

Midcoast Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends



September

Sunday	Sept. 4	Rise of Meeting	Potluck Lunch--followed by grounds work
Fri. & Sat.	Sept. 9-10		*Vassalboro Quarter Fall Gathering, Friends Camp, China, Maine
Sunday	Sept. 18	Rise of Meeting	Meeting for Business
Thurs.-Sun.	Sept. 29-Oct 2		*Woolman Hill Fall Program

October

Sunday	Oct. 2	Rise of Meeting	Potluck Lunch--followed by grounds work
Sunday	Oct. 16	Rise of Meeting	Meeting for Business

For New, Revised, and Updated Calendar Items, please see our online calendar at:
<http://www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org/calendar.htm>

*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 Diane Kirkman at diane_kirkman@hotmail.com a request. Thanks!*

MIDCOAST MONTHLY MEETING OF FRIENDS

P.O. Box 714 Damariscotta,
ME 04543

Co-Clerks:

Suzy Hallett, 563-6084 &
David Cadbury, 230-0436

Recording Clerk:

Jim Matlack, 236-0903

Newsletter—September 2011

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For newsletters, important links, & a current calendar, visit our website:
www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org

Minutes (Pending)--Monthly Meeting for Business--July 17, 2011

Suzy Hallett, Co-Clerk, opened the meeting, calling for silent worship. The agenda was amended to add reports from First Day School, Finance, and Pastoral Care Committees. June Minutes were approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Guy Marsden reported for **Meetinghouses & Grounds** on plans for the kitchen and dishwasher. Guy will donate the dishwasher and his labor to install it, including necessary plumbing and electrical changes. A new 30" cabinet will be needed. Guy will work with Bill Hallett and George Waldman to hire a contractor to handle installing the cabinet. Bids could start with the bid Suzy Hallett had previously gotten. Martin Imm thanked Guy and said that his gift and similar gifts would be recorded and letters given to donors to use for the IRS. Discussion of possibilities for additional storage followed. This part of the kitchen upgrade will be taken up later.

Rachel McGuinness reported for **First Day School**. Since no one had applied for the summer caretaker position, she and Glenn Plyler would take care of any children attending this summer. Discussion followed of how the money allocated for a caregiver might be spent. It was agreed that the committee needed no further permission to use the entire amount budgeted for the year as it wished.

Martin Imm reported for the **Finance Committee**. He reminded that the Meeting was asking those pledging to consider increasing their pledges by 5%. The Meeting has lost some pledging members; rental income will go way down in 2012 when Coastal Kids vacates; the 2012 budget for committees has increased; and NEYM has asked for an increase, to name some of the financial pressures. The annual subscription to *Friends Journal* will be reviewed. The investment account had made around \$10,000, which had paid for the driveway work and the new floor in the social room. \$40,000 has been transferred to the investment account, and \$250 to the emergency fund. Pledges are still coming in.

OLD BUSINESS:

Suzy Hallett reported that the new contract with **Coastal Kids** had been signed, increasing their monthly rent from \$600 to \$650.

Rachel McGuinness reported for the ad hoc committee exploring **expansion of the meetinghouse**. Much discussion followed, including financial questions, concern about constraints on the Meeting's use of space for our own needs, desires/responsibilities for sharing what we have with the wider community, as well as the best process for decision-making on this issue. Suzy and Guy will look for the original architectural plans for the meetinghouse, which included an additional wing, as a starting point for the ad hoc committee, which will meet next on August 7 immediately after rise of Meeting, before the potluck.

Carmen Lavertu reported for **Pastoral Care**. She said that **Ernie Foust's** condition had been much worse than his family had thought, prompting them to move him to an assisted-living facility in Pennsylvania. The family reports that Ernie is having difficulty adjusting. Carmen encouraged us to write to Ernie. Suzy agreed that Ministry & Counsel would write to the Meeting in Reading, Pennsylvania, to see if they would visit him (Ernie Foust, The Whitehall Manor, 1177 6th St., Whitehall, PA 18052). Carmen also asked us to remember **Carolyn Miller** as she makes a difficult move. Carolyn can't move into her new home until August 15; meanwhile, contractors hired by the purchasers of her current home are working there. [*Ed. note: see directory updates, page 3.*]

Jim Matlack's program on his recent visit to the Holy Land will be on August 7 at 12:30 after the monthly potluck. Workday is rescheduled for August 21. Guy will send these date changes plus Jim's description of his program by e-mail chain.

The meeting was closed with silent worship.

Respectfully submitted, Willow Rowntree

The next monthly meeting will be held on Sunday, September 18, at the rise of meeting for worship. All are welcome. Please bring a bag lunch. These pending minutes are also available at www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org and on the meetinghouse bulletin board.

QUERIES

Personal Conduct-- Do you live with simplicity, moderation, and integrity? Are you punctual in keeping promises, careful in speech, just and compassionate in all your dealings with others? Do you take care that your spiritual growth is not sacrificed to busyness but instead integrates your life's activities? Are your recreations consistent with Quaker values; do they refresh your spirit and renew your body and mind?

UPDATE YOUR DIRECTORY!

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SATYAGRAHA (GANDHI) AND NON-VIOLENT POLITICAL MOVEMENTS

I would like to invite Friends to the seminar I am offering for [Coastal Senior College](#) this fall. It will meet at the Camden library, Tuesdays from 1 to 3 p.m., for eight weeks, beginning September 20.

"Satyagraha" is the historical revolutionary philosophy of Mohandas Gandhi, which introduces political activism to the age-old dream/philosophy of pacifism. In this seminar, we will acquaint ourselves with Gandhi's achievement and the movements influenced by his ideas, especially the American civil rights movement. Then we will study current movements, which will bring us to the Arab Spring and Gene Sharp's influence.

I have films and books to share, and the Internet is an introductory source. Suggested beginnings are Joseph Lelyveld's new biography of Gandhi, [Great Soul: Mahatma Gandhi and His Struggle with India](#), and online at [The Albert Einstein Institution](#), Gene Sharp's "[Dictatorship to Democracy](#)").

Carmen Lavertu, clavertu@gmail.com, 354-996

"Watch every one to feel and know his own place and service in the body, and to be sensible of the gifts, places, and services of others."

--Isaac Pennington (1616-1679)

Rediscovering the Beloved Community Vassalboro Quarter 2011 Fall Gathering



Fri., Sept. 9 and Sat., Sept. 10, 2011 □ Friends Camp, China, ME
**An opportunity to play, sing, talk, worship & share what we treasure
about our Quaker Community with Friends from throughout the Quarter**

THEME AND FOCUS FOR THE GATHERING: In May, Gifts and Leadings brought a new vision of the Quarter this year. They urged us to put aside traditional concepts of committees and officers and replace them with gatherings of "groups of concern" arising from our most deeply felt leadings. Fall Gathering is a time to embrace the spirit of that vision. Our leadings as individuals and as a Quarter may draw us toward other Friends who share concern for our own spiritual nurture, or for the needs of our monthly meetings, or for service to the wider world around the globe, or toward other callings. Fall Gathering offers opportunities to form groups of concern and to engage, energize, and support each other.

As we go forward as a Quarter, the groups of concern will provide structure and energy for our work together. The Saturday program will focus on two sessions. An "inward" session will focus on the strengths, energy, and spirit of our monthly meeting. Through these remembrances we hope to clarify what enlivens and inspires us. In our "Outward" session, we move beyond the local meeting scope to the Quarter, to other circles of Friends, and to the global world, seeking to discern how our fellowship can help us carry our faith far beyond us. We hope this gathering will be the beginning of a journey of discovery toward a vision of a revitalized Quarter.

Details: Charlie Hudson loghouse@fairpoint.net

What Do We Mean By “Gifts & Leadings”?

If your answer to this question is that Gifts & Leadings is the name of a committee that sorts out who will take care of the responsibilities of the Meeting during the coming year, you would be correct. However “Gifts & Leadings” implies values that are deeper and distinctly Quaker in contrast with the alternative name, Nominating Committee. Taking the phrase apart, what do Quakers mean by “gifts” and what do they mean by “leadings”?

By “gifts” Quakers usually mean spiritual gifts, similar to St. Paul’s writings about spiritual gifts in the New Testament. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul writes, “There are different kinds of gifts, but the same spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.”

In Quaker practice, individuals are encouraged to recognize their own gifts; moreover, they are encouraged to name the gifts of others, supporting opportunities for growth and personal fulfillment.

The term “leadings,” in Quaker usage, refers to inner nudges from the Spirit to undertake some course of action. Catherine Whitmire writes, “It’s true that everything we do can be offered to God, but certain things seem to awaken our spirit and draw us deeper into the Light. Each of us needs to discover for ourselves what those things are--what we are drawn by, or led to . . . There may be particular kinds of work or service that revitalize us and connect us to a stream of divine energy . . .” (Catherine Whitmire, *Practicing Peace*).

In *Plain Living*, Whitmire relates an anecdote from Barbara St. John Cummings: “My uncle George Warner, who was born in the nineteenth century, was both well educated and widely traveled. One day during meeting for worship in Germantown, Pennsylvania, Uncle George rose to speak and surprised his family and the meeting by speaking his message in French. When the service ended, a stranger rose from the back of the room and said in French, “I read, but do not speak English. This morning when I walked by your sign and read 'The Society of Friends,' I thought to myself, maybe someone in there will be a friend to me. I was desperate and felt ready to end my life. I entered the meeting house and was sitting quietly in prayer, when suddenly someone rose and spoke in French the words of comfort I most needed” (*Plain Living*, p.128).

Over time, Quakers have emphasized the need to undergo four tests of whether a leading is valid:

- “The test of moral purity. This is the test which would most stringently examine whether too much self-interest, or not enough moral consistency, tainted . . . a leading.
- “The test of patient waiting. Self-will is impatient of tests.
- “The test of self-consistency of the spirit: testing an individual’s leadings against scriptural analogues and the witness of other Friends. The belief underlying this test is that, though revelation is progressive, God does not change over time.
- “The test of bringing the individual into unity: This test assumes that a leading will bring with it what St. Paul, writing to the Galatians, calls the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Galatians 5:22-23, Hugh Barbour, 1965)”, quoted in Catherine Whitmire, *Plain Living*).

St. Paul points out that our gifts are given to us so that we can serve others, especially within the community of faith: “There are diversities of ministrations (service) but the same Lord” (1 Corinthians, 12:5).

Similarly, Quakers value the sharing of gifts in service to others:

Quaker writer Paul Lacey writes, “A leading does not come to us simply so we may have one. Eventually its inwardness takes outward form and affects the rest of the human community. When we are led to truth it is so we may live *by* it and do something *with* it” (“Leading and Being Led,” Pendle Hill Pamphlet #264, 1985).

Gifts & Leadings is a phrase that has been around Quakerism for a long time. Strawberry Creek Meeting in Berkeley, California, probably was the earliest meeting, in 1980, to rename its Nominating Committee the Gifts & Leadings Committee. The idea had been proposed by member Eleanor Warnock. She suggested that the nominating process could become one of spiritual discernment. Vassalboro Quarterly Meeting adopted “Gifts & Leadings” in place of “Nominating Committee” several years ago. Friends from Midcoast Meeting who attended quarterly meetings were soon taken with the appropriateness of this phrase for use in its own meeting. Its Gifts & Leadings Committee has been known as such since that time.

The gifts and leadings process is one that belongs to the entire meeting community.

Submitted by Jean Crawford
on behalf of the Gifts & Leadings Committee

WITNESSING AT THE WHITE HOUSE--by Andy Burt



On Sunday morning, August 21, I joined nearly 50 others in front of the White House, where we sat and stood in a witness to President Obama, asking him to say "no" to the Keystone XL pipeline from the Alberta Tar Sands through America's breadbasket in the Midwest to refineries in Texas. I was arrested by the Park Police, handcuffed behind my back, and taken with 12 other women in a paddywagon to the police headquarters, where I was booked and released after paying a \$100 fine. For all but one person in the paddywagon (not me), this was the first time to be arrested.

For me, this project has come to represent the defining moment in my own personal decades-long pilgrimage and commitment to mitigate the impacts of climate change and transform our power system to one that's based on the wind, sun, and geothermal, not on fossil fuels. Climatologist Jim Hansen's words about the pipeline project--that it would result in tapping into the earth's second largest carbon pool after the oil fields of Saudi Arabia and would mean "game over" for the climate--struck deep in my heart. With others witnessing with me, I spoke of this as taking the seat on the bus, just the beginning of the acts of civil disobedience that will be necessary if we are going to speak truth to power, save the earth's ecosystems, and provide a sustainable future for our descendants.

When I came to Friends more than 40 years ago, I was inspired by the living witness of many in this Meeting who were speaking out against war, protesting the Vietnam War, and living a simple life that would "take away the occasion for war." Over the years, as I have read Friends' history, I have longed to know a community like early Friends, who were put in prison for their beliefs, yet stood strong in their faith and commitment to social justice and peace, who took the place of others in prison as well. The Philadelphia Friends Center's statue of Mary Dyer, who was hanged on Boston Common for her Friends beliefs, has always touched me deeply as I experience the peace and centered calm in her face and demeanor.

So when my friend Bill McKibben sent out an e-mail early this summer that the time had come for acts of civil disobedience, I felt led immediately to say, "Yes, I'll come; just tell me when." And so I found the window of opportunity in my busy schedule of work and family and signed up for August 21. I put my name on the ride board and soon had 3 strangers to join me in our Prius--a woman from Lexington, Massachusetts, a retired teacher (taught Bill McKibben in 5th grade) and board member of MA Interfaith Power & Light; a post-doctoral fellow from

Harvard studying plant adaptation to climate change, who is now considering action versus academia; and a jobs coach from Connecticut who used Jim Matlack's camera to record the events that Sunday. (On the way back, a 2009 graduate of Middlebury College and resident of Yarmouth, Maine, took the scientist's place.) Every step of the way, I found myself opening doors to new friendships and new experiences.

Two points about my experience will stay with me. The first was deep and personal: I was very scared about the unknown and especially about how I would react to being handcuffed behind my back (I am quite sensitive to claustrophobic situations and have said I would spill the beans in a torture session if I were put into a situation where I couldn't move). What I found was that in the enclosed old paddywagon in 90-degree heat with no air conditioning and in the crowded company of my "friends in crime," I felt liberated in community. As we were whisked away, with sirens blaring and a motorcycle escort through the streets of Washington, D.C., we sang and laughed, and I felt that deep calm I had sensed looking at Mary Dyer's face. The words from the hymn "How Can I Keep from Singing" [*Ed. note: see text of this hymn on page 6*] kept coming to me, and I cried with joy.

The second point was that as a community organizer, I was thrilled that the 5 people from Maine who so far have been part of the 15-day daily acts of civil disobedience in front of the White House (as of Aug. 25, 322 have been arrested) have had great exposure in Maine media, and through their words and witness, this issue has gained heightened visibility. Many, many thanks to Jean Matlack, who although unable to make the journey to Washington, tirelessly contacted the press all over Maine to place stories and link those of us in Washington with the Maine media. It's been an enormously successful effort and a model for the future.

So, in conclusion, our President alone, not the divided Congress, can make the decision whether to approve the project which the Canadian government and Big Oil are lobbying hard to develop. This means we can speak to him and encourage him to act boldly to --as he said in his 2008 campaign--"win the future." Please go to the Tar Sands Action website, <http://www.tarsandsaction.org>, and sign the petition. There is a lot of background information on this issue there. Write President Obama a personal letter. The civil disobedience at the White House continues until September 3 (there will be a religious leaders' day on August 29), and some of you may feel led to go. [*Ed. note: also check out <http://www.350.org>, founded by Andy's friend Bill McKibben, and <http://www.coolmaine.org/green-sneakers.html>.]*

Thank you, Friends, for your prayers and support.

How Can I Keep from Singing?

Words and Original Music by Robert Lowry, 1860

My life flows on in endless song;
Above earth's lamentation
I hear the sweet though far off hymn
That hails a new creation:
Through all the tumult and the strife
I hear the music ringing;
It finds an echo in my soul—
How can I keep from singing?

What though my joys and comforts die?
The Lord my Savior liveth;
What though the darkness gather round!
Songs in the night He giveth:
No storm can shake my inmost calm
While to that refuge clinging;
Since Christ is Lord of Heav'n and earth,
How can I keep from singing?

I lift mine eyes; the cloud grows thin;
I see the blue above it;
And day by day this pathway smoothes
Since first I learned to love it:
The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart,
A fountain ever springing:
All things are mine since I am His—
How can I keep from singing?

PRACTICING AWARENESS IN NATURE: Metaphor and Observation as Spiritual Practices



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Jennie Isbell and Newell Pledger-Shinn
Thursday September 29—Sunday October 2, 2011

Participants in this weekend will be invited to consider experiences of divine presence from the inside out, with attention to how our understandings about God are shaped and influenced by the natural world. We will spend some time in nature, prayerfully opening to the questions of our lives to look for the lessons and insights God offers in nature. We will learn the names of things, with attention to a few particular fellow creations. We will also play with language, in story or poem, to allow images of nature to illuminate our stories. Participants may wish to bring walking shoes, sketch books, journals and cameras. In addition to sessions on species identification and time outdoors, the schedule will include practices to bring you into your body and senses, time for reflection on your own, small group and whole group sharing.

Jennie Isbell is a massage therapist, yoga teacher and spiritual director. At the center of her work are a passion for spiritual hospitality that includes companioning seekers as they find ways to respond to divine presence and the persistent conviction that spirit and body are deeply, reciprocally connected. She is a member of Clear Creek Monthly Meeting in Richmond, IN, and has served this community as adult religious education coordinator for three years. Newell Pledger-Shinn first learned wonder as a childhood woods wanderer and playful poet. He's been returning ever since to nature, to stillness, and to metaphor as central supports in his spiritual journey. As a wilderness leader, mediator, fundraiser, and timber framer, his joy is co-creating spaces for the loving and faithful encounter of self, other, and divine. He is a member of Clear Creek Monthly Meeting, where he serves on the ministry and oversight committee.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS IN WOOLMAN HILL'S 2011-2012 FOUR-SEASON RETREAT CYCLE

Winter

Dec. 29, 2011 - Jan. 1, 2012:
Outer Stillness, Inner Peace

Spring

April 26-29, 2012:
Minding Our Lives

Summer

June 14-17, 2012:
Interfaith Light

For details:

WWW.WOOLMANHILL.ORG

413.774.3431

FACEBOOK: WOOLMAN
HILL

*"Let your lives speak."
George Fox, 1652*



The Peace of Wild Things
by Wendell Berry

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

Submitted by Andy Burt

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock."

Revelation 3:20

ADVICES

Personal Conduct--Let us bring the whole of our daily lives under the ordering of the Spirit. Let our faith free us from crippling fears so that we may live adventurously. In relations with others, let us exercise imagination, understanding, and sympathy. Let us live and work in the plainness and simplicity of true followers of Christ.

In view of the evils arising from the use of tobacco and intoxicating drinks and from the abuse of drugs, Friends are advised to consider whether they should refrain from using them, from offering them to others, and from having any share in their manufacture or sale. We should not let the claims of good fellowship or the fear of seeming peculiar influence our decision.

Let us maintain integrity in word and deed. Holding to the simplicity of truth, let us keep free of oaths. Remember how widespread and diverse are the temptations to grow rich at the expense of others, and how apparently harmless indulgence often leads by degrees to wrong-doing. Let us avoid and discourage every kind of betting and gambling and commercial speculations of a gambling character.

Friends have always held that the sacred nature of a sexual relationship is affirmed only in marriage. In recent times, however, some Friends have found such affirmation in other contexts. Let us be certain, in any case, that we hold up to the Light any sexual relationship we may be considering and reject any relationship that may violate the integrity or spiritual welfare of either of the partners or of others. No relationship can be a right one which makes use of another person through selfish desire.

**MIDCOAST MONTHLY MEETING
OF FRIENDS
P.O. Box 714
Damariscotta, ME 04543**