



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

*Peace is a daily, a weekly, a monthly process, gradually  
changing opinions, slowly eroding old barriers, quietly  
building new structures.*

—John F. Kennedy

## June

Sunday	June 5		Food Pantry Day Meetinghouse & Grounds Workday
		rise of worship	
Sunday	June 12	2 p.m.	Crop Walk, Newcastle
Monday	June 13	6-8:30 p.m.	* Ongoing study group on non-violent communication
Friday	June 17	6:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Potluck Supper Monthly Meeting for Worship for Business
Sunday	June 19	rise of worship	* 2nd-hour discussion regarding the NEYM Minute of Exercise on FUM personnel policy
Monday	June 20		Call for newsletter items: July-August issue
Sunday	June 26		# Friends Camp South China opens for summer
Monday	June 27	6-8:30 p.m.	* Ongoing study group on non-violent communication
~ Advance Notice ~			
Sat. - Fri.	July 2-8		# Friends General Conference, Blacksburg, VA
Sunday	July 10		* Picnic at Crawford Cottage on Lake Megunticook
Sunday	July 24	rise of worship	Meetinghouse Workday
Sat. - Thurs.	August 6 - 11		# New England Yearly Meeting, Smithfield, RI
Fri. - Sun.	Sept. 9 - 11		Fall Gathering, Friends Camp

# Financial support is available. Please speak to clerk Jean Crawford (236-4176) if interested.

\* 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](http://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](mailto:moonlite@lincoln.midcoast.com)

Visit [www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org](http://www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org)

# *The Entirely Unofficial* **MONTHLY MEETING NOTES**, 5th month of 2005

based on draft minutes by Rob Patterson

Clerk Jean Crawford opened the meeting with a poem by W.S. Merwin entitled "Good Night." A brief silence was observed. There were eleven Friends present. Minutes of the last meeting were read and approved with minor corrections.

## **Ministry & Counsel**

Holly Baldwin read the draft of the annual State of Society Report which had been drafted after a sharing session involving interested Friends from the meeting at large. With only minor changes, most of them stylistic in nature, the very good report was approved by the meeting for submission to New England Yearly Meeting and the Quarter. The June 1st meeting of the committee will be a joint one with the Nominating Committee to discuss Gifts and Leadings and issues concerning eldering and Gifts and Leadings.

## **Finance Committee**

Bill Spock, Clerk of the committee, reported. Expenses for the 2004-05 fiscal year are \$1225 below budget, while income is \$300 below budgeted levels. Our overall condition is sound and we can thank the special gifts and bequests we have received over the past year for assuring this good position. The committee made a total of five proposals for fiscal or other action by the Meeting. First, that our net income of \$4175 be used to add \$175 to the General Fund and \$4000 to reserves; Capital Repairs to receive \$2000 of this, Building Capital and Meetinghouse & Grounds would each receive \$1,000. This was approved. Second, it was recommended that, in response to a request from the Quarter, we increase our contribution to Quarterly Meeting from \$600 to \$650 annually. This was approved. (The Quarterly Meeting request was for \$700, but in light of the fact that our contribution has increased dramatically in recent years, \$650 was approved for the upcoming year.) Third, that Capital Repairs be authorized to pay \$3650 for painting and \$200 for light ballast. This was approved. Fourth, that in response to a plea from the Maine Counsel of Churches, we make available to the Giving Winds Fund a low-interest loan of \$10,000, which will be used to improve the quality of housing and assist with

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?

small-business development for the four Maine Native American tribes. The program has never had a loan default in its history. This was approved. Finally, the committee suggested that an ad hoc committee, including Ernie Foust and any other interested Friends, report to Finance with cost and layout proposals for a meetinghouse extension. It was agreed that this work should initially come from a group specifically assigned the task, rather than from Finance. It was agreed and the committee will be formed. Bill was thanked for another thorough and comprehensible report.

## **New Business**

Midcoast Meeting, along with other New England monthly meetings, has been asked to prepare a minute on how we feel New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM) should relate to Friends United Meeting (FUM) in the future, considering their personnel policy. This will assist NEYM to address FUM at the upcoming yearly meeting sessions.

Background materials on this issue, including a copy of A Minute of Exercise on Friends United Meeting Personnel Policy, were distributed for Friends to consider. The policy in question is one of excluding from leadership positions Friends who are sexually active outside heterosexual marriage. It was agreed that we would have a second-hour discussion at the rise of Meeting on Sunday, June 19th, so that interested Friends can weigh in on this matter. There will be information in the newsletter to further inform Meeting members about this issue.

## **Recent & Future Events**

Betsy Terrell spoke about the all Maine Gathering on May 7th at which the Quarter's State of Society Report was read and discussed. It was a very beautiful and meaningful day for all participants.

A discussion ensued about the kinds of Meeting activities that lead to "deeper talk." Worship-sharing groups, quasi-social events like book clubs, picnics, and Friendly 8s dinners were mentioned. The recent pizza party had about 8 people sign up but 22 actually attended! Jean Crawford said she would like to host a July picnic at her family cottage on Megunticook Lake in Camden. It will be after the rise of meeting, July 10.

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The Annual Meeting of the Corporation was also held at this time, with no specific business conducted other than the mandatory reports.

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**The next Monthly Meeting for Business will be Friday, June 17, 7 p.m., following a potluck supper at 6 p.m. All welcome.**

## Minute of Exercise Sent by New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM)

On June 19th there will be a second-hour discussion of a minute of exercise sent by NEYM to all the monthly and quarterly meetings, requesting input on an issue that came up during last year's sessions. The theme for these sessions was "And Who is My Neighbor?" (Luke 10:25-37) A Friend rose and asked, "Am I your neighbor?" She was concerned that as a lesbian she is barred by the personnel policy of Friends United Meeting (FUM)—of which NEYM is a founding member—from holding a leadership role, either as a staff person or as a volunteer. FUM's policy excludes from leadership Friends who are sexually active outside heterosexual marriage. Reportedly, there was a great deal of emotion expressed around this issue. NEYM Ministry and Council has been charged with bringing a minute to the 2005 sessions based on the year's discernment through a working party and, if possible, including input from all the member meetings of NEYM.

Bear in mind that FUM for the most part functions in parts of the world where culture and mores are radically different from the ones we have come to regard as "normal" here in the Northeast U.S. and that their experience of Quakerism is much more conservative than what we at Midcoast may be accustomed to. Of the 27 Yearly Meetings in FUM, 12 are in North America, 13 are in Kenya, and one each in Cuba and Jamaica.

### Text of the Minute of Exercise:

New England Yearly Meeting Friends gathered at our annual sessions reaffirm our belonging to Friends United Meeting, not only as co-founders and firmly led co-participants in its ministries, but as Friends whose faith has been strengthened and recharged by God's presence in our worship, work, and fellowship with FUM Friends. FUM remains one of the most important places where we meet Friends who challenge our beliefs, and where African, Latin American, Middle Eastern, and North American Friends meet face to face, growing in love and understanding. Since the 1940s when we were called to re-unite our previously separated Yearly Meetings, and since the early '90s when we developed special bonds of love and mutual ministry with Cuba Yearly Meeting, we have learned to live with our differences, and we have come to feel how painful it would be to live in isolation from other Friends.

At the same time that we cherish our membership and participation in FUM, many of us are troubled by FUM's personnel policies and practices, which exclude non-celibate gays and lesbians and unmarried heterosexual couples from leadership roles. Within NEYM we have struggled for years with same-gender marriage, and while support is not universal, we have watched as

*continued on page 8*

## Update on Visioning/ Planning Process

by Jean Crawford

In November of 2004 the Meeting envisioned four main goals:

1. to maintain our core of centering strength,
2. to grow in vitality,
3. to undertake a Meeting-wide project that goes beyond ourselves, and
4. to focus on the young.

These goals echoed themes that arose in our discussions two years ago. During the winter and spring of 2005 a series of second-hour discussions has helped us discern how we are to approach these goals. We asked, through a self-assessment questionnaire, what skills and energy Friends currently have to offer the Meeting. This told us that our committee structure needs adjusting: we need to have fewer committee jobs and fewer committee meetings. In one committee, Peace & Social Concerns, committee expectations were sapping member energy to the point that committee meetings were put on hold.

When Jonathan Vogel-Borne visited us in February to help us sort out Peace & Social Concerns, he suggested we gather for a potluck first. Thus began a movement away from organized discussions and toward social get-togethers. This has led to deeper sharing of ideas on the Meeting's future. Many good ideas having to do with peace issues, meetinghouse and grounds maintenance, Native Americans issues, etc., have already taken shape.

Ministry & Counsel has invited Nominating Committee to meet jointly on June first. The idea of "gifts and leadings" will be explored as a way to reform our committee structure. We expect, too, that visioning and planning will, in the months ahead, be less in the form of meetings and more in the form of spontaneous sharing.

All the while, we will review our goals and we will continually seek to be centered.

### Nonviolent Communication Practice Group

The Nonviolent Communication Practice Group continues to meet on the second and fourth Mondays of each month from 6:00 - 8:30 p.m. at the meetinghouse. If you are interested in joining the group or checking it out, please contact Linda Cote-Small at 563-6712.

# State of Society, Vassalboro Quarterly Meeting - 2004

"Trusting the Leadings of the Spirit" describes the continuing theme for Vassalboro Quarter in 2004.

Our year began with the "feeling of loss" when a snowstorm caused our February Quarterly Meeting in Farmington to be canceled. It proceeded to the "feeling of being lost" in the summer, with no clear direction or leader (Clerk) of the Quarter and many tired members of dwindling committees. Yet, a dedicated group met in prayer, met again in prayer and visioning, and met again in prayer and visioning and listening and trusting that there would be Leadings of the Spirit.

The Fall Gathering Committee, through the winter and spring, struggled to hear the Leadings of the Spirit. Grappling with the "feelings of loss" and "being lost" were felt there as well.

At one point, we wondered if we were hearing "Jubilee Year": take a year off, take more time and listen more fervently to the Spirit. We continued to pray and listen and trust that we would be led.

Cobscook Monthly Meeting held us in their care as they hosted our May Quarterly Meeting. The Fall Gathering Committee kept meeting and kept hearing: "Doesn't every person in our Quarter have gifts to share? Do we recognize our own gifts? Do we listen, hear and trust the leadings of the Spirit and act upon them especially in the work of our Monthly Meetings, our Quarter, and our Yearly Meeting?" These queries led to the choice of "Servant Leadership" as the theme of our family weekend.

In September, Friends began to hear and act on a

call, and by Fall Gathering we had dedicated leadership joining the process for finding our direction. With an inspiring keynote speaker introducing "Servant Leadership" to the wider group in attendance at Friends Camp, a change in energy and enthusiasm testified to the movement of the Spirit among us. Visioning at Fall Gathering led to new committees, new leaders, and new members of committees, a new schedule for Quarterly Meeting Day, a new meeting time for Ministry & Counsel, new efforts to visit and support smaller Monthly Meetings, and new energy.

In November, Midcoast Monthly Meeting hosted the largest turnout in several years for Quarterly Meeting day. We tried out all of our newness and danced in joy and ate lasagna.

We are thankful for the shift of our attention to discernment of Gifts and Leadings. We are thankful for the joy of North Fairfield and Eggemoggin on our visits. We are thankful for those elders who hold us in their prayers. We are thankful for the leadership of our children's program that sustained us throughout the year. We are thankful for the Spirit that continues to lead us.



## Portraits of Conscience

An exhibit of portraits by over 50 artists of prisoners of conscience worldwide will be presented by Amnesty International Group 371 at the Lincoln Street Center for Arts and Education, Lincoln Street, Rockland, May 27 – June 26, 2005. Gallery hours are 9 - 4 weekdays and 1 - 4 Saturdays. For directions, call Lincoln Street Center, 594-6490. For information on the project, call Steve McAllister 236-4298.

## Natalie Wriggins—Pastels

Natalie will have a one-woman show of her pastels at Round Top Center for the Arts. Natalie invites all Friends and their friends to join her at the opening reception of her new show at Round Top Center for the Arts, Damariscotta, Friday, June 3, 5 - 7 p.m., or, as she says, until people go home. The show runs through July 2, and the gallery is open Monday - Saturday from 10-4 and Sundays from 12-4.

## Friends Camp

Under the care of New England Yearly Meeting, Friends Camp gives young people a community experience based on Friends principles of simplicity and respect for the individual. Campers and staff combine their diverse geographic, scholastic, racial, and family backgrounds as they play, learn, and worship together. Friends Camp is an international community.

The camp still has openings in each of its two-week sessions for youth who are seven to seventeen years old. There are also one-week camp sessions in June and early July for those entering 4th - 6th grades. There will be an opportunity to meet the director of Friends Camp, Nat Shed, and tour the camp facilities, on Sat., June 4, from 1-4 p.m. More information about camp options is available at [www.FriendsCamp.org](http://www.FriendsCamp.org) or call Nat Shed at 207-873-3499.

The Friends Camp Campership Fund needs your support. Donations to this special fund have not kept up with the demand for camperships from middle- and low-income families. Please consider helping by sending a donation to Friends Camp, 25 Burleigh St., Waterville, ME 04901

# State of Society Report, Midcoast Monthly Meeting, 2004

Approved 5/20/05

The year 2004 has been a time of inward growth and reflection for Midcoast Monthly Meeting. Our graying meeting is heartened for the future by a welcome increase in participation by younger newcomers and children. We are especially grateful for this opportunity for growth as we still feel the effects of the loss of several of our dear Friends over the past few years, most recently Bronson Clark and Pat Gerringer. We miss our elders' company and their examples as passionate, spirit-filled Friends endowed with much wisdom. We also continue to struggle to reach the same sense of purpose and community that we had when we built the meetinghouse ten years ago. Our struggle to find our direction at this time has also brought us together, closer to the Source.

Some of the concerns in our hearts:

We've been in our meetinghouse for ten years, and we find strength and peace in having a physical home for our community of Friends. Maintaining this treasured asset requires work that we didn't have to worry about before. Between meetinghouse upkeep, committee assignments and other work of the Meeting, we have more jobs to fill than able members and attenders. How can we balance our expectations of what we should do as a meeting with the limitation of the abilities and leadings of our members and attenders? Part of our difficulty in getting things done has to do with geography and age—one Friend noted it's difficult to convene a meeting when half the committee doesn't drive after dark, and half the committee works until dark!

We struggle in our search for meaningful expressions of our testimonies on issues of peace and justice. How are we led—as a community and as individuals—to witness to what our hearts tell us about truth, peace and justice? Meeting for Worship is the foundation of our community. Some of us are seeking a greater depth of experience and deeper peace. Although First Day School is feeling more solid in the commitment of families and teachers, we have further to go to feel really secure in our First Day efforts.

These various struggles are different examples of the diversity that we bring to this Meeting. How do we make sense of the different ways the Meeting is meaningful for different parts of our community? We hold on to an unrequited desire for a unifying project to channel our energy: what kind of project would bring us all together?

Struggling brings us to the growing edge: growth and joy in the Meeting.

Although we are struggling with these questions and concerns, we find that the hard work and discomfort has led to some deep searching and great communion with the Spirit as we seek to discern where we

are led. We have had powerful second-hour discussions on vocal ministry, membership, and differences among us. We have begun a visioning and planning process that has provided more opportunities to listen to the Spirit speaking through us. We pray that this will leave us with a clearer sense of the direction the Spirit is leading us. In one visioning session we considered the query "Do we envision the future by experiencing the living silence as we listen and explore our hearts?" Perhaps this will help us discern our way in 2005.

This year, we also hope to strengthen our practice of caring for each other. We need the ability to look critically at our weaknesses and the grace to find in ourselves gifts that we honor in others. We have noticed that we do not know each other as well as we would like. We yearn for more opportunities to share fun and fellowship. This would help us grow together as the caring community we envision.

Our meeting has shared many joys as well. We are seeing new and younger people become more active in the life of the Meeting. Our Meetings for Business are a place for growing together in community and an opportunity to feel the Spirit move among us—at least sometimes! More people are coming to Meetings for Worship, which are generally found to renew our spirits, our sense of community, and our commitment to witness for peace.

We fondly recall two special Meetings for Worship which exemplify our hopes for 2005. One was shared with Tibetan monks who were visiting the area, only one of whom spoke English. They worshiped with us and then went out with the children and created a mandala on the social room floor, which they shared with us after worship. The community thus created transcended language, age, social, and religious difference, and made us all one. The other Meeting was held in September at the St. Johns' house on Morse Mountain. The Friends who were there were able to relax in the spirit in that special place: we enjoyed one another's company walking on the beach, we entered into deep worship, and we celebrated with a lunch of nourishing food and fellowship. We gathered in the memory of our Friend Connie St. John and let her spirit dwell among us.

Let us recall the living example of Friends from the past, as well as the gift of unity the monks left with us, as we welcome the newcomers and children and all work together to build our Meeting community.



# All Maine Gathering

by Betsy Terrell

A large group turned out for the joint gathering of Falmouth and Vassalboro Quarters at South China Community Church on May 7. We shared worship, business, wonderful food, and companionship. The intergenerational activity after lunch involved each person creating a necklace of 4 beads, to represent the concepts of silence, respect, sharing, and circles. The beads had been beautifully painted by the children during the morning.

We were blessed to have for our main speaker the founder and executive director of the Four Directions Development Corporation (FDDC), Susan Hammond. Susan, who is a member of the Penobscot tribe, began by showing a beautiful short video, which introduced us to the timeless, spirit-based culture of the Maine tribes and the disastrous effects of the arrival of Europeans: between 1616-1619, ninety percent of the Wabanaki people died. (This video, *Wabanaki: People of the Dawn*, may be borrowed from the Midcoast Meeting library.) Today, the tribes are facing a struggle for cultural survival in the face of overwhelming odds: the counter-influences of the surrounding predominant culture, with values much different from their own, and persistent crushing poverty. (Poverty rates on the Maine tribal reservations range from 23.6% to 60.1%, as compared to the statewide rate of 11.5%.)

Susan spoke about the work of the FDDC, giving stirring examples of how lives have been changed through this organization's efforts. Through its housing loans, families have been able, as never before, to improve and repair their homes, as well as to buy new homes, relieving overcrowding and homelessness. FDDC also does educational work, teaching tribal members the skills of financial literacy and educating the general public and state government about the needs of the tribes. An example of small-business assistance was their loan to the maker of the natural bug repellent "Buzz Off" ([www.buzzoff.us](http://www.buzzoff.us)). This business was started by a tribal member in her home, using her knowledge of herbal ways and her culture's respect for the environment, and has since experienced a four-fold expansion of its market through FDDC loans for equipment and advice on business planning.

## 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.

Maine Friends have here an opportunity for right sharing with our tribal neighbors, through donations to this corporation, improving lives on the most basic levels, and encouraging economic development, self-determination, and self-reliance.

Last Fall the Maine Council of Churches initiated the Giving Winds Fund campaign to help capitalize the FDDC's revolving loans funds, and there is a promise of federal matching funds up to \$1,000,000. At our May 20 Meeting for Business, Midcoast Meeting approved the transfer of \$10,000 from Meeting funds into the FDDC's capital fund as a 5-year loan. Acadia Meeting has given a grant of \$1000. Individuals who feel moved to do so may also contribute by contacting the Maine Council of Churches at (207) 772-1918.

As we are reminded in New England *Faith and Practice*, in a quote from John Woolman, "Here we have a prospect of one common interest from which our own is inseparable—that to turn all the treasures we possess into the channel of universal love becomes the business of our lives."



## World Gathering . . . . .cont'd fr. back cover

Friends, what we share, and how we differ.

I also plan to do some fund-raising for my expenses for the WGYF. My job is much easier than I expected, because Carolyn Miller helped me apply to the Pickett Fund for a grant that will support most of my expenses. I still need to raise some funds for myself, and I also feel a strong obligation to support the expenses of representatives from other parts of the world who don't have as easy access to financial resources like the Pickett Fund, and especially the representatives from Cuba Yearly Meeting, who have a special relationship with NEYM. If you would like to make a contribution, please send it to Paul Diamond, attention to the WGYF.

Midcoast has been so supportive of me throughout my preparations for the WGYF. I feel blessed to have your prayers and support. I am very excited about the Gathering, and I would love to talk to you about any aspect of it, before or after my trip. Please feel free to talk to me after meeting, or give me a call (644-1014).

# If War Is Not the Answer, What Is?

from Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), [www.fcnl.org](http://www.fcnl.org)

Rep. Lynn Woolsey (CA) provided part of the answer to this question when she reintroduced the Sensible, Multilateral American Response to Terrorism (SMART) security platform (H. Con. Res. 158) in mid-May. The SMART Security resolution already has 49 cosponsors, but FCNL believes we should be able to more than double the number of cosponsors before the end of this year (Last Congress the same resolution had 50 cosponsors at the end of the session).

## SMART Security Platform: A Sensible, Multilateral, American Response to Terrorism

### 1. Strengthen International Institutions and Support the Rule of Law to Prevent Acts of Terrorism and Future Wars

- a. Increase support for multilateral diplomacy and international institutions like the United Nations; work collectively to eliminate terrorist networks and resolve international conflicts.
- b. Increase funding for humanitarian programs, which address the root causes of instability and terrorism, like hunger, illiteracy and unemployment.
- c. Reject unilateral preemptive war as a means of resolving international conflict; actively support institutions that can bring terrorists to justice, like the International Criminal Court.

### 2. Reduce the Threat and Stopping the Spread of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction

- a. Demonstrate global leadership by renouncing the first use of nuclear weapons, the development of new nuclear weapons ("mini-nukes"), and the testing of nuclear weapons.
- b. Honor our international commitment to work for the elimination of nuclear weapons, while increasing funding to secure "loose" Russian nuclear weapons and materials so they don't fall into the hands of terrorists.
- c. Strengthen U.S. commitment to international treaties like the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention.

### 3. Change Budget Priorities to Reflect SMART Security Needs

- a. Eliminate military spending on obsolete and unnecessary weapons systems and use those resources to strengthen local "emergency responders" (such as fire, police, and public health departments), as well as for meeting urgent domestic needs like health care, education, jobs, etc.
- b. Provide adequate peacekeeping and re-development funding in troubled nations like Afghanistan and Iraq to secure long-term peace and stability.
- c. Provide new investments in renewable and safe

energy alternatives, which will reduce U.S. dependence on foreign oil and the growing threat of global warming.

FCNL suggests the following possible action steps:

- doing direct lobbying work
- placing an advertisement in a local paper
- writing letters to the editor

More information about these options is available on the FCNL website:

[http://www.fcnl.org/issues/issue.php?issue\\_id=45](http://www.fcnl.org/issues/issue.php?issue_id=45), click on "SMART Security Platform Endorsement Form"

Write your representative, urging him/her to cosponsor the SMART Security resolution, or express your thanks if he or she has already signed on as a cosponsor. Go to this address: <http://capwiz.com/fcnl/issues/>, then click on the link to "urge your representative to cosponsor the SMART Security resolution."



*Meetinghouse & Grounds*

## Memorial Benches

Claire Darrow

Here's a chance to do something you've probably never done before. There is still an opportunity to fund all or part of one of the benches we have just purchased for the Meetinghouse Memorial Garden and at the same time give a permanent remembrance of someone important to you.

Last week I was at Kew Gardens outside London, a vast acreage of gardens, trees, hothouses, and research, evidencing the hard work of people who love the natural world and gardening. There were many, many benches placed about the grounds, all with lovely brass plaques saying things like, "In loving memory of our dear parents," or, "In memory of so and so, who loved this place so much." It's a win-win situation, helping the Meeting and honoring the people who are meaningful to you. The cost for one bench is \$445, and there is no reason why people couldn't go in together, either in twos or groups. You'd just have to agree on what to say on the plaque. For more information, call Claire (371-2447) or Paul Diamond (236-0283).

Friends' understanding of the truth has grown to include the belief that an individual's sexual orientation is no measure of their ability to express God's love through committed long-term relationships.

In the same vein, over the years we have grown to understand that God's gifts of ministry and leadership are bestowed with no consideration of sexual orientation or marital status. Indeed we have been blessed countless times by the ministry and leadership of those who would not be allowed to serve under FUM policies.

While some are hurt and some are angry, we are ALL troubled by the lack of unity on this issue. In the interest of creating a more perfect world, Gospel Order requires us to seek together for God's will and for the love which has been wounded by our differences.

We invite the FUM Board to come again to New England, to work among us, to worship and be hosted by all of us, to see our lives speaking. We make ourselves available to be invited to worship and testify among FUM Friends and among other yearly and monthly meetings about these concerns.

As we continue discernment within NEYM, we ask the administration of FUM to consider, as we have at NEYM 2004 sessions, "Who is your neighbor?" Jesus taught us that love and compassion for the neighbor who does not look like us is more important than the written law.

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**Here are some questions that have been suggested as possible starting points for consideration:**

- How might we foster responding to this Minute of Exercise in a place of deep worship and tenderness toward one another?
- When we disagree, how can we all speak our truth and stay in loving relationship?
- What gifts is the Spirit trying to give us in raising this concern at this time?
- What might we gain from a fuller understanding of FUM and its racial, cultural, theological and economic diversity? How would a fuller understanding of FUM's diversity increase our understanding of Quaker witness worldwide?
- Are you as an individual concerned about FUM's personnel policy? What are your particular concerns?
- Is the meeting unified in a concern about this policy? What is the range of concerns in the meeting?
- How do you feel about the fact that FUM's policy denies to non-celibate gays and lesbians, regardless of their marital status, and to all non-celibate unmarried heterosexuals the possibility of living out a volunteer or employment ministry to which they feel called?

As our response to NEYM must be received by them before July 1st in order to be included in their discernment of a minute for the 2005 sessions, it would be wonderful to have as many Friends as possible take part in this second-hour discussion.

## How are we doing?

by Betsy Terrell

In the process of searching the Midcoast *Newsletter* archives, I came across the following (unattributed) quote: "If you were arrested for being a Quaker, would there be enough evidence to convict you?" Also, from a Midcoast minute approved in May of 1999:

At the end of the twentieth century we perceive that both enlightened science and enlightened religion challenge us to regard our world as more complex and fragile than it has been viewed in the past. We now know that, because the earth sustains us physically and nourishes us spiritually, we must acknowledge our dependency on its integrity.

George Fox, in his 1657 epistle 'to Friends' advised Friends to 'be careful how ye set your feet among the tender plants that are springing out of God's earth, lest ye tread upon them, hurt, bruise, or crush them in God's vineyard.' We would add to that vision a carefulness and respect for our place in all life and the whole of the Earth.

The pace of human exploitation of the resources of the earth continues to accelerate, and we are called to be mindful of the harm, both great and small, we do to other life on planet Earth. We summon ourselves and all humanity to deal tenderly with the Earth and other forms of life that we may live in harmony to the benefit of all.

Having survived both the millennium doomsday scare and post-9/11 terrorism rhetoric, have we become stupefied, overwhelmed? One of Peace Pilgrim's basic directives was to "bring belief and practice into harmony." How carefully and extensively do we examine our own lives for discrepancies between our deepest beliefs and our day-to-day actions?

A Friend quoted on the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) Web site ([www.fwccamericas.org](http://www.fwccamericas.org)) reflects on two approaches to the queries:

"My experience has been that they involve about as much thought as do responsive readings from the Episcopalian prayer book. Might as well read off the ingredients from the label of a paint can. In North Carolina we sat knee to knee in a small room and wrestled with their import, with how they might give shape to what we do in our lives. In North Carolina, the queries actually meant something."

# Consumerism, Part 2: The Spirituality of Food

by Betsy Terrell, inspired by Carmen Lavertu

As I began preparing this month's newsletter, I received the following from Carmen Lavertu by e-mail:

It is good for the body and surely good for the soul, too, to eat foods grown in our own neighborhood, cultivated by conscientious farmers and gardeners in the natural and organic way. The farmers' markets are opening now, and we should make every effort to attend weekly for as much of our food needs as they can supply. Last summer, I especially enjoyed the beautiful and delicious vegetables grown by our Friend, Beth Schiller (formerly a regular Midcoast attendee), of Dandelion Spring Farm. She is back this year at the farmers' market in Rockland and at Good Tern Coop. She also has "Community Supported Agriculture" shares and "senior shares." E-mail her at [schillersheep@hotmail.com](mailto:schillersheep@hotmail.com), or call 380-4199."

I agree with Carmen. I read once, though I don't remember the source, that the average food product you buy in the supermarket comes from 1300 miles away. While it is certainly enjoyable to have available foods that are out of season or cannot be grown in our local climate, when you think about all the hidden costs involved, from the necessity for mass production tactics to the pollution created by transporting foods over these distances, the de-personalization of not having any relationship with the growers and all the others involved, not to mention the loss of freshness and nutritional value—buying and eating locally grown foods looks better and better.

## What is Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)?

CSA is a relationship of mutual support and commitment between local farmers and community members who pay the farmer an annual membership fee to cover the production costs of the farm. In turn, members receive a weekly share of the harvest during the local growing season.

As Wendell Berry says, 'how we eat determines to a considerable extent how the world is used.' With this in mind, it is important to remember that the goals of CSA support a sustainable agriculture system which...

- provides farmers with direct outlets for farm products and ensures fair compensation
- encourages proper land stewardship by supporting farmers in transition toward low or no chemical inputs
- strengthens local economies by keeping food dollars in local communities
- directly links producers with consumers allowing people to have a personal connection with their

food and the land on which it was produced

- makes nutritious, affordable, wholesome foods accessible and widely available to community members."

Quoted from <http://www.csacenter.org/movement.html>

Here are two Web sites that list local farms offering CSA options: [www.csacenter.org/movement.html](http://www.csacenter.org/movement.html) and [www.getrealgetmaine.com/buy/csa\\_farms.html](http://www.getrealgetmaine.com/buy/csa_farms.html)

An additional option available to us here in Midcoast Maine is to buy a share in a local fish farm project: Aquaculture Engineering in Washington is "pioneering truly sustainable aquaculture." 207-845-3048 or [www.localharvest.org/farms/M9968](http://www.localharvest.org/farms/M9968)

I'm sure that many of us are already aware that Borealis Breads of Waldoboro encourages the planting of organic wheat in Maine through their partnerships with farmers, many of whom are in Aroostook County, one of the poorest counties in the state. Visit their Web site at [www.borealisbreads.com/MaineWheat.html](http://www.borealisbreads.com/MaineWheat.html)

A Web site listing of farmers markets throughout Maine can be found at [http://starchefs.com/features/farm\\_fresh/html/maine.shtml](http://starchefs.com/features/farm_fresh/html/maine.shtml) (be sure to type an underscore between "farm" and "fresh.")

Even in supermarkets, you can choose locally grown produce, such as apples and potatoes, with the Maine label on them.

Here's a closing quote from the "slow foods" movement Web site (the opposite of fast food) [www.slowfoodusa.org](http://www.slowfoodusa.org):

As each of us changes our pace in life, slowing down, we will have an effect on the whole. You can partake (in slow foods), every time you enjoy these pleasures:

- Trace your food sources
- Visit a local farmers' market
- Join a CSA
- Invite a friend over to share a meal
- Visit a farm in your area
- Create a new food memory for a child! Let them plant seeds or harvest greens for a meal.
- Start a kitchen garden
- Learn your local food history! Find a food that is celebrated as being originally from or best grown/produced in your part of the country.

Slow Food is simply about taking the time to slow down and to enjoy life with family and friends.



# World Gathering of Young Friends

by Holly Baldwin

Dear Friends,

This summer I will be traveling as part of a group of New England Young Adult Friends to the World Gathering of Young Friends (WGYF), which will bring together young adult Friends from all regions of the world—from all expressions of Quakerism—for the first time since 1985. We will gather in Lancaster, England, in the area where Quakerism began.

It's easy for me to forget that our practice of unprogrammed meeting for worship is really not the dominant practice of Friends worldwide, or even in North America. This gathering presents an opportunity to learn about the other Quakers in our Family of Friends, as well as to really examine our traditions, and my own relationship to the Society of Friends. The gathering also aims to be more than an academic examination of the diversity of Friends, but a place where our generation of the Society can grow together in the Spirit, develop deep connections with one another, and strengthen the love and understanding between our diverse traditions.

To give you an idea of what I am anticipating, look at the article elsewhere in this newsletter about New England Yearly Meeting's struggle with Friends United Meeting's hiring policy. We are part of FUM,

we love FUM, and we grow so much through our relationship there. But yet, our heads and hearts lead us to different understandings of God's will regarding same-sex and unmarried couples. What are the ways that we can love and support these couples AND Friends who hold beliefs that contradict what we understand to be divine truth?

This confrontation with expressions of Quakerism that seem foreign to me will not just involve Quakers from faraway places like the Western United States or from Africa or Cuba. I have been surprised to learn that even here in New England there are Friends churches (in Durham and in Winthrop, for example). There are also Friends churches that consider themselves evangelical! While these may not be members of our yearly meeting, they are our neighbors, and they are part of our tradition. We have so much to learn about Quakerism's diversity, even here in our own backyard.

I hope to be able to share some of my experience with Friends at home. I would love to bring together Friends from our neighboring meetings, programmed and unprogrammed, to share in fellowship and in worshipful conversation and to explore who we are as

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