

7th/8th Months

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

July-August 2009



Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens,
and I will give you rest.

-- Matt. 11:28

Rest. Rest. Rest in God's love. The only work you are required now
to do is to give your most intense attention to His still, small voice
within.

-- Madame Jeanne Guyon

July

Sunday	July 19	Rise of Meeting	Monthly Meeting for Business
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August

Sat.-Thurs.	August 1-6		*NEYM Sessions, Bryant U., Smithfield, RI
Sunday	August 2	Rise of Meeting	Pot Luck Lunch followed by Work Hour (Meetinghouse & Grounds)

September

Sunday	Sept. 6		Meeting for Worship, Small Pt., Morse Mountain (in addition to usual Meeting for Worship at meetinghouse)
Fri.-Sun.	Sept. 11-13		Vassalboro Qtr Fall Gathering, Friends Camp, China, ME
Sunday	September 20	Rise of Meeting	Monthly Meeting for Business

*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.

Highlights

Monthly Meeting for Business—June 21, 2009

The Budget for 2009-10, presented by Paul Diamond, was approved. This final budget, revised from last month's proposed budget, increases \$150 for committees and \$350 for operating expenses. These increases were allowed because of an increase in pledges of \$500 since last month. Still, the amount pledged for 2009-10 is down about \$1,000 from last year.

Meetinghouse & Grounds will try to return some money to the general fund in 2009-10 if possible. Business Meeting approved the finally edited version of the **Memorial Stones Prospectus**. Small stones, which provide space for one name with birth and death dates, and large stones, which provide for two, are available for purchase. Suzy Hallett, Deb Haviland, and Nancy Booth received thanks for their work on this project.

Ministry & Counsel are shuffling their members' responsibilities in light of recent resignations. **M&C needs new members. The Memorial Minute for Sally Wood** needs to be completed. Karen Cadbury agreed to work the reports from individual committees into a draft **State of the Society Report**, which M&C will then put into final form. M&C will work with Gifts & Leadings to increase committee membership.

Pastoral Care had a good turnout at their last meeting and reviewed the current Meeting directory. PC will confer with Ministry & Counsel about contacting members and attenders who are no longer active to see if they wish to remain in the directory.

Peace Center Committee is working on how best to work with other religious congregations on mutual concerns and interests. Focus will be on climate change and peace and war issues. The Peace Center group has consulted with Peace & Social Concerns and considered possibly combining the two groups. As a result the Peace Center will be drafting a minute recommending that Peace & Social Concerns be laid down. The Peace Center is planning two fall educational programs: a film series and an Earth Institute Study Circle on the subject of food called "Menu for the Future." The four-week study circle will be led by Linda Cote-Small and Andy Burt.

Religious education will continue through the summer because more children are attending. Deb Haviland and Karen Cadbury will place a schedule in the newsletter. The Business Meeting approved the purchase of a swing set to be financed by Charlotte Ritter's bequest. David Cadbury is working on a canoe trip for First Day School.

The Hospitality Committee has purchased sufficient supplies for the time being.

Gifts & Leadings will meet with Ministry & Counsel to discuss M&C's need for additional members.

Business Meeting approved \$150 from the conference fund to finance **Carmen Lavertu's travel to NEYM meetings**. Additional funds for travel and to replenish the conference fund will be met by specific fundraising.

Jim Matlack reported that **Friends' Committee on Maine Public Policy** had decided to focus on two concerns: criminal justice and Native Americans. They will try to get Native Americans to become involved in state planning for climate change. The next FCMPP meeting will be Sept.26 under new leadership, Diana White and Ed Snyder.

The next meeting for business will take place Sunday, July 19 (please note that there is no business meeting in August), at the rise of meeting for worship. All are welcome. Please bring a bag lunch. The entire pending minutes of the June session are available at the Meeting website www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org and on the bulletin board at the meetinghouse.

QUERIES

Care of Children--Do children receive the loving care of your meeting? Does the meeting nurture their religious life and give them an understanding of the principles and practices of Friends? Are you an example to your children in your faithfulness to the ideals you profess? Do you promote your children's moral and spiritual development by loving oversight of their education, recreation, and social activities? Do you listen to children, recognizing that the Spirit may lead them along paths you have not foreseen? Do you assist them to assume their rightful responsibilities in the home, the meeting, and the community?

♥ *GIFT TO THE MEETING* ♥

Alice Lacey has generously given the Meeting a copy of her book *The Autobiography of Pacos Tacos*. Thank you, Alice!

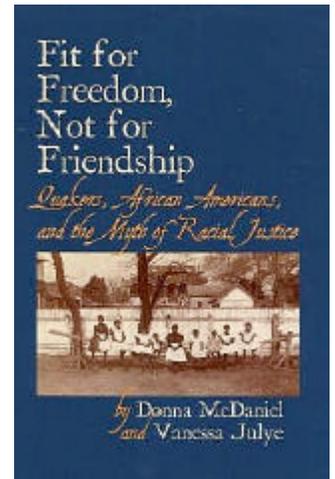
NEW BOOK IN OUR LIBRARY

Fit for Freedom, Not for Friendship: Quakers, African Americans, and the Myth of Racial Equality

By Donna McDaniel and Vanessa Juley, Quaker Press (FGC), 2009

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) has been reputed to have opposed enslavement and later racial injustices. Many members, however, enslaved people of African descent, and Quaker attitudes toward African Americans since have generally reflected the culture at large. To some extent, then, the Quaker story has lessons for all of us.

Most Quakers did not become involved in the process of banning enslavement until 1760, after thirty years of taking only minimal steps to end Quaker participation in it. The process ultimately took another twenty years to complete. The Quaker stance against enslavement, however, was singular. No other Christian denomination of notable size at the time required its members to end the practice. *[from cover and flyleaf]*



The authors call on their own exhaustive study of multiple sources in Quaker archives and libraries to weave a tapestry of experiences in the shared history of "European" Americans and African Americans. Quite a number of Friends I have known (and known of) over the past sixty years are among the sources cited in the voluminous footnotes.

--Pete Haviland

ADVICES: Care of Children

Care of the children of the meeting should be the responsibility of every Friend. Let us share with our children a sense of adventure, of wonder, and of trust and let them know that, in facing the mysteries of life, they are surrounded by love. Both parents and meetings need to guard against letting other commitments deprive children of the time and attention they need.

Friends are advised to seek for children the full development of God's gifts, which is true education. All Friends are cautioned against harshness of tone or manner when offering counsel or reproof. To the child, even a seeming harshness may check the beginnings of repentance or growth, and a lack of sympathy may cause harm where only good was intended. Let us nurture a spirit of common concern, thereby giving children a sense of belonging to a larger community.



SUMMER FIRST DAY SCHOOL

The First Day School Committee reported to monthly meeting that it planned to have a program during the summer months. Karen Cadbury, Rachel McGinness, and Willow Rountree are the volunteers for the program. Kristin Stone and Brian O'Mahoney have been attending with their sons Eoin and Eliot. They live in Whitefield, and Brian teaches at Lincoln Academy (kmohrstone@yahoo.com). Other children who have attended over the winter are Duncan and Thatcher Steele-Maley, Ryan and Elijah Gass, and Morgan and Laurel Gallione. Visiting children are always welcome.



This year **Carmen Lavertu** completes the last year of her three-year term on the Peace and Social Concerns Committee for NEYM. As you know, Carmen has been one of the most active participants from our Meeting in Quaker organizations, as well as the wider community, dealing with issues of torture, the Iraq war, and social justice. In order to support her efforts and to offset her expenses, the Meeting will accept individual contributions to the Conference Fund. If you wish to help in this way, please send your contribution to Paul Diamond, Treasurer, 73 Pascal Ave., Rockport, ME 04856.

Labor Day Sunday (September 6) at Small Point

Susan St. John has invited us again this year to come to Small Point, Morse Mountain, in Phippsburg, on the Sunday of Labor Day weekend (September 6) for a walk on the beach, worship, and potluck lunch. (We also remember our beloved Friend Connie on this special day.) Come after 9 a.m. for a walk, with Meeting for Worship around 11 a.m., followed by lunch. Those who need to drive in to the house are welcome to do so, but for those who would like to walk, that is lovely.

Directions: 12 miles on Route 209S from Bath. This road makes a 90-degree turn for Popham Beach. Continuing straight at this bend is Route 216, look for Morse Mountain parking lot on the left, 1 mile ahead. Friends planning to go should let Deb Haviland (354-8714 or haviland@midcoast.com) or Carmen Lavertu (354-9556 or lavertu@prexar.com) know to form car pools either at the meetinghouse or at Morse Mountain.

A recent e-mail from Friends Camp in China, Maine, says that there are still openings for this summer's sessions: "If you have family or friends who would like to know more about Friends Camp please, give them this link: www.friendscamp.org. They may also call Nat or Jeff in the summer office at 207-445-2361 to learn more about Friends Camp."

The following contribution comes from Anna Needham--our "foreign correspondent," who summers briefly in Maine and worships with us when she is here but whose home meeting is Ackworth Meeting in England. The story of her husband's "dying and death within the loving care of Ackworth Meeting. "

~A QUAKER FUNERAL~

Grenville ministered in Meeting the Sunday after we received a long e-mail from our son Tom, who was in his first job as an aid worker in Angola. The email described, in the laconic way of the young, his emergency evacuation from his post, in a Russian transport plane--no seats, no hostesses, and overloaded with ammunition, tires, soldiers, women, children, a few police, and the two workers from Action Against Hunger. Two days later, Tom's heart still hadn't returned to normal.

What struck Grenville was how stable (prosaic even) our lives were, compared to our offspring's. He said that he never expected to experience anything like Tom's heart-stopping adventure but expected that he would live to his mid-eighties like his father before him. I was horrified by this certainty about how long either of us would live. "You never know," I said in my own ministry, "what is round the corner."

Friends reminded us both of this, when a few months later, they crammed themselves into every nook and cranny of our lounge, meeting in worship to support both of us, as we all faced the certainty of Grenville's death in the very near future. Already, he was too weak to go to the Meeting House, so Friends came to us. Only two or three weeks after that first ministry, we learnt that the pain in Grenville's back was not due to his latest cycle trip but to an untreatable cancer,

Thankfully we both accepted this from the beginning and were determined to live every moment of what life we had left as a couple, as fully as possible, encouraging our family and friends to do the same. Grenville was simply amazing the way he took on board such an unpalatable truth and put his priorities in place. He reached out to family and reached a depth of feeling that hadn't always been possible in his busy life. There was always laughter and joy as well as sorrow and loss in the house. It was an adventure but a very different one to the one he had thought about during that fateful ministry.

He wanted to share in everything. Someone had to go and find the resident physicist to answer all his questions, when he went for his scan at the Regional Radiology Centre. We discussed his funeral. Ackworth Quaker Meeting has its own burial ground, and for many years I had been convenor of the Burial Ground Committee and the Friend to be informed of death. Many years before, we had both said that we wanted our bodies cremated, but now, I found that I had a really strong leaning to use our own burial ground, which was beautiful in its simplicity. I also thought that we could do it without using an undertaker. Grenville was horrified. "I couldn't do it for you," he said, "supposing something went wrong?" However he warmed to the idea, when he realized that I was quite confident and I did agree to talk it over with an undertaker we both knew. He set about deciding details with his usual thoroughness, "Why not a coffin?" he asked

when I suggested a plain burial box. "Because" I said, "it will have to go into the garage until it is needed, and all kinds of people, including the little boys next door, go into our garage."

In the end, his wish to go down to the burial ground did not happen. He didn't have enough strength for that short journey, but when I returned from choosing the plot with another member of the Meeting, he immediately wanted to know what we had decided. "Just where I would have chosen," he said, "and can you put it, so that it just straightens up that row?" Anyone who knew what a stickler for design he was would immediately recognize the authenticity of that remark!

Our friendly undertaker had the box made for us, and I went over to collect it--a simple pine box, stained green, with rope handles. I brought it back, and it didn't look out of place in our garage among the boxes, woodworking tools, bikes, and all manner of things except a car. "I want to see it," Grenville announced a few days later. He had just enough waning strength to get to the garage, holding my arm. When our daughter and her husband returned from a walk, they found us both sitting on the burial box holding hands. "I feel so at home," said that surprising husband of mine!

During those few months, the Meeting walked every inch of the way with us. Friends slipped round with gifts of food, bunches of flowers: the potatoes were planted, and a sitting rota was set up, when he became too ill to be left. The wider circle of friends sent cards and heartfelt letters saying how much he had meant to them. The district nurses came in twice a day, our GP called several times a week. I never wanted for emotional support or practical help. I told the medical people that we wanted to bury his body in the burial ground and that I thought that we could do it ourselves without using an undertaker and that we planned to keep the body in its box, outside on the patio, until the death was registered. We could then hold the burial in our own time. "There won't be a problem," said our Irish GP, "it's just how we did it at home." Brothers and sisters made long journeys to see us. Our daughter Rosie and her family flew over from the States. We wept together, when they had to go back, with two-year-old Noah, waving and waving to Grandad, as the taxi took them to the station.

In the end, it all was just as we had hoped. For the first time for weeks, I was the only one at home, that night, sleeping on a mattress beside his hospital bed in the lounge. I stirred in the night listening to him breathing quietly, peacefully, and then I realized that he had stopped. I treasure those peaceful hours with him (he died at 3 am) before the inevitable busyness began. It was Friday morning, so we could register his death and arrange the burial before Meeting for Worship on Sunday. The grave was dug on Saturday, a letter was written to all our friends, telling them the sad news and inviting them to come in the spirit of celebration to a Memorial Meeting in two weeks' time. On Saturday evening so many Friends dropped in that our Friend Una Parker was able to teach us a simple Taize chant to sing at the burial if we felt so moved. Grenville's body lay in that simple green box, under the vine on the patio. A large candle burnt day and night. I went to bed content that night, leaving our son, Grenville's two sisters, and his brother comfortably leaning on the burial box and talking hard.

The next day I drove the estate car with the burial box down to the burial ground. Tom, his uncle, and two Friends from the Meeting carried the box to the grave. In the soft rain which was falling, we filled in the grave ourselves, singing the chant which Una had taught us. For me, it was immensely healing and beautiful. Above all, it felt sad but natural. Grenville's physical remains were disposed of with dignity and love. We returned to the Meeting House for Sunday Meeting for Worship, and there was much heartfelt ministry.

Two weeks later, a big memorial Meeting was held in the Meeting House, and again there was much ministry and at Grenville's request, the singing of Vaughn Williams's "The Vagabond" by his former colleague and singing teacher, Malcolm St John, and finally, in honor of the Unitarian tradition into which he had been born and which had remained an important influence in our family life, the congregational singing of that splendid hymn "We Sing the Joy of Living." Finally, two-year-old Noah came confidently in to join us. Throughout the Meeting, the candle which had burned on his burial box had been lit. We all stood and asked Noah to blow out Grandad's candle, which he did with great aplomb!

Over refreshments, the folk-dance group, to which we had both belonged, danced. Afterwards two of our friends wrote, "We came with great sadness but we went away laughing." I like to think that is how it should be, for life is this great mixture of joy and sorrow, and it is for living. If, like Grenville, we can die whilst singing the joy of living, then may we have truly lived.

FRIENDS COMMITTEE ON MAINE PUBLIC POLICY--The Friends Committee on Maine Public Policy met on June 20 for the first time since last June. Diminished attendance in 2008 had cast doubt on the continued viability of FCMPP. The future of the committee was the focus of the May 2 All-Maine Friends Gathering, which expressed renewed commitment for the continued role of FCMPP as a public voice for Quaker concerns on state-level policy issues.

When FCMPP gathered on June 20, that commitment was manifest, as 17 Friends were around the table (including 5 from Midcoast Meeting). Ed Snyder was clerk for the session--as he has been from the founding of the committee--but it was announced that Diana White will be co-clerk with Ed for the next year with a view to assuming leadership thereafter. Committee members also pondered how best to track relevant legislation in Augusta and to focus FCMPP's public advocacy. Through extensive discussion the FCMPP's traditional emphases were reaffirmed on 2 primary issues--Indian or Native American affairs and criminal justice issues. Attention was given to new opportunities for Quaker advocacy on these traditional concerns.

Widely expressed concerns among Friends over environmental issues led to discussion to assess whether and how FCMPP could incorporate such issue work into its ongoing work. A small group will research possible ways to address environmental/energy concerns and will report back to FCMPP at the next meeting.

Brief attention was given to the Marriage Equality Act and the likely referendum campaign next fall. Given the lack of clarity as to the degree of unity among Friends on this issue, it was felt that the matter should be commended to monthly meetings for thoughtful consideration and local engagement as Friends may be led.

The next meeting of the Friends Committee on Maine Public Policy will be 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, September 26, at the Alford Center in Waterville.