Feb. 9th I enjoyed an inspiring couple of hours talking with Andy Burt, a true representative of Earth Stewardship. Besides working tirelessly on multiple environmental issues both locally and at the state level, she lives what she believes. Since 1989 she and her husband, Steven, have lived in a house which is completely off the electric power grid. To offset their necessary use of cars, they buy "green tags," which support the development and implementation of clean power sources such as wind generators.

Andy represents the Maine Council of Churches' Environmental Justice Program in Augusta, testifying and providing information for legislative bodies in their deliberations over environmental issues. She explained that, although the U.S. government may be dragging its feet in regard to the Kyoto Protocol (implemented on Feb. 16 by 128 nations), Maine and many other states are moving ahead with their own initiatives. Maine has enacted a Climate Change Action Plan, in agreement with regional states and provinces, to take action on global warming. As an example of her work in Augusta, Andy described how electric cars made by DaimlerChrysler, called "neighborhood cars," were illegal in Maine except on the islands until a couple of years ago. Andy worked with auto dealers, environmental groups, and the MCC to

bring about legislation to legalize these cars on Maine roads with speed limits of 35 mph or less.

One of the initiatives she is working on this spring is weatherization for low-income residents. "Keep ME Warm" this past fall was a weatherization project for elderly residents. Andy is working with committees and others in Augusta to show the cost-effectiveness of doing such initiatives, and to try to expand this program. She feels this is an issue of environmental and economic justice and also one which has impacts on climate change through encouraging more economical use of energy resources.

Maine Interfaith Power and Light

Andy was a founding member of Maine Interfaith Power and Light and continues to serve on its board. MeIPL's goal has been to bring a clean power choice to the people of Maine—a goal that has been accomplished! Other green energy suppliers do not want to come to Maine because there are too few people, so MeIPL became the marketer. Its Clean Power and Clean Power Plus products cost a little more because they are not yet competitive. However, the Standard Offer (which includes power produced by coal, nuclear power, etc.) has now gone up, so the Green offering is becoming more competitive.

continued on page 7

Midcoast Meeting of Friends
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