

The Entirely Unofficial **MONTHLY MEETING NOTES**, 6th month of 2006
Based on draft minutes by Pete Haviland

Clerk Claire Darrow settled the meeting at 7 p.m., following supper with a silent holding in the Light for Charlotte Ritter and Nan Stone (of VQM). 8 Friends were present. The agenda was approved.

The minutes of 1/29/05 were read and approved with the correction of the name of the QUIT conference attended by Carmen. It was agreed to postpone the Annual Meeting of the Corporation until July to allow the financial results to be considered.

Ministry & Counsel--The State of the Meeting Report was read and approved [text within this issue of the *Newsletter--Ed.*] with several small modifications of language. It will be sent to Quarterly and Yearly Meeting, and to the Newsletter.

Linda proposed adding Willow Rowntree to Ministry & Counsel as a new (seasonal) member. This suggestion was agreed to, but it also occasioned a concern being expressed that Ministry & Counsel ideally should be made up of members of Meeting, and this year is largely made up of attenders. Linda assured the Meeting that she was fully aware of this potential problem, and is prepared to consult "seasoned Friends" for consultation on specific issues. Friends felt comfortable with this approach, hoping that some members would come forward in the fall and winter.

Peace Program--has been summarized well in the current Newsletter and another session will be scheduled soon. Formal next steps will probably be proposed at that time.

Finance Committee--There will be a full report next month on the Finance Committee and the year-end Treasurer's Report. A person will be chosen to audit the activity of the past year for completeness and accuracy.

Hospitality--It was reported that Chris Holley has agreed to join the committee and is a welcome addition.

VQM--Midcoast has been asked to take responsibility for the Young People's program at the Fall Gathering on Sat., Sept. 9th, from 8:30 to 10:00am. The Clerk has asked Carmen to follow up with Mary Knowlton or Molly Duplisea.

QUIT--Carmen reported on the conference on torture at Guilford College, attended by at least 29 members of NEYM [see Carmen's report in this issue of the *Newsletter--Ed.*]. John Calvi was the keynote speaker who said, "Quakers should find Hell and bring Light into it." He also spoke of the dangers of inaction and denial because of which we have been silent too long.

The Clerk spoke of Yearly Meeting programs and activities at Sessions Aug. 5th to 10th, urging us to try to attend.

The Meeting closed with a few minutes of silence at 8:54 p.m.

FALL GATHERING

This year's Fall Gathering will be Friday, September 8, through Sunday, September 10, at the usual location, Friends Camp, South China. The theme is "Life in Balance: Healing Ourselves and Community," and the keynote speaker will be John Calvi, who will also give a workshop and individual care. Linda Cote-Small and Andy Burt are also leading workshops. **Deadline for registration is August 28, 2006**, and you can register by using the form in one of the brochures on the meetinghouse credenza. For further information, kindly contact Carole Beal at carole@acadia.net.

HOSPITALITY AFTER MEETING

The Hospitality Committee invites members and attenders to sign up for refreshments after meeting. It involves bringing a snack (does not have to be home baked) and organizing the coffee, juice, and table ahead of Meeting for Worship. The Meeting supplies the coffee/tea, and there is usually juice available. We have about 25 in Meeting but not all stay for refreshments or eat them. There is a sign-up on the bulletin board. Part of the duties also involves cleaning up (or getting someone else to do so) and taking the garbage home. It's really easy and fun and a wonderful way to contribute to our fellowship.

CLERK'S CORNER



I assure you my columns will not consist of only asking you to respond to requests. This corner is for whatever comes to the top in my mind and heart. At this time there is another glaring gap in the workings of the Meeting that I feel I must speak about, and I pray someone or some ones will step up to fill this gap.

We spent quite some time at Monthly Meeting discussing the dilemma we face, that Ministry & Counsel has (1) only four year-round members, instead of six or eight, and (2) only two of these are actual members and (3) these two are slated to rotate off the committee at the end of this year. .

In the section on Ministry & Counsel in Faith and Practice it is assumed that members of M&C have been formally accepted into the Meeting. This is important so that the wealth of experience of seasoned Quakers can be available to the deliberations of the M&C meetings. There is a lot of experiential learning done as a beginning Quaker, in forms and processes, and this can be only done over time. It is usual that new members of M&C spend the first year of their three-year term "learning the ropes," and after that they feel more in tune with the proceedings. It's not hard work, but it is deep work, holding the care of worship and the membership in the Light. .

The main duty of M&C is responsibility for the quality of Meeting for Worship, and the spiritual health of the Meeting. Other duties include overseeing the acceptance of new and transferring members from other meetings, helping to arrange memorial services and marriages, including the setting up of Clearness Committees for marriages, memberships, personal crises, life changes, and whatever comes up and needs caring hearers, as well as writing memorial minutes, and preparation of the annual State of the Meeting Report, outlining what has happened during the past year. These are the main tasks of the committee. It may seem like a lot of work, and very new, but I assure you it comes easily as time goes on. And speaking of time, it doesn't take a lot of time, for the most part. One meeting a month, at a time convenient to all. Eleven in all over the year. .

I strongly suggest you delve into the duties of M&C, if you are a member, (pages 241-245 in Faith & Practice) and I even more strongly suggest if you are not a member, or have been contemplating it, look also at the responsibilities of being a member, (pages 127-230 and 235-240). .

Please understand that the above is only my opinion, and that others may differ as to content or timeliness of the plea. The discussion in Monthly Meeting was caring and deep, and some feel that things will "come around." But I hope you will ponder what I have brought up and find where it sits in your minds and hearts.

~STATE OF SOCIETY REPORT~ Midcoast Monthly Meeting, 2005

Approved 6/16/06

Our year has been full of joy and loss, public action and participation, much waiting and discernment to seek out the gifts and leadings of our membership, and many events that strengthened our communal and our individual faith.

The year began under the heavy cloud of the December 26, 2004, tsunami in the Indian Ocean and the ongoing war in Iraq. To this was added a concern for those harmed by Hurricane Katrina and the earthquake in Pakistan, as well as ongoing concerns for peace, poverty alleviation, and environmental sustainability. We continued to respond to the war in Iraq by participating in Bridges for Peace and through meetings with representatives of the Maine congressional delegation. Individual members and attenders participated in relief to those devastated by the tsunami.

Our Meeting was blessed this year to commemorate the 10th anniversary of our meetinghouse, which we chose to celebrate through an event raising public awareness of the earthquake in Pakistan. We hosted Andrew Jilani, a development expert from Pakistan, in a public lecture, thereby also raising funds for a local group of doctors who went to the disaster area to provide medical relief. This meetinghouse and this Meeting have provided a safe and supportive place that nurtures the growth of the individual and the community together. We continue to find that by reaching outward we are also rewarded with stronger and sustaining bonds within our own community. In addition, our meetinghouse participated in an energy audit and hosted a workshop on this topic that was heavily attended by the local community.

In this year we also had to say goodbye to active Friends. We were saddened by the departure of a couple who moved away to be closer to an adult daughter and her children in a time of need. We are thankful that while some have left, we have also welcomed a new member to our Meeting. The Meeting has an ongoing interest in finding ways to attract new people. Our members speak to others outside of Meeting about the blessing that the Meeting is in their lives, and yet it is hard to ensure that the effects of such inwardly communal faith are felt by newcomers.

Our Meeting has regular member participation in the wider Friends networks. A member represented Midcoast Meeting at two World Gatherings of Young Adult Friends, one held in England and the other in Kenya. We consistently have members who attend Quarterly and Yearly Meetings, and have done intervisitation with other monthly meetings in our quarter. In addition two attenders taught workshops at the weekend Fall Gathering of the quarter.

Sometimes we agree and sometimes we do not, but our atmosphere is supportive. The Meeting has been supportive to many in personal loss and even in conflict. Some of us feel that while the Meeting has a yearning for seeking and growth, it may be a bit tired and in need of a resting place as well. Others feel that we are strong in building and property care, but need to improve spiritual care and the sense of community.

We are perhaps in a different place than we would have anticipated a year ago when a survey of the Meeting was conducted for planning purposes. The year started with a number of committee vacancies and concerns that we don't have enough members and attenders to share all of the necessary responsibilities of the Meeting. After three meetings the planning process was put on hold so we could listen to each other. Also, at the beginning of the year, the Peace & Social Concerns committee, after special discernment, decided not to meet as a committee.

Even though the Peace & Social Concerns committee was laid down, there were still many efforts in this area all encouraged by members or attenders. One member was instrumental in a Lincoln County Peace and Justice Coalition. This member has also been involved with AFSC on Militarism in the Schools and other groups that serve the local community. A couple of members are active in the local food pantry. An attender facilitated a non-violent communication practice group open to the public. Several of these groups meet at our meetinghouse and we are encouraged to know we are supporting these efforts.

In the fall Ministry & Counsel started a Creative Listening Series at 8:30 a.m. on Sundays, and those who have participated have found it beneficial. It leads well into Sunday Worship.

Also this fall a Gifts & Leadings process, a new discernment process intended to allow the Spirit to direct committee formation, was begun. Though the process has involved struggle and a few open committee spots remain to be filled, we feel the effort was successful. One member pointed out that he now sees us more comfortable functioning as a collection of individuals who initiate involvement as they are moved, as opposed to being led by an organization. This process has brought renewed energy to committee service in support of the meeting and many were encouraged by the results. We also have new hope for the reinstatement of the Peace & Social Concerns committee.

One senior member reminded us that we are a community, and growth involves the decline in participation of older Friends while increasing responsibilities are taken on by younger Friends. This process has challenges, but we are reminded that this is healthy for us and that we need to pay attention to satisfying our own and one another's needs. Whatever the difficulties, we grow through them and we are encouraged.

QUERY: Meeting for Worship

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



The QUIT Conference: The Quaker Initiative to End Torture
by Carmen Lavertu

The conference was conceived and convened by John Calvi (Putney, VT) about a year ago, and working with a planning committee of five other friends, he organized and conducted the conference at Guilford College June 2-4. The plan was to begin with education leading to action. One hundred and thirty Friends and human rights workers participated. Fifteen Friends from New England formed a committee to continue this work. Our aim is to bring a minute to New England Yearly Meeting sessions in August. In the meantime, we are inviting our monthly meetings to join the effort in seeking information and searching for responsive leadings as to what can be done individually or as meetings.

In his opening remarks, John reminded us of our obligation as Friends to shed Light in dark places, and for this reason we must avoid the temptation to deny the reality and avoid action. "The greatest good will come by being faithful to the Light that guides compassionate work and restores our frail humanity in the face of unimaginable pain and systemic illness."

Included in the educational part of the conference were the testimonies of two torture survivors, Hector Aristizabel and Baltazar Pinguel (imprisoned in Colombia and the Philippines, respectively). Both are now living in the United States, conducting workshops, lecturing, and doing healing work.

The workshops instructed in direct action, legislation/monitoring, treatment and healing, and torture in prisons. Town meetings reports and discussions, workgroups, music, and worship completed the program.

After the conference, the New England committee continued to work via e-mail on the aim to bring "the Quaker Initiative to End Torture" before NEYM sessions in August. The following minute was adopted after much work. It has been accepted for the sessions program. Monthly Meetings as well as individual Friends are asked to hold the minute in the Light and see what support may be offered.

***Minute Produced by New England Participants in
the Quaker Initiative to End Torture (QUIT)
Conference at Guilford College, June 2-4, 2006***

New England Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends declares that torture is wrong. We believe in the sanctity of life, a faith that arises from our experience that there is that of God in everyone.

Torture steals the humanity of the tortured and the torturer alike. Sadly, all human beings have the potential to be among the torturers as well as to be among the tortured.

Fear can cause us to forget our deep connections with one another, allowing us to harm a fellow human. It is the Light that helps us to see our face in the stranger's and enables us to choose love and forgiveness, even when we are afraid.

When we cannot find the Light in ourselves, we are grateful to be part of a faith community which holds us in it until we can.

People, standing together, affirming this Light and life, help us make the choice for peaceful solutions and a better world.

We call on our members to join with people throughout the world to create a force of public opinion to end torture. We will continue to hold this issue in our hearts and in the Light in order to discern how we may be led for future action.

Midcoast Meeting accepted a Minute on torture in May. To find further information, please visit the QUIT website: www.quit-torture-now.org.

Friends, please let me know of your interest and your leadings.

--Carmen

FOR RENT: Cozy ground-floor 1-bedroom apartment in beautiful country setting 5 miles south of Rt. 1 in Bremen. Suitable for 1 person, non-smoker, no pets. Shared laundry room, optional satellite TV. Off-street parking, yard with fruit trees, garden space. Short walk to saltwater boat ramp. \$385/mo + utilities. 1-yr. lease + one month security deposit. Call Nancy Terrell-Hall at 207-236-5771 or email moonlite@lincoln.midcoast.com.

NEW NOTES

by Deb Haviland



Peter Hull graduated from Lincoln Academy in early June and was the valedictorian of his class. Our congratulations to Peter! He will be attending Wesleyan University in the fall.

Jerry and Sally Wood celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on June 17 with a family celebration at Woolman Hill in Deerfield, MA. Our congratulations to them! Jerry and Sally moved to Charlottesville, Virginia, this winter to live with their daughter Ruth and grandchildren Nathaniel and Laura. Their new address is 527 Whitcover Cir., Charlottesville, VA 22901, and their phone is (434) 962-8763. They have found the meeting in Charlottesville very welcoming.

Pat and Bill Spock have recently returned from a trip to China, and Viki and Paul Diamond are also traveling in China this June. We look forward to hearing more about their adventures.

Ministry & Counsel

The Ministry & Counsel Committee is brainstorming about future activities to foster spiritual growth and corporate worship of the community. If you have ideas you would like us to consider, please contact any committee member: David Cadbury, Nancy Nyberg, Linda Cote-Small, Todd Garth, Willow Rowntree, or Rowan Rowntree.

ADVICE: Meeting for Worship

Consider with care how God reaches us in meeting for worship. To every Friend is given a share of responsibility for the meeting. Friends are advised, therefore, to be diligent in attendance at meetings and in inward preparation for them. Let us be concerned to enter reverently into communion with God and with one another, to yield ourselves to the influence of the divine presence. Then what is evil in us may be weakened and the good raised up. God calls each one to the service of the meeting; let us be obedient and faithful, whether by work, by song, or by silent waiting, and let us receive the messages of others in a tender spirit.

LAST-MINUTE NOTICE:

Memorial for Jane Cook



Cobscook Monthly Meeting will be holding a memorial service for Jane Cook, who died earlier this spring. The service will be part of their regular meeting for worship on June 25, 2006, with a potluck lunch following the service. Jane Cook and her husband Ralph were two of the founding members of Midcoast Meeting in Camden in the early 1960s.

BE A "GOOD APPLE"
by Andy Burt



There's never a better time to support Maine's farm families than right now, when our local farmers are bringing fresh food to farmers' markets in our towns and some farmers may still be looking for shareholders for their community supported agriculture (CSA) farms. The Maine Council of Churches' Environmental Justice Program are ready to help Maine's congregations connect to neighbor farmers and build local foods systems.

MCC has created a local foods covenant project, "Be a Good Apple!" for individual households to pledge to buy \$10/week of Maine food throughout the year. MCC has materials, guides, and resources to aid in that effort. Cards and information about the project will be available on the credenza in the Meetinghouse. If you can join this effort, please sign the form that will be near the project information. We hope to be able to track how many people in the faith community are participating. Currently, 28 congregations have received materials and are initiating the project in their houses of worship.

Creating local foods systems, which would reduce the miles food travels (the average Maine plate of food travels 1,800 miles) and support local farmers and economies, is also an effective strategy to curb greenhouse gas emissions in our rural state.

Additionally, the Maine Council of Churches has just begun working with Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, under a recent grant, to link congregations to their neighbor farmers and fishers in an effort to promote local foods consumption and local sustainable economic development. The idea is that congregations might become depots for local community supported agriculture farms (CSAs) and fishers/seafood harvesters, thus playing a key role in developing local foods systems that can support a community. I have brochures for some of the local CSAs from Camden to Brunswick. Also, I have information about some congregations in the area that are beginning this process. I would be glad to talk to folks at Midcoast Friends who might be interested in this concept for our Meetinghouse or in their home communities.

*Nothing worth doing is completed in our lifetime,
Therefore, we are saved by hope.*

*Nothing true or beautiful or good makes complete sense in any immediate context of history;
Therefore, we are saved by faith.*

*Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone.
Therefore, we are saved by love.*

*No virtuous act is quite as virtuous from the standpoint of our friend or foe as from our own;
Therefore, we are saved by the final form of love, which is forgiveness.*

--Reinhold Niebuhr

NEW ENGLAND YEARLY MEETING SESSIONS 2006

**Saturday, August 5, through Thursday, August 10, 2006
Bryant University, Smithfield, Rhode Island**

The theme this year is "Holy Obedience: From Worship to Witness," and all are invited to attend. In her article in the summer issue of *The New England Friend*, Sessions Committee Clerk Carol Letson said that in this year's sessions, "We come together to worship and to do worshipful business. The opportunity to prayerfully carry on our business together takes time and patience. We will continue to explore Holy Obedience and its role in our worship, in our work and play. Do join us in August."

For details, visit the sessions web page at NEYM's website: <http://www.neym.org/sessions2006/index.html> or contact Registrar Laurel Swan by fax at 860-242-9985. Extensive program schedules, fee information, and registration forms are in the summer 2006 issue of *The New England Friend*, some of which may be on the credenza at the meetinghouse.