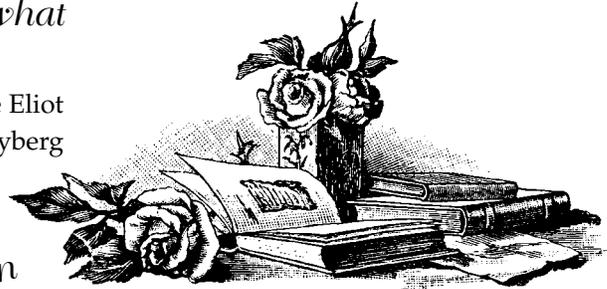


MIDCOAST MONTHLY MEETING
OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS
Damariscotta, Maine
NEWSLETTER



*It is never too late to be what
you might have been.*

—Novelist George Eliot
contributed by Nancy Nyberg



*Truth being so much greater than
our conception of it, we should ever
be making fresh discoveries.*
—London Yearly Meeting of Friends, 1920,
courtesy of the Motto Calendar 1997

*Having one's prejudices neatly
arranged in the mind is not
the same as thinking.*

—Steve Allen,
contributed by Carmen Lavertu

May

Saturday	May 1	all day	* Quarterly Meeting, hosted by Cobscook Meeting
Monday	May 3	7 p.m.	* "Resisting Empire," with Logan Perkins
Tuesday	May 4	TBA	Religious Education Committee meeting
Wednesday	May 5	5 p.m.	Ministry & Counsel Committee meeting
Thursday	May 6	4 p.m.	Peace & Social Concerns Committee meeting
Sunday	May 9	8:30 a.m.	Reading Group
Sunday	May 16	8:30 a.m.	Reading Group
Friday	May 21	6 p.m. 7 p.m.	Potluck Supper Monthly Meeting for Business & annual meeting of the corporation
Monday	May 24	asap	Deadline for June newsletter

* 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

The Entirely Unofficial **MONTHLY MEETING NOTES**, 4th month of 2004

based on draft minutes by Bill Spock, Alternate Recording Clerk

Thirteen people were present for the first Friday evening Meeting for Business in 2004. The minutes of the March meeting were read and approved with several minor corrections, plus a restatement of the conclusions on the subject of Worthy Needs. The change makes it clearer that it is a subject requiring further discussion by the Peace & Social Concerns Committee (P&SC), who agreed to take on the responsibilities.

The subject of Worthy Needs was then pursued at some length. Although there were no objections to the basic suggestions, this change in approach does warrant more consideration. P&SC will take the initiative for further discussion of this issue and make recommendations at the May meeting for the remaining \$750 in contributions for this fiscal year.

Treasurer's Report

Paul Diamond presented a report that covered the anticipated financial results for this fiscal year, ending May 31, a proposed budget for next year, and the allocation of reserve funds. Final approval of the budget will be at the May business meeting (See article on page 3). By that meeting, Sally Wood will have the report on committee responsibilities, which will help to resolve any budget issues between committees.

Expenses for this year are estimated to be about \$1,000 under budget, but contributions will probably be down about \$2,000. This will still leave about \$5,000 to be transferred to reserves. Following Paul's recommendation, the Meeting approved transfers of \$1,000 to Building Capital, \$2,000 to Capital Repairs, and \$2,000 to Meetinghouse and Grounds.

Next year's tentative budget shows a \$2,000 increase in expenses, but without a corresponding increase in income. This is not a trend that can be continued in the

future. However, the budget does provide for a potential reserve transfer of \$4,000 in May 2005. A 10 percent increase in contributions to New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM) is offset by a decrease of \$400 in funds for Worthy Needs. Other increases are smaller and are scattered among the committees, operating expenses, and contributions to various Friends organizations. The only planned capital expense is for repair of the driveway, possibly costing over \$6,000. For a copy of the proposed budget, contact Paul Diamond (236-0283, pauld625@aol.com). Comments on the budget proposal should go to Paul as soon as possible.

Ministry & Counsel

Jean Crawford presented memorial minutes for Chouteau Chapin, Patricia Faulkenhain Geiringer, and Erica Mather Welter, which were approved with suggestions for minor changes. The final minutes will be published in the newsletter, and copies will be filed in the archives. Chouteau's minute will be forwarded to Quarterly Meeting. A memorial service for Pat Geiringer will take place April 17 at 2 p.m. at the meetinghouse. Pat died on January 5, and soon after there was a memorial service at the Bunker Hill Community Church in Jefferson. The April service responds to the feeling that Pat would have liked a service in the manner of Friends.

The State of the Meeting Report 2004, for 2003, was discussed at some length and the comments were referred back to M&C for further review. This is an important document, as it provides the Meeting with a chance to consider the events of the past year, both accomplishments and areas for improvement.

Friends are encouraged to complete Emergency Contact Information forms, or review their prior forms, so that we have on file at the meetinghouse information on how to reach appropriate people in case of an emergency.

continued on page 8

Resisting Empire Teach-in

On May 3 at 7 p.m. Logan Perkins will convene an evening presentation looking at the corporate systems of food, energy, and the military as tools of empire and making the case that the U.S. is acting as an empire. She will also be showcasing steps to be taken in resistance to empire. See article on page 3.

Query #3

Meeting for Business

Are Meetings for Business held in a spirit of worship and prayerful search for the way of Truth? Are all members encouraged to use their talents in the service of the Meeting? Do you undertake your proper share of the work and financial support of the Meeting?

Quarterly Meeting *hosted by Cobscook Meeting* **Saturday, May 1st,**

9:30-4:30

Cobscook Meetinghouse Rt. 189 (Lubec Rd.),
approx. 17 miles north of Machias

Theme: Sharing the Light

for information,

call Ernie or Barbara Foust, 582-8615

All Welcome!

People's Free Space: Sustainability School Tour and Resisting Empire

By Logan Perkins

Peoples Free Space is a group whose mission is "to create autonomous collective spaces for sharing resources and information, building community and fostering sustainable alternatives and creative resistance to social, economic, political and ecological oppression."

Frida Bus, our biodiesel-powered mobile community space, is a converted school bus that contains a kitchen, a library, couch, free box, and free information. This spring we will be converting the bus to run on straight vegetable oil, and we will install solar panels. During May the Frida Bus will be traveling around Maine putting on two types of presentations. During the day we visit schools and present a program about the ecological and social problems with our country's dependence on oil and other fossil fuels. Included in the presentation is information on alternative energy sources that currently exist, such as biofuels, wind power, solar power and energy conservation.

In the evening we will hold multimedia presentations called "Resisting Empire," which will critically look at the United States' addiction to war, oil, drugs, and power. Through music, puppets, slides, and discussion we will show how the US empire uses food, energy, and war as mechanisms to control the people of the world. We will not just dwell on the negatives, but will showcase inspiring examples of grassroots resistance and sustainable alternatives to the corporate domination of the planet. At the end of our presentation we will facilitate community discussion about local issues and building regional solidarity. Our presentation lasts approximately 2 hours and can be held in any space.

Midcoast Meeting will be hosting a Resisting Empire event on Monday, May 3rd, at 7 p.m. Other venues include Camden: May 4-5, Belfast: May 6, Blue Hill: May 7-8, Mount Desert Island: May 9-10, Waterville: May 11-12, and Skowhegan: May 13. Presentations at Greater Portland/Cumberland County Schools: May 17-30. For more information, contact Logan Perkins at Box 1582, Portland, ME 04104, (207) 761-2909 logan@planet-save.com.

The Advices

In Meetings for Business, and in all duties connected with them, seek again the leadings of the Light; let our utterances be brief and without repetition. Let us keep from obstinacy and from harshness of tone or manner and admit the possibility of being in error. In all the affairs of the Meeting community, let us proceed in a peaceable spirit, with forbearance and warm affection for each other.

Budget for 2004-05

by Paul Diamond

At Monthly Meeting for Business on April 16, Treasurer Paul Diamond presented a proposed budget for the fiscal year 2004-05, which begins on June 1. He also reviewed activity in various special accounts, such as the Capital Repairs Account, the Meetinghouse and Grounds Account and the Special Projects Account.

It is anticipated that income for the year 2003-04 will fall short of the budget by about \$2,100. The effects of this shortfall will be mitigated in part by savings on the expenditure budget of about \$1,675. But since the expenditure budget was originally established at a level well below anticipated income, there will still be money available to transfer \$5,000 into our reserve accounts—the Building Capital Fund, for future expansion of the meetinghouse (\$1,000); the Capital Repairs Account, for major items such as the upcoming repairs to the parking area (\$2,000); and the Meetinghouse and Grounds Account, for future major purchases (\$2,000). These transfers were approved by Monthly Meeting.

For next year, it is anticipated that income will be about the same as this year—namely \$18,600. An expenditure budget of \$15,200 has been proposed, and it is hoped that some \$4,000 will be available for transfers to reserves a year from now. The major items in the proposed expenditure budget are committee-approved expenditures (\$2,675); community participation, including Worthy Needs (\$1000) and a voluntary contribution to the Town of Damariscotta (\$400); Friends Contributions and Responsibility, including New England Yearly Meeting and other Quaker entities (\$5,125); and Operating Expenses (\$6,000).

Copies of the proposed budget were distributed at Monthly Meeting, and additional copies are available from the Treasurer, Paul Diamond, at 236-0283. It is expected that a final decision on the budget will be taken at the May Monthly Meeting for Business.

Searching for Housing

Peter Lehman would like to find an apartment or house to rent in the Rockport, Union, Warren, or Hope area as soon as possible. If you know of a possibility, call him at 542-1496.

Change of Address

Esther Cope is now happily settled in her cottage at Cornwall Manor and writes to say that her new mailing address is PO Box 125, 6040 Grandview Circle, Cornwall, PA 17016-0125. Her phone and email remain the same (717-270-9459, escope@paonline.com)

Visit

www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org

Mothers Without Borders!

Third Annual Mother's Day March,
Sunday, May 9, in Bath, Maine from 12-2
by Gretchen Hull

"Disarm, disarm! We women of one country are too tender of those of another to allow our sons to be trained to injure theirs."

These are the words of Julia Ward Howe calling upon mothers in 1870! This year, mothers and others are called to assemble on the Woolwich side of the Bath Bridge on Sunday, May 9, at noon. We will march across the Bath Bridge and continue on to Library Park to hear speakers and music. A photographic exhibit of mothers around the world is planned. People from all walks of life will carry signs and banners urging love and non-violence in the resolution of personal differences, in the setting of international policy, and in the protection of our Mother Earth.

Note: Please plan to park in the Woolwich Post Office lot, or in public parking under the Bath end of the bridge, not those of businesses! We will make car-pooling available for your return if you need it!

FMI: Gretchen Hull, Bridges for Peace, 563-5416, peacebridges@peacebridges.org, or Rosalie Tyler Paul handinhand@clinic.net



Crop Walk Planned

by Ruth Ives

With so much hunger and disaster and so many refugees in the world today, the Church World Service is more hopeful than ever that successful CROP walks will relieve as many of these problems as possible. Many organizations are working toward this end as well. Church World Service is an outreach of many major denominations, from Roman Catholic to Congregational, Quaker to Methodist, Baptist to Episcopalian. All our area churches have been represented in past CROP walks in which participants offer brochures and information about the CWS projects and gather sponsors whose financial gifts, (however modest they may be) are used to fund national and international projects. As much as 25% of the income may be offered to local food pantries to improve the health and nutrition of low-income people in this area.

We hope that you will join us on Sunday afternoon, June 13, when the CROP walk begins at 2 p.m. All are welcomed to walk the designated 10 kilometers (6 miles) in the Damariscotta-Newcastle area. Non-walkers who are eager to provide food, housing, or other help are invited to speak to your contact person and offer a donation for this cause. We'll keep you posted on how plans are developing!

The contact person for Midcoast Meeting is Holly Baldwin, 644-1014, hollyb@riseup.net.

Antarctica Exploredcont'd fr. back cover

We sailed all that day, and I witlessly tried to take pictures of the waves, but of course they didn't show up nearly as big on film as they actually were. I guessed that there was at least half a mile between crests, so they were not sharp, and they approached the ship in a dignified, if relentless, manner.

While on board, we enjoyed a number of lectures and slide shows from the professionals who accompanied us. One was a glaciologist, one a marine-mammal researcher, and there were several photographers, a geologist, and a professional ornithologist. We even had an ice captain, who advised the ship's captain about ice conditions and what to do and where to go or not. These lectures were informative and always interesting. The first lecture was about Antarctic etiquette. We were to take nothing ashore that didn't return with us. Before embarking in the Zodiaks to go ashore, we walked through a dishpan of disinfectant, so that our boots would carry no unwelcome contaminants. We also went through these same dishpans on the way back, to remove penguin offal from our boots and keep the ship clean.

The second morning I was awake around three and looked out our porthole into the lavender dawn and saw my first large iceberg, glowing a misty blue. It was magical. As the day wore on, we saw a snow-covered island and more icebergs, some as big as city blocks, flat on top because they had sailed perhaps a thousand miles from their origin in the icefields on the eastern side of Antarctic Peninsula.

Our first stop was at Deception Island, aptly named. We sailed into the flooded crater of its volcano, still somewhat active, but not dangerous. The level of excitement was palpable as we looked at those ancient rocky portals. An abandoned whaling station lounged on the beach, with huge rusty tanks, parts of buildings, and piles of whale bones. People who went ashore were advised to wear bathing suits. Imagine!! But after some digging on the beach the resulting hole became filled with lovely sooty warm water, and the bathing was elegant.

This is the most unspoiled area on earth, of that I'm convinced. No cigarette butts on the beaches, no floating plastic, not even jet trails or overflights to mar the peacefulness of the natural world. I could feel my soul expand, and the everyday world I had left behind vanished.

The animals reflected this tranquillity, showing little or no fear of us as we explored through penguin rookeries and walked near seals sunning themselves on the beaches. The natural predators of these species are only in the sea, so on land they took us for granted and did not regard us as a threat. It was heartwarming.

Penguins are comical to observe. They posture and squabble and holler and waddle around. They are wonderful parents, turning their eggs gently to keep

continued on next page

them uniformly warm, feeding their chicks regurgitated krill (small shrimp), preening themselves and their offspring. They smell of krill, and their rookeries are stained pink from their digestive products. We saw about four different species of penguins.

The sea birds, albatrosses, giant petrels, skuas, and such followed in our ship's wake, riding on the air currents it caused. They could go for hours, it seemed, without flapping their wings, some of which were 12 feet across! I never saw an albatross land in the water, and wondered how they rest.

We sighted whales every day, mostly humpbacks and minke. It is humbling to see these creatures of the deep conducting their lives without our intervention, safe and free. (Whaling has long been discontinued in Antarctica.) When the cry went out, "Whales to starboard!" everyone swarmed to that side. Good that the ship was a big, steady one!

The passengers aboard were mostly from college tour groups, and we found a few good friends among them. It was an adventurous group, and several people who needed canes to get around insisted on going ashore in the Zodiacs for our outings. I myself wondered how I would cope with getting in and out of the Zodiacs, but after an undignified entry the first time (landing on my backside in the bottom), I was agile and experienced enough to resume my usual grace.

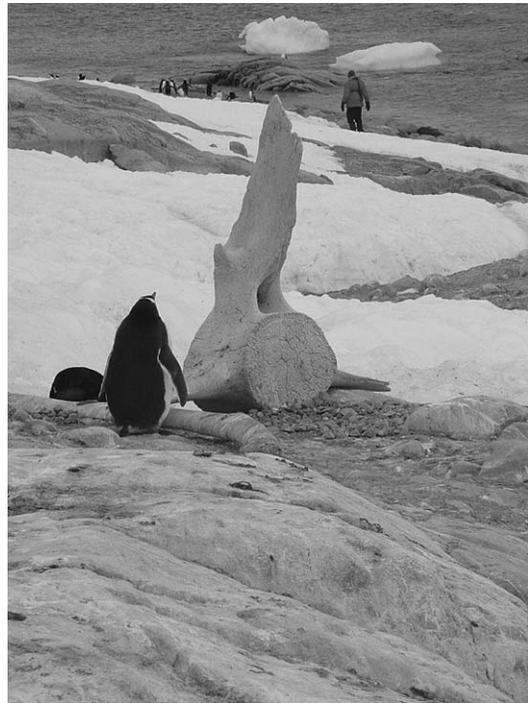
The only structures we saw were abandoned whaling stations. We saw only two other vessels—one other cruise ship and a small sloop, as well! Courageous people!

On the other side of what is called the "peninsula" (the mountainous arm which reaches north toward Argentina, connecting under the Drake Passage with the Andes), there are research stations, but we did not go that far. We sailed through some lovely, narrow passages with mountains, glaciers slipping down between them, on either side. It was a photographer's paradise. The ice was unbelievably blue, all shades, from very pale to inky. I kept looking to assure myself my eyes weren't deceiving me.

The weather cooperated, though the wind was constant, and we had to dress for it. One day we were informed that we would have a picnic lunch on the after deck, and most of us were skeptical about that one. But as that was the only place we could get lunch, we all appeared, and we had a grand time "roughing it." The next day, the deck where we had been was covered with several inches of snow.

In all, it was a trip I had been wary about taking, knowing how very far we would have to travel and wondering if we would be up to it. Not a problem. There's a fanciful part of me that would love to return, if only to feel that peacefulness and pristine, austere beauty again.

See Claire's photos in color on our Web site: www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org



Penguin and whale vertebra



Humpback whales



Iceberg

Worthy Needs Examined

By Paul Diamond

For many years, the same organizations received the same amounts year after year, apparently without any review by either the Finance Committee or by Monthly Meeting. This got a little ridiculous as some organizations went out of business and we discovered that some checks had gone uncashed for years!

Originally, I believe that most of the "community" contributions were made to organizations in the Damariscotta area. But as attention began to be focussed on the item, it was recognized that if the Meeting was to act collectively to support organizations in the area served by the Meeting, it made sense to broaden the catchment area to reflect the widening geographical spread of the Meeting's membership. There were some who felt that our "community" was broader than that, and that there were causes on a statewide, national, or international level that were worthy of collective recognition by the Meeting.

Recognizing that there would be no way to satisfy all of the worthy causes out there, while agreeing there was value in exercising a collective responsibility for giving (over and above amounts that individual Meeting members gave from their own budgets), Monthly Meeting decided that the best way to address the multiplicity of concerns was to appoint a Worthy

Needs Committee whose membership would change every year (except perhaps for one member who would stay for two years and provide continuity). The result might reflect small-group preferences in a given year, but over time would be broadly representative of the Meeting's overall concerns. As a result of this process, for two years Worthy Needs Committees considered different charities and organizations in a broader catchment area including other Midcoast organizations, a statewide Indian organization, an overseas Quaker concern, and a large international charity. Monthly Meeting seemed to be comfortable with the idea that the Worthy Needs beneficiaries would tend to change from year to year, as committee membership changed.

This year, however, it seemed that it was more difficult to find people willing to serve on the Worthy Needs Committee, and the committee itself recommended only a small number of payments, mostly local. The committee endorsed the idea of initiatives emerging from within the Meeting (such as the Heifer project and concerns like those that Claire Darrow has raised) and brought the Peace & Social Concerns Committee (P&SC) into the picture. At this point, with barely a month left in the fiscal year, we have spent only a little over half of the budget.

My own view is that it will be good for Monthly Meeting to explore its criteria in considering the Community budget for 2004-05. Is Meeting comfortable with the fact that the Finance Committee is recommending a smaller amount than for 2003-04 (\$1400 including \$400 for the Town of Damariscotta, instead of \$2,000 - including Damariscotta - for 2003-04)? Does it want to give P&SC guidance in considering geographic areas (truly local—Meeting membership catchment area—or statewide) or Quakerly concerns (like overseas activities) or matters emerging from First Day School (like the Heifer project) or international organizations working to ease the stresses of war (like Doctors Without Borders)? If it does not want to give P&SC general criteria like this, might it want to encourage continuity so that some organizations may grow to expect annual contributions from Midcoast Meeting, or would it be content to see token contributions on a one-time basis so that a range of worthy causes in our "community" could at least be recognized once?

I hope that Monthly Meeting will review these issues broadly as it moves into the fiscal year 2004-05. Meanwhile, I wish P&SC every success in its deliberations over how to spend the remaining \$750 from the current fiscal year (ending May 31), and I hope it may have some recommendations in this regard for the May Monthly Meeting to consider.



Aging with Joy and Grace

by Sally Wood

On Saturday, April 3, five Midcoast Friends traveled to East Vassalboro Meeting to attend Aging with Joy and Grace: A Retreat for Everyone Alive. It was a marvelous experience.

We shared stories about family and friends aging. We shared stories about our own aging. Some were good and some were not so good. Some were funny, and some were sad. They all seemed to enlighten us.

We talked about planning for death, so it could be experienced with joy and grace. Many people don't want to talk about aging and/or dying. We were helped to see how it can help not only us but our siblings, offspring, and friends. It should be an expected event, not feared.

There were sessions about will preparation, Medicaid, long-term care, living wills, and last wishes. We were inspired to smile about our final days and to do all we can now to make them joyful and graceful for us and those who will share them with us.

Chouteau Chapin, 1910-2003

"You're from Midcoast Meeting? Oh, then you know (knew) Chouteau!" One can only begin to suggest the import of that familiar observation. It was joy in the present tense and joy tempered with sadness in the past tense. Both a reflection of a significant human being who embodied the delight of gentle wind with the capacity to shake large objects.

Ethel Chouteau Dyer was born in 1910 in St. Louis to a family known as founders of the American West. She was educated at Bryn Mawr and London's Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. She made her Broadway debut in 1936. Along the way she studied acting techniques under Lee Strasberg, working with actors who later became stars, such as Marlon Brando.

A passion for peace and justice was the driving force throughout her long life. It found expression through her love of storytelling and the stage. When she received her first offer of an equity role on Broadway, she felt called to turn it down because of her commitment to develop scripts with timely social messages for the girls' drama club at the Henry Street Settlement House in New York City.

When Chouteau discovered Quakerism later in life, it was like the end of a lifelong quest. Quakerism, with its belief in "that of God " in each person and its tradition of social and peace activism, served to confirm and strengthen her as she continued her prodigious endeavors to improve the world. She and her husband, Stuart Chapin, became deeply involved in Quaker causes, studying intensively at Pendle Hill and supporting peace efforts in Mexico and Maine and beyond.

In 1968 Chouteau and Stuart helped to found Midcoast Monthly Meeting. Her stage shifted from Broadway, but it was still a stage. She generated the enthusiasm and coordinated the results into Christmas plays she directed for all the children in the Meeting to participate in and enjoy. For Chouteau, the problems of the world, though many and immense, always allowed room for joy and simple pleasures. Her concerns were addressed through her tireless efforts in the Meeting, in Quarterly Meeting, Yearly Meeting, her Washington Congressional delegation, and a wide network of Quaker connections at home and abroad.

Chouteau was not to be distracted from her responsibilities to the Meeting and served two separate terms as clerk of the Meeting. She often offered her home, "The Barn" in Montsweag, for Meeting activities. Always enthusiastically involved with the children and youth of the Meeting, she was known and loved by them for her role as Charlotte in *Charlotte's Web*. However, peace and social justice activities were her dominant interest. She protested the Vietnam War and worked on behalf of Maine Native Americans and against the nuclear power plant in Wiscasset. In 1974

she was arrested in Operation Snowy Beach at Reid State Park for protesting Navy operations and was taken off to jail. During the '80s she organized protests against U.S. wars in Central America and traveled to Nicaragua. In 1990 she attended a rally for peace in Portland for which she made armbands to generate questions about ways to achieve peace in the Middle East. Later she worked with the Plowshares group too, protesting Bath Iron Works' involvement in missile weaponry. Attending a rally in a wheelchair was never an impediment when she felt called to help.

In 2000 at age 90 her creativity and love of life resulted in her staging a remarkable birthday bash in a theatre in Brunswick. According to one Friend, she "planned, wrote and choreographed the whole production." She kept the 200 or so people in the theatre enthralled as she dramatized her life story which she chose to title "The Life of a Peacemaker."

As her health declined Chouteau became limited in speech and mobility, but her attitude remained as positive as ever. Friends remember how she would greet them with radiant eyes and a big smile when they visited her in the nursing home and when they joined her there in meetings for worship.

Chouteau died June 15, 2003, in Bath at the age of 93. Later, family and f/Friends gathered in great numbers on the beach and fields below "The Barn" for a memorial service that was a grand celebration, a living mirror of her vital, dynamic life.

Accepted by Midcoast Monthly Meeting on April 16, 2004



CONA News

Upcoming CONA Events

- **CLASS AND CASTE IN AMERICA.** An exploration of class(ism) and how it affects our social judgements and our political opinions. Wednesday, May 5th, 7:00 p.m., at the Second Congregational Church in Newcastle.
- **ANNUAL MEETING.** St. Andrew's Church, Glidden St. Newcastle. Saturday, June 12th: 11:00 a.m. Annual Meeting, and at 12:00 noon potluck lunch. At 1:00 p.m. Maine author William S. Coperthwaite will discuss the social, political and personal impact of a search for simplicity.

For more information, contact Tom Schmidt, 529-5302, tschmidt@prexar.com.

Erica Mather Welter, 1898-2003

Erica Mather Welter found the Religious Society of Friends in the last quarter of her inspiring life and was a beloved and articulate member of Midcoast Monthly Meeting for thirty years. Her remarkable clarity of thinking and living was melded with an astounding memory until the last day of her life at 105 years of age.

To the children of the Meeting, Erica was 'bigger than life.' She came to the children's space on each First Day for many years with presence and presents. Firm small handshakes for everyone—"Can I see your eyes?"—magic notepaper boxes of dragonfly wings or maple seeds passed around. "All things in nature are beautiful, and each one is different, just like you children!" Erica recited to the children week after week. Her detailed stories of an English childhood and the adventurous Atlantic crossing on a ship filled with immigrants at the age of five or six became real each Christmas as she led children and adults alike through the proper rituals of the specially ordered Christmas "poppers."

Erica often expressed her deep joy for being a part of Meeting, "her extended family," where independent searching was encouraged. She asked many of us to examine our own concepts of God. "Don't tell me—work it out for yourself!" she instructed us. She held the philosophy of self-reliance and the morality of kindness. She frequently quoted Emerson and left us her principal rule of life: "Enjoy being alive and help others to enjoy their lives." Erica valued thinking and urged everyone she knew to form opinions from their own observations and reflections.

By the time that Erica came to Midcoast Meeting she had already lived a long and thoughtful life. After serving in both world wars as a physical therapist, she spent many years as a teacher. Erica and her husband,

Amthor, moved to Maine in 1960 and spent ten happy years traveling to many countries together before his death. Her "forty-year dream," the creation of the Thompson Ice House Museum in South Bristol, was dedicated to him.

Erica had other dreams as well and was very concerned about issues of peace and social justice. When she was no longer able to write clearly on her own she continued to dictate well-informed letters to the president and to the newspapers. Taking pride in her three centuries, she purposely signed them all: "Erica Welter, 104 years old." On her 105th birthday, she was congratulated by telephone by former Senator George Mitchell, whom she greatly admired.

Erica did not want to celebrate her 105th birthday. She deplored the end of her independence and wrote in a letter published in the *Maine Times* in November, 2001: "at my age, life is not worth living, I am terminally ill, I am ready to die, but the state law forbids any doctor to help me die." She reflected deeply about her life and believed she could exercise her freedom at the end as she had her life long. The freedom to choose to die, she insisted, should not be abrogated by society.

Erica's open and frank acknowledgement of the dying experience was unique. She reflected deeply and fully disclosed the process, her mental and emotional states, as well as the physical discomforts, to her friends. This was her final gift of love to friends and caretakers.

Erica at last received her wish and died at her Damariscotta home. She lives on in the hearts of many of us. The unfolding of a small patchwork quilt that the children had made for her on her 90th birthday opened many memories to the young adults who attended her memorial service. As her father often quoted to Erica: "To live in the hearts we leave behind is not to die" (Thomas Campbell, 1777-1844).

Monthly Meeting Notescont'd fr. p.2

Peace & Social Concerns

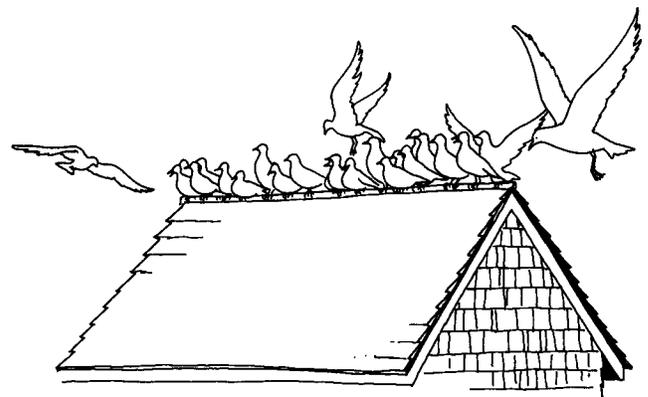
Holly Baldwin reported that a Quaker Earth Care Witness subcommittee has been formed for environmental care witness.

Landscape

Claire Darrow distributed an estimate from R.T. Hamlyn Construction for driveway renovation: ditch repair \$1,320, regrading \$1,160, and adding compacted gravel \$3,726, total \$6,206. She will obtain more information or estimates before a decision is made. A special meeting before the May business meeting may be needed if work is to be completed this spring.

The next Monthly Meeting for Business will be Friday, May 21, at 7 p.m., following a potluck supper at 6 p.m. All welcome.

Accepted by Midcoast Monthly Meeting on April 16, 2004



Patricia Falkenhain Geiringer, 1926-2004

"I would like to have known her better." Variations of this sentiment were heard from many Friends when they learned that Pat Geiringer had died unexpectedly on January 5th. Pat had been in the wings of the meeting; she was a frequent attender rather than a member, and she usually did not linger for social hour. However the conversations we had with her left us feeling touched by her sensitivity, breadth of interests, humor, and desire to put together the puzzle pieces of her life.

Pat was born in Atlanta, Georgia. After graduating from New York University, she had an illustrious life in the theater. She became a permanent member of the distinguished Phoenix Theater in New York City, where she won three Obie awards and The Drama Critics Award.

She met her husband, Robert, also an accomplished actor, while playing with him in an off-Broadway show. Although most of her professional life was centered in the theater, including teaching acting classes, she also worked extensively in television and film. She and Robert often worked together. Devoted to their dual profession, they had no children.

In 1965 Pat and Bob embarked on a lifelong dream, buying a home, a 200-plus-year old farmhouse on 55 acres in Newcastle, Maine, which they painstakingly restored themselves. They found old wood in the attic and used it to make repairs in the house, saving every handmade nail they could find for the floors. They patterned their "new" parlor after a Sturbridge Village room they had fallen in love with. Complete with handpicked furniture of the era, their home and later the gardens were truly a labor of love.

According to one Friend, "Visiting her house in Newcastle was a special pleasure, and she enjoyed having people there. When she discovered that I had an interest in history, she plied me with questions. I realized immediately that she not only knew a great deal about history but was also intensely interested in it. Pat quietly worked hard for the causes in which she believed." Pat's work in the community included the Newcastle Historical Society, the Damariscotta Lake Watershed Association, the Bunker Hill Grange, the Bunker Hill Ladies Aid Society, and the Knox-Lincoln Soil Conservation Board. She also belonged to a writing group and a sewing circle and often read to children at the Skidompha Library.

After Bob's illness and death in 1989, Pat devoted herself to caring for the house, woodland, and her beloved gardens. In her writing group, she chronicled the history of the farm for the benefit of future owners. She was an avid bird watcher and feeder. She also loved watching the wildlife around the farm and studying the skies.

Said a Friend, "Pat kept in touch with her many, many acquaintances through frequent phone calls. She was never too absorbed in what was sometimes her own very considerable pain to listen to someone else, to tell a good story and to laugh. Talking with her was guaranteed to brighten a day. In the unprogrammed worship of Midcoast Friends Meeting, Pat found spiritual sustenance, fellowship, and a community committed to peace and social justice. Over the years I came to know (her) as a very caring, deeply sensitive, generous, talented, and witty person."

Following her death there was a large memorial service in the Bunker Hill Community Church overlooking Damariscotta Lake, attended by friends from all walks of life and all geographical areas. Later a second service in the manner of Friends took place at Midcoast Meeting. Pat rests in St. Patrick's Cemetery, Newcastle, beside her beloved husband of 39 years.

Accepted by Midcoast Monthly Meeting on April 16, 2004



Library Committee News

New Books in the Collection

by Deborah Haviland

The Library Committee has added a number of new books to our collection. There is variety for each one of us. Please look at them, take them out, and enjoy. We always welcome suggestions and ideas from members and attenders and would love to have a review of any book you would like tell others about. It is a way we can all share in our spiritual growth.

- The Essential Rumi**by Coleman Barks
- Will the Circle Be Unbroken? Reflections on Death, Rebirth, and Hunger for a Faith** .by Studs Terkel
- Credo**by William Sloan Coffin
- Cultivating Compassion: A Buddhist Perspective**by Jeffrey Hopkins
- Soul Searchers, an Anthology of Spiritual Journeys**by Teresa De Bertodano (compiler)
- On Being a Quaker: Membership - Past - Present - Future**by Alastair Heron
- The Spiritual Activist: Practices to Transform Your Life, Your Work, and Your World.** .by Claudia Horwitz
- Judi Dench: With a Crack in Her Voice** .by John Miller
- One Explorer's Glossary of Quaker Terms**by Warren Sylvester Smith, Editor
- Traveling In** (Pendle Hill Pamphlet 324)by Douglas V. Steere

Antarctica Explored

Story and photos by Claire Darrow

Rick and I had the journey of a lifetime, to Antarctica, in January (summer there). We boarded a revamped icebreaker in Ushuaia, an outpost at the very bottom of Argentina, for the trip across the infamous Drake Passage. About 100 passengers were aboard and at least 50 staff and crew. It was a small ship, as cruise ships go, and not at all ritzy, but it was comfortable. The decks were almost cluttered



with stacked Zodiacs (the inflatable boats we used to go ashore, able to hold about 12 passengers) and lifeboats, but there were many different choices of where one could stand to view the ocean or countryside. There was also a sitting area aft on one of the lower decks.

On the first night we encountered a storm which produced 60-foot waves and 60-knot winds! The captain slowed the ship and headed into the wind, for the sake of the passengers, many of whom were nearing elderliness. Not many people were able to sleep, and in the morning a few sported bruises and contusions. Rick remembered something he'd learned in the Navy about staying put in rough seas, but I felt I slept only between the rolls, holding on all the while. I wished there had been bunk boards to keep me where I belonged. The next morning, the ship was still rolling. Not many people were in the dining room for breakfast, but we were! I was intrigued to see that the way to keep tablecloths on the tables was to pour water on them. The waiters forgot the table where we were, and on one roll of the ship the whole caboodle went flying, me with it. No harm done, and everyone took it in stride.

continued on page 4

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