

Fifth Month

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

May 2006

NEWSLETTER



The Father spoke one Word, which was his Son, and this Word he speaks always in eternal silence, and in silence must it be heard by the soul.

--St. John of the Cross, from jottings from his notebook

May

| | | | |
|----------|--------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Saturday | May 6 | | *Quarterly Meeting, Searsport |
| Sunday | May 7 | Rise of worship | Food Pantry Day *Discussion of Meeting as Peace Center |
| Sunday | May 14 | Rise of worship | Meetinghouse workday |
| Thursday | May 18 | 9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m. | A Conversation with Belden Lane, Topsham (see April Newsletter, p. 5) |
| Friday | May 19 | 6:00 p.m./7:00 p.m. | Potluck Supper followed by Monthly Meeting for Worship for Business |
| Sunday | May 21 | 8:30-9:45 a.m. After social hour | *Creative Listening *John Woolman Session |

~Advance Notice~

| | | | |
|----------|----------|--|--|
| Fri-Sun. | June 2-4 | | QUIT Conf., Guilford College, Greensboro, NC (see April Newsletter, p. 4) |
|----------|----------|--|--|

*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.

The Entirely Unofficial **MONTHLY MEETING NOTES**, 4th month of 2006
Based on draft minutes by Rob Patterson, Recording Clerk

Clerk Claire Darrow opened the meeting with a reading from the Peace Pilgrim followed by a brief silence. There were 15 members and attenders present. The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved with several corrections.

MINISTRY & COUNSEL: Deb Haviland reported for the committee. The committee is recommending the establishment of a Pastoral Care Committee. Acknowledging that many Friends are doing the work of pastoral care, the committee would serve as a central hub to hold these efforts together, ensuring that the needs of members and attenders are met. The committee would meet with Ministry & Counsel periodically to promote connectedness. The duties of the committee would include visiting meeting members in their home, hospital, or nursing facility; sending cards, notes and flowers; corresponding with out-of-town members once a year; keeping the file of emergency forms and encouraging individuals to complete them; and overseeing the emergency fund, among others. The establishment of this committee was approved. Todd Garth and Betsy Terrell have agreed to serve on Ministry & Counsel, joining Nancy Nyeberg, Linda Cote-Small, and David Cadbury. The Welcome Brochure, which had been handed out at the last business meeting, was approved for distribution. Claire Darrow was asked to lead the effort to draft a Memorial Minute for Natalie. She agreed to do this. The State of Society report will be presented at the next monthly meeting for business.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Paul Diamond presented recent financial results and budget proposals for the fiscal year 2006-2007 which begins June 1. He noted that a number of committees have not yet made their needs known for the coming year. Committee Clerks are reminded that the budget needs to be approved at the May business meeting. The Meeting's outflows have increased about 25% from 04/05 to 06/07 (projected), while income and contributions have decreased 25% in the same time frame. For the first time ever we may have a budget shortfall, whereas in all prior years we have had a surplus, which we transferred to reserves. Bill Spock asked for thoughts on what should be included in his annual request for contributions (pledge letter). It was suggested that members be asked to consider adjusting their annual contribution to keep up with inflation. Many, it was noted, give the same amount every year. Paul indicated that we have never touched

our most recent bequests from deceased members but that we should "consider the modalities" for tapping those funds, if needed.

PEACE & SOCIAL CONCERNS: Carmen Lavertu reported for the committee. She reported that the last called meeting to discuss Peace & Social Concerns was attended by about 20 members and attenders, and there seemed to be a great deal of enthusiasm about having the Meeting be a peace center. Gretchen Hull suggested that we call another meeting to follow up on the energy and enthusiasm expressed. It was difficult to come up with a specific date which could accommodate all those who want to be present. Finally it was decided that the work day scheduled for May 7 would be postponed until the 14th so that this meeting can be held on the 7th after meeting for worship. Carmen spoke to the upcoming conference on torture being held June 2-4 at Guilford College. She advanced Jean Crawford's earlier suggestion that the Meeting send a letter of support for the conference, appending to it the October 2005 letter which we drafted for area publications and political leaders. The website for the conference is www.quit-torture-now.org.

BUILDING & GROUNDS: Steve Gorry reported for the committee. Paul Diamond is working on revised meetinghouse use rules and procedures. The last work day was very productive, and the next is now scheduled for May 14.

OTHER BUSINESS: Jean Crawford introduced a proposal for formally addressing the concept of public relations for the meeting. The premise is that many in the community would want to attend Midcoast Meeting once they became aware of us, the sorts of things we do, and the values we hold. Clearly we need to grow and attract young people to our meeting. Jean proposes that, in addition to our website and newsletter, we use our occasional public announcements about meetings or functions to also publicize our core beliefs and views such as silent worship, the lack of a creed, "that of God" in every person, and our holding to simplicity and care for the environment. Going further, we could mention our specific desire to attract more families with children in order to strengthen and expand our religious education program. The idea is not to proselytize but to make people aware of what we have to offer. More discussion is needed about this important matter. Friends are reminded that Quarterly Meeting will be

in Searsport on May 6. Sponsored by Acadia and Belfast Meetings, the topic will be "Making the World We Want: The Power of Government Procurement." Sweatshops in underdeveloped nations are the focus of attention, trying to make governments and businesses aware of how their actions can affect the sweatshop practices.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, it was adjourned after a brief silence, to meet again on Friday, May 19, 2006. Potluck supper at 6 p.m. followed by the meeting at 7 p.m. All are welcome to attend.

CREATIVE LISTENING

Deborah Haviland

Our Creative Listening series resumed in March, and our next gathering will be Sunday, April 30, from 8:30-9:45 a.m., before Meeting for Worship. This is a wonderful way to deepen personal relationships and hear each other's stories. The process is simple: a leader asks a question about a specific type of experience, and each member responds in turn. Each speaker shares only her experiences or feelings, and there is no discussion. The listeners respond silently in kind. Willow Rowntree wrote about her experience in our January newsletter and she said, "Creative Listening is an act of mutual compassion that creates recognition and celebration of the Light that shines in each person's story." Come join us on April 30.

Query 12. Peace and Reconciliation



Do you "live in the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars"?
Do you faithfully maintain Friends' testimony against military preparations and all participation in war, as inconsistent with the teachings and spirit of Christ?

Do you strive to increase understanding and use of nonviolent methods of resolving conflicts?

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

Advices--Peace and Reconciliation

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



As some of you may know, Joannie Piccard has moved to Princeton, New Jersey. She is now recovering from knee-replacement surgery. Although she has discontinued her e-mail service for now, she can be reached at 312 Redding Cir., Princeton, NJ 08540, or 609- 924-4450. She'd like to hear from Friends and asks to be held in the Light.

Summary of Meeting to Discuss the Peace and Social Concerns Committee

Submitted by K. L. Cadbury

Approximately 20 people from Midcoast Monthly Meeting of the Society of Friends met on March 26 after meeting for worship to talk about how we might be more effective and able to contribute--as a meeting and individually--to advancing conditions that lead to the valuing of all people, improved social and political conditions, greater equality and to the elimination of war and other conflicts in which people choose or are forced to use violence.

The purpose of the discussion was to brainstorm ideas, thoughts and directions that we might propose or take. No attempt was made to select or define a particular activity or direction; instead, Meeting members were asked to reflect on the ideas and suggestions that were presented. Most of the comments that were made were in the form of questions; therefore, they are presented here in that manner.

We began with silence and then a period of sharing. The following summary was created from notes taken at the meeting by Linda Cote-Small, Claire Darrow, and Carmen Lavertu. We thank them for their help in capturing this information. If you think any contributions have been omitted or that the correct meaning of a contribution has not been captured, please contact Karen Cadbury, and she will make any needed changes.

The next step--as agreed to by all who attended--is to take these ideas and suggestions to Monthly Meeting and to circulate these notes to people who were not able to attend the meeting.

This discussion meeting was part of an effort to broaden and strengthen the participation of our meeting members in social concerns activities and to support those who are engaged in such activities. For this reason, the ideas that emerged during this meeting will not be sent back to the Peace & Social Concerns Committee for implementation. Instead, if Monthly Meeting wants to move forward on any of these ideas, the next step might be to create a planning group with wide participation to thresh out a plan and create a proposal.

Ideas and Thoughts about Peace and Social Concerns

1. Do people in the community really know how much money is being spent on war and what we

could do with an equivalent amount of money? Could we do a book that had this type of information?

2. How can we establish Monthly Meeting as a peace center in the Community? What would this look like? Could we have programs for children? speakers? workshops?

3. Does our meeting have the ability to be a community center, since we have a limited physical capacity? Do our members have the capacity to respond to this need in the community?

4. We should be responding to specific situations that are urgent and important to Friends. Many of the issues are so broad and so general that it can be difficult to understand and act on issues of concern:

- a.) Tom Fox's vision or
- b.) the request from Langley Meeting.

5. How can we be connected to and grounded in Friends' traditions and spirituality? In areas such as,
a.) the testimony on war,
b.) being a counterpoint to fundamentalism, and
c.) continuing the activities of Friends such as John Woolman.

6. How can we make the Friends Peace Testimonies relative to our times?

7. What is the best way to pursue the Peace Testimony unencumbered by dogma?

8. How can we find strength as a community to foster sustainability and demonstrate how things may be done differently? How can we be a place where people find the strength and knowledge to create sustainable communities?

9. Can we as a corporate body express ourselves in the Damariscotta area? Are there issues on which we can focus in the Damariscotta area--People to People, STOP Walmart, a clergy group, envisioning opportunities, the April 2nd reconciliation program?

10. Can we continue to be part of the ecumenical group that is dealing with healing and economic opportunities?

11. How can we support the personal aspects of living in peace?

12. Can we live out the Quaker Peace Testimony by putting out our ideas and ideals?

13. How can we envision a peaceful world?

14. Can we have speakers?

Suggestions for Strengthening and Bringing Vitality to Social Concerns Work through the Meeting

The second part of the meeting was devoted to identifying suggestions and sharing ideas that may have occurred to people in the brainstorming part of the meeting. The following suggestions were offered:

1. Let us develop the Peace & Social Concerns Committee in a new format.
2. Let us establish a Peace Center at our meeting to foster peace and to grow and reach out as a meeting.
3. Let us consider how we may go out as peacemakers in our local communities--ministry to elected officials, for example.

4. Let us develop our abilities to be consensus builders.

5. Let us support the work that AFSC is doing about the military in the schools, and find other standards that we can use for communicating about these issues.

6. Let us develop our newsletter so it could be sent out to people in the community.

7. Let us develop a peace newsletter with updates on peace activities and substantive articles on peace issues.

8. Let us sponsor speakers and activities, such as Elise Boulding and her Visioning a Peaceful World.

9. Let us develop ways of using local-access television and other forms of public communication.

10. Let us sponsor an AVP workshop

A Peace Center for the Meeting and for the Community

By Carmen Lavertu

The summary report of the meeting held on March 26 to discuss the Peace & Social Concerns Committee was addressed at the Monthly Meeting last week. After review, discussion, and silent listening, the Meeting decided that a meeting is urgently required to see if it is possible to act on the ideas that have come forth. It was further decided that the establishment of a peace center for the Meeting and the community would be a good organizing idea. This meeting, to focus on the idea of a peace center, has been scheduled for May 7, at the rise of Meeting for Worship. All Friends are urged to come, those who came to the first meeting and those who weren't able to come. It is very important, in this difficult time of our nation at war, that we Friends be united in purpose and vitality to realize Peace in our worship, work, and voices.

CLERK'S CORNER



Spring is definitely here; just look outside the window. We've had our first work hour, on a day threatening rain, but it held off, and we had nice sun in which to work, with a warm potluck gathering afterward. I think we'll do this often.

The Peace Vigil went well, and we had a glorious day to hold it in. I thought for a while we ought to have a nasty, cold day so that our commitment to Peace would seem to be more of a statement. But that's not what matters most. We were there, all 26 of us.

I have a strong sense that there are changes afoot within our Meeting. At Business Meeting, we talked over many new aspects of things we've been dealing with for some time. Our Finance Committee is working, with our approval, toward setting up a kind of endowment fund, as our income is looking as though it will be somewhat smaller in the coming years. We'll see, but we're taking no chances; we don't want to be caught short. This is only in the suggestion mode right now, and we'll hear more about it as time goes on.

After our Peace & Social Concerns "talkabout" several weeks ago--well attended and exciting--we are talking about opening up the Meeting in several ways. One is to have much more frequent articles in local newspapers about our doings, so that people really know we're here. We hope this will bring new people into the Meeting if only to find out what we're all about, but hopefully to come, stay, and bring their children. We really need children to help this Meeting grow as the rest of us age. And this brings up the subject of the addition we talked about a while ago. It is very much on hold for now, but many of us haven't given up the hopes that it will be needed when we expand.

Another idea that sparked a lot of interest was making this Meeting a peace center, the details of which are yet to be arranged. We have taken the radical step of postponing the next work hour (day) for a week, to the 14th, so that we can all sit together sooner rather than later and share our thoughts about this proposal, or rather, these proposals, for no one idea is settled on as yet.

And one new thing has already happened. The new newsletter group has begun its work, and Nancy Terrell-Hall is all but fully retired. Diane Kirkman has taken over the editorship, with the practiced help of Betsy Terrell, Jean Crawford is writing the news articles to go out to the papers, Sally Tukey is getting the newsletters printed and seeing that they get to Sarah Ewing and Steve Gorry, who are preparing and mailing the printed copies to those who wish snail mail delivery. I hope I haven't left anyone out!* It's quite a crew. I am so delighted that these people have stepped forward to fill the gap facing the Meeting.

In connection with the new avenues the Meeting is exploring, I hope you will come to the Peace & Social Concerns meeting, after worship on the 7th, and see what interests you most and find a way to help out. This is what will make our Meeting strong, and I know from experience that working together is the most fun thing we can do.

*Editor's note: And Guy Marsden has assumed responsibility for the website.

~MINISTRY & COUNSEL~ REPORT TO MONTHLY MEETING April 21, 2006

Name of the committee: A decision to reconsider keeping the name of Ministry & Counsel for this committee instead of Worship & Ministry was approved by Monthly Meeting.

Committee Description: The updated M&C description for the committee, excluding pastoral care responsibilities, was approved with two additions. The corrected description follows below.

Welcome Brochure: The newly designed "Welcome Brochure" was approved.

State of the Society: A final draft of the "State of the Society Report" will be presented at the May monthly Meeting for Business.

Natalie Wriggins Memorial Minute: Claire Darrow has agreed to coordinate the writing of this minute.

Handbook: The monthly meeting decided to put the production of a new handbook on hold for this year, since we are experimenting with a couple of new committee changes. The hope is to have a new handbook in later 2007.

Greeting: A piece on the importance of starting meeting for worship promptly on Sunday is in this newsletter (see below). Reworded signs about time considerations for Sunday worship will be posted on both the exterior and meeting room doors.

Strengthening the Spiritual Life of the Community: Each member of the committee is contemplating this topic to be discussed within the next couple of months as we put together a plan for this coming year.

Ministry & Counsel Committee Approved 4/21/06

Ministry & Counsel is responsible for attending to the spiritual life of the Meeting, including the quality of silence and vocal ministry. There are three areas where it takes primary responsibility:

- Ministering to the regular scheduled worship by: scheduling greeters and closers; coordinating the reading of queries and advices, periodically; providing guidance, mentoring, or eldering as needed; and responding to questions about Quakerism.
- Providing opportunities for the spiritual growth and enrichment of the Meeting through a variety of educational activities, such as study and discussion groups, retreats, meetings for sharing, etc.

- Overseeing membership, marriages and unions, memorial services, and other special worship services including the writing of memorial minutes.

Other duties of Ministry and Counsel include preparing the annual "State of the Society Report" and managing the selection/preparation and availability of pamphlets and other handout materials such as the "Welcome Brochure" and the "Handbook."

Members of the M&C and Pastoral Care committees will meet together periodically to ensure connectedness.

A Concern for Quaker Practice

Originally by Deborah Haviland, Amended for
Reprinting by Betsy Terrell
at the Request of the April Meeting of Ministry &
Counsel

Ministry & Counsel recommended at the December monthly meeting that we have a greeter in the foyer for the first 10 to 15 minutes of meeting. The committee feels there is a need to have someone welcome people who attend meeting for the first time. We also brought forth the concern that it is important that we all become more aware of the Quaker practice of not entering the meeting room when someone is speaking. We are aware that it is more difficult to center down when people enter at different times and that noise in the foyer can be disruptive during the beginning of meeting. The greeter will ask people who come after meeting has started to wait quietly in the library or on the hall bench for ten to fifteen minutes. At the right time or when the children come out, everyone will go into the meeting room together. We will have a sign on the door for people arriving after that time, reminding them that meeting has started. If persons do enter when someone is speaking, it is appropriate to stand inside by the door until the speaker is finished and then go to a seat. There was a full discussion by those

attending monthly meeting about this recommended change. It was agreed to implement these suggestions for the spiritual health of our meeting.

Requests from the Ministry & Counsel Committee

In January of this year, Ministry & Counsel began a practice of having a greeter in the foyer of the meetinghouse for the first fifteen minutes of Meeting for Worship. The goal is to provide a welcome to newcomers and a friendly greeting to members and attenders, as well as to request that latecomers wait in the foyer until 10:15 and all enter together at the same time as the children (if any) are coming out. This waiting time was initiated out of a concern for the disruption in the settling and centering process of those already in the Meeting for Worship. It is also helpful to those arriving after 10:00 to allow for a few minutes of transition from the activities of traveling to meeting into preparing inwardly to enter the already established stillness of the Meeting for Worship space. The committee would like to express appreciation for everyone's cooperation in providing for this transition time to help smooth the entry into Meeting for Worship.

On a related note, the committee is also seeking to expand its list of those who feel comfortable taking the responsibility of greeter and/or for closing the meeting and leading the introductions, afterthoughts, and announcements period. Anyone who feels a leading or willingness to explore either of these positions, please contact one of the current members of the committee for further information:

Linda Cote-Small, clerk: chezcote@gwi.net; 563-6712
David Cadbury: cadbury@adelphia.net; 230-0436
Nancy Nyberg: nancyonyberg@alum.wellesley.edu; 443-1281
Todd Garth: Todd_Garth@yahoo.com; 677-2757
Betsy Terrell: captainbetsy@fastmail.fm; 563-1831

JOHN WOOLMAN SESSIONS

By Carmen Lavertu

For several months, many Friends have been reading the *Journal* of John Woolman and his essay "A Plea for the Poor." Ten or so readers have met twice to share our appreciation and to read passages aloud. We next meet May 21, after Meeting for Worship and the social hour, shortly before noon. Friends are encouraged to be reading and contemplating the life of John Woolman, not only for personal ethical and spiritual enrichment, but also to learn his process of discerning leadings and guidance for Quakerly public witness.

QUARTERLY MEETING

"When Next We Meet"

~Saturday, May 6, 2006~

*First Congregational Church of Searsport
Hosts: Belfast and Orono Monthly Meetings*

- 8:30 a.m. Gather and visit. Children's program.
8:45 a.m. Meeting for Worship.
10:00 a.m. Meeting for Business.
12:00 noon Potluck lunch (children under care of their parents). Please bring a salad or dessert to share. Soup, bread, and beverages provided.
1:15 p.m. Intergenerational Activity.
2:00 p.m. **Making the World We Want: The Power of Government Procurement--Bjorn Claeson, Director of Sweatfree Communities.** "Clean Clothes," "Justice Clothing," and Maine's 2002 landmark legislation.
3:30 p.m. Adults, youth, and children together for close.
3:45 p.m. Departure.

Contact for information: Lucinda Selchie, 338-3428.

Contact for Youth Program: Ronda Nichols, 567-3967.

Phone at church: 548-0327.

Woodwich, ME 04579, 443-8942, guy@artecnet.

Address changes to: Pat Spock, 729-0826, wspotk@gwi.net, 10 Curtis St. Brunswick, ME 04011. Web: Guy Marsden, 61 Delano Rd. August. Editor/design: Diane Kirkman, 236-9078, diane_kirkman@hotmail.com, 18 Atlantic Ave., #3, Camden, ME 04843. Paul Diamond, 236-0283. The Newsletter - May 2006 - Volume 18 - Number 4. The Newsletter is published every month except

Midcoast Monthly Meeting of Friends - Clerk: Claire Darrow, 371-3447 - Recording Clerk: Rob Patterson, 236-9551 - Treasurer: