



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

Unless we change directions, we are likely to end up where we are headed.

—Chinese Proverb

October

Sunday	Oct 2		Food Pantry Day
		Rise of worship	* World Communion Day
Sunday	Oct. 9	8:30-9:45 a.m.	* Creative Listening
		rise of worship	* Sylvia and Dana Tavares, 25th anniversary celebration
Monday	Oct. 10	6:00-8:30 p.m.	Ongoing study group on non-violent communication
Tuesday	Oct. 11	6:00-8:00 p.m.	AFSC Maine Committee on Youth and Alternatives to the Military
Thursday	Oct. 13	5:30 p.m.	Ministry & Counsel Committee meeting
		7:00-8:30 p.m.	Lincoln County Peace and Justice Coalition
Sunday	Oct. 16	rise of worship	* Second-hour discussion: Gifts and Leadings
Friday	Oct 21	6:00 p.m.	Potluck supper
		7:00 p.m.	Meeting for worship for business
Saturday	Oct. 22		* George Sparks's 90th birthday party at Schooner Cove Damariscotta
Sunday	Oct. 23	8:30-9:45 a.m.	* Creative Listening
		rise of worship	* Meetinghouse workday and harvest celebration
Monday	Oct. 24	6:00-8:30 p.m.	Ongoing study group on non-violent communication
Friday	Oct. 28	6:00 p.m.	* Pizza and discussion of Gifts and Leadings issues
Sunday	Oct. 30	rise of worship	Informal meeting for peace and social concerns sharing and networking
~ Advance Notice ~			
Sunday	Nov. 6	8:30-9:45 a.m.	* Creative Listening
Saturday	Nov. 12	9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	* Unplugging the Holiday Tree workshop, bag lunch

* 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.

Visit www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org

The Entirely Unofficial **MONTHLY MEETING NOTES**, 9th month of 2005

based on draft minutes by Rob Patterson

Ministry & Counsel

At its last meeting the committee discussed possible formats for a discussion/dialogue time. The committee is recommending a process of Quaker dialogue, "Creative Listening," which was derived from the experience of Claremont, California, Friends. Three Sundays before meeting for worship have been set aside for this. The proposed schedule is 8:30 till 9:45 a.m. on October 9th and 23rd and again on November 6th. The meeting approved this schedule. The aim of the process is to deepen interpersonal relations and spiritual life of members in our community.

Louisa Gray and Deb Haviland will combine their efforts to make sure that our meeting is represented at New England Yearly Meeting Ministry & Counsel meetings during the year. That committee meets five times annually.

Treasurer's Report

Paul Diamond announced that the meeting has received \$15,000 in pledges so far for the year—the goal being \$17,500. This is very good progress, he felt. The \$1,000 earmarked for community giving (the so-called "worthy needs") has yet to be expended. How it will be used this year has not been determined.

Old Business

Carolyn Miller reported that the interest group meeting to discuss the possibility of a meetinghouse expansion had received some preliminary drawings from an architect. These are sufficiently detailed for builders to give us "ballpark" estimates of what an expansion might cost. A great deal of discussion ensued; some felt we were moving too quickly without

the support and backing of the entire meeting. The process that brought our meetinghouse together 10 years ago was remembered for its inclusiveness and care. One member pointed out that the future of the meeting is in our children and that without an effort to attract young families the meeting will wither. It was also pointed out that the original meetinghouse plans had included separate space for First Day School but that we had scaled back in the name of fiscal caution. Now we find ourselves with about \$57,000 in the Special Gifts fund, largely due to the generous bequests of two deceased members. It was agreed that we should get estimates so that we can more practically discuss the expansion idea in the future.

The plan to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the building of the meetinghouse was discussed. It was agreed that it should occur close to Thanksgiving, so November 20th was agreed upon. The nature of the celebration was not determined. Formation of a planning committee was suggested. The clerk called for volunteers and, there being none, she suggested that perhaps by Sunday next some members will recognize their gift and be lead to such work. As meeting for business would normally fall on the 20th of November (having returned to the winter schedule), it was agreed to hold business meeting in November on the 13th.

Pete Haviland reported that we have acquired two additional listening devices to aid the hearing impaired at meeting for worship. That brings the total to five. It was also noted that there has been a problem with users failing to turn them off after use, thus causing the batteries be dead by the following week.

New Business

An interfaith petition to end torture was read, and it was agreed that the clerk should sign it on behalf of the Meeting. [See text elsewhere in this newsletter.]

Looking ahead, the clerk suggested that we start thinking about several possible projects for the coming months: organizing a new round of Friendly 8 suppers, possibly having another charity fundraiser, and finding out if there is sufficient interest to restart a book discussion group. All these were seen as ways to ensure continued vitality in the community.

On Sunday, October 9th, Sylvia and Dana Tavares will renew their vows on the occasion of their 25th wedding anniversary. There will be a celebratory potluck luncheon after meeting to which Friends are encouraged to bring salads or breads. The meeting will provide beverages, and Sylvia is preparing a main course and dessert.

The next Monthly Meeting for Business will be Friday, October 21, 7 p.m., following a potluck supper at 6 p.m. All welcome.

.....
● **Fall Workday** ●
● **October 23rd after Worship** ●
● We will work only for an hour and then eat what- ●
● ever appears as a potluck with socialization. With ●
● any luck, harvest squash pies might make an ●
● appearance. FMI: Claire Darrow, 371-2447. ●
.....

Query #6
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?

The Power of One

One person certainly can make a difference. Following the terrible news of the destruction wrecked by Hurricane Katrina, Nancy Booth, with permission from the owners, set up a card table on the sidewalk in front of Maine Coast Book Store. During the two weeks that she was there, she succeeded in collecting \$3,358, which she sent to American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) for their Hurricane Katrina relief fund. Way to go, Nancy! And thanks to the generosity of friends and neighbors in the Damariscotta community. For more information on this latest disaster relief project of AFSC along with information on where to send contributions, go to the front page of the Midcoast Meeting Web site at www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org.

Request for Help for People to People

The Meeting has received a letter from Rev. Thayer of the Damariscotta Baptist Church outlining a clear need for all area congregations to revitalize People to People, the organization founded by Midcoast Meeting years ago, which seeks to provide Lincoln County families in need with clothing at no cost. Gretchen Hull currently serves on the board. More participation by Midcoast Meeting is sought. If you are able to contribute some time and energy to this worthy project, please contact Gretchen at 563-5416.

Gifts and Leadings

Important Upcoming Dates

Sunday, October 16, rise of Meeting

Calling all members and attenders to join in the discussion and plan for the coming year.

Friday, October 28, 6:00 p.m.

Pizza party and follow-up planning session. All urged to attend. Please bring side dishes.

A Favorite Gone Missing

At the July workday I brought some food to share. It was on a small stainless steel platter lined with blue enamel. I had to leave before the meal and whoever cleaned up may have seen it. It didn't come back to me, and as it is a favorite of mine I'd really like to have it returned. Please look around and see if it might have come home with you. Thanks so much, Claire Darrow, 371-2447, cdarrow@gwi.net.

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 moonlite@lincoln.midcoast.com

Quaker Dialogues

By Deborah Haviland

Ministry & Counsel is sponsoring a series of three dialogues on Sundays October 9 and 23 and November 6 at 8:30 – 9:45 a.m., before Meeting for Worship. At the conclusion of the three we will decide when and how to continue in the new year. Another name for these dialogues is Creative Listening, and the aim is to deepen our interpersonal relations and spiritual life through the sharing of meaningful experiences. Each time we will speak to one or more questions.

These are some of the key points for this method of dialogue: 1) that speaking be from feeling and experience rather than theory or opinion, 2) that the option not to answer be fully respected, 3) that there be no discussion then or afterwards of what was shared and that what is said be held in confidence, 4) that the leader take part as one of the group. All are invited to participate.

Peace Studies

Linda Cote-Small is again offering Peace Studies I at Midcoast Meeting as part of the School Union 74 (Damariscotta/Newcastle) Adult Education program. Gandhi said, "There is no way to peace. Peace is the way." During this 7-week course participants will read and discuss *Peace Is the Way; Bringing War & Violence to an End*, by Deepak Chopra. At each weekly meeting, in addition to discussion, there will be a period of stillness and opportunity to share experiences, successes, and challenges of living peace in our lives.

Participants are encouraged to purchase the book by the beginning of the class. The fee is \$40, \$45 for residents outside of Union #74. Dates are Wednesdays from October 5 to November 16, 6:30-8:30 p.m. To register, call Union #74 Adult and Community Education at 563-2811.

Happy Birthday George!

The Meeting has received word that George Sparks's family is planning a gala celebration of George's 90th birthday. His actual birthday is October 23—the celebration will be held on the afternoon of Saturday, October 22, at Schooner Cove in Damariscotta. It will be an open house type of party and it is not a surprise.

The family will be showing a memory disc that will reflect George's life. If you have any special pictures of him, please send them to George's granddaughter, Jennifer Postlewaite, 8 Lang Street, Vassalboro, ME 04989, 207-649-3860 msjen_96@yahoo.com. If you would like the pictures returned, please put your name and address on the back of the pictures and they will be returned. Please save the date and think about pictures.

Wild Mercy

The eyes of the future are looking back at us and they are praying for us to see beyond our own time. They are kneeling with clasped hands that we might act with restraint, leaving room for the life that is destined to come.

To protect what is wild is to protect what is gentle. Perhaps the wilderness we fear is the pause within our own heartbeats, the silent space that says we live only by grace. Wilderness lives by this same grace.

We have it within our power to create merciful acts...intervals of silence sustained in the twenty-first century.

From a prayer-poem written by Terry Tempest Williams (author of *Refuge*, the classic about sacredness of place) following a visit to the Arctic Wildlife Refuge.

—contributed by Andy Burt

The Advices

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 viewing 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 work 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.

Upcoming Events of Interest

by Andy Burt

- **Oct. 2: World Communion Day.** Midcoast Meeting will join our liturgical neighbors who are using Maine-grown bread and grape juice for their communion as we enjoy a local foods spread during fellowship hour. Foods will include Borealis Aroostook wheat bread (Aroostook farmers grew the wheat), grape juice from Cellar Door Winery in Lincolnville, local cheeses, apples, and honey.
- **Oct 13:** Camden Opera House, 7 pm. Joanna Macy, eco-philosopher, Buddhist scholar, and deep ecology activist/teacher will speak on **“Taking Heart in Tough Times.”** Look in the meetinghouse for a poster about this talk.
- **Oct. 18: Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners** executive director Russell Libby will speak about food policy and his vision for a sustainable Maine. Potluck supper at 6 pm. Program from 6:30 to 8pm. Rockland Unitarian Universalist Church, Broadway.
- **October 21: Making the Connection: Human Health and a Changing Environment.** Augusta Civic Center. Physicians for Social Responsibility, Maine Council of Churches, and environmental and health groups are sponsoring the day-long conference. Information is available on the PSR Web site www.psr.org, or contact Andy Burt adburt@gwi.net.
- **October 28-30: Keep ME Warm.** Efforts to winterize elderly people’s homes across the state. Sally Wood and Andy Burt are organizing a team for our Meeting to work in Lincoln County. See related article elsewhere in this newsletter.
- **Nov. 4: An Evening to Honor Tom Ewell,** includes dinner and speaker. For more information contact Maine Council of Churches, 772-1918.
- **Nov. 5: Alternative Gifts Fair** sponsored by Unitarian Universalist Faith in Action. 9-12 at Skidompha Library, Damariscotta. Learn about giving gift certificates and memberships to non-profits, Green Tags, and other “non-material” gifts as a positive alternative to traditional gift giving. FMI: Andy Burt, 882-6848, or Kitsy Winthrop, 773-7738.
- **Nov. 6: “Local Wisdom: Small Farms and Sustainable Communities,”** a talk by Catholic writer, ethicist, and environmental ethics professor John Carroll at Pine Tree State Arboretum. Take a guided tour of the arboretum in Augusta beginning at 2:30 p.m., followed by the dedication of a sugar maple tree on the property. John will speak from 4-5 and a simple supper of soup, bread, beverage, and dessert, all made from locally harvested products will follow. A poster will be put up at the meetinghouse. For more information, please contact Andy

continued on next page

Back Issues of the Newsletter and Meeting Information are available at: www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org

Consumerism: Part 5

by Betsy Terrell

Here's a quote from a book I borrowed off the shelves of the Midcoast Meeting Library, *Riding with the Lion, In Search of Mystical Christianity*, by Kyriacos C. Markides. He is quoting a Greek monk with whom he visited while researching his book. "People," he said, "kill themselves working in order to buy things that they don't really need. And after they buy what they think they need they work even harder because there are more things that now they think they need. And on and on. At the end they don't have a single moment even to pray."

I have been working lately with the triad of external motivation, internal motivation, and eternal motivation. When I am being moved by advertising or by someone else's statements or urgings, I am being externally motivated. When I am being moved by my own carefully considered needs and wants, I am being internally motivated. When I have set aside my own personality and its strivings and I hear the still small voice from within and follow it, I am being eternally motivated. It helps me a lot to think about these three possible sources of motivation and to use them as a tool for discerning where I am coming from in any particular incident.

I was unable to get to Fall Gathering and am sorry to have missed the workshop led by Linda Cote-Small about our daily contributions to the Earth Charter. I would like to invite anyone who did attend, or anyone else so inclined, to send me an e-mail with their comments about ways they are expressing the Earth Charter, and we will publish them in an upcoming newsletter. If you would like to read the text of the Earth Charter, it can be found at this website: <http://www.earthcharter.org/files/resources/Earth%20Charter%20-%20Brochure%20ENG.pdf>



Upcoming Events of Interestcont'd from p.4

Burt, director of Maine Council of Churches' Environmental Justice Program, 623-0500 or adburt@gwi.net.

- **Nov. 12: "Unplugging the Holiday Tree."** A workshop co-sponsored by the Midcoast Unitarian Universalist Fellowship and members of our Meeting's peace and social concerns efforts. The workshop will be led by the Rev. Kitsy Winthrop from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the meetinghouse. We will invite the public. Please bring a bag lunch and we'll provide a beverage. Goodwill donation requested.

Nominating Committee Now Gifts & Leading

by Jean Crawford

Last year Midcoast Meeting decided to simplify its committee structure. An important sense emerging from our visioning process had been that we wanted fewer jobs and fewer committee meetings. An early manifestation of a shift involved a new Landscape & Meetinghouse Committee with fewer members/coordinators charged with involving the entire Meeting community in helping to get the work done.

The next manifestation appeared with the Nominating Committee. Six Friends began talking this summer about how the process of deciding who will coordinate the work of the Meeting can be simplified and how it can be tied more directly to the energies of the membership.

The group decided to rename itself the Gifts & Leadings Coordinators to more accurately identify what it is about. This was influenced by the visioning process as well as by experience within Vassalboro Quarterly Meeting. It is no facile renaming; rather it represents Friends' realization that everyone who cares about Midcoast Meeting is personally responsible for getting its work done and structure is not so important.

All Friends of Midcoast Meeting are urged to participate in the process of choosing our coordinators for the coming year (January-December 2006) and for offering their energies in whatever ways they are led. **What are the jobs that are absolutely necessary for carrying out the work of the Meeting? How are you, as someone who values the work of the Meeting, called to participate in its efforts? How are you led to recognize gifts among other Friends and support them to help coordinate our work?**

These are some of the questions that the Gifts & Leadings Coordinators trust you will help them answer this fall. By the end of 2005 the Meeting needs to decide who will coordinate its work for the coming calendar year. It is vital that as many Friends as possible participate in the process. The Gifts & Leadings coordinators have scheduled two events: a second-hour conversation following Meeting for Worship on October 16 and an evening event on Friday, October 28 to move forward. The hope is that Friends will do whatever they can to make possible a vital and meaningful year 2006.

The coordinators hope that, apart from these set times, Friends will take time to think about Meeting and to have conversations with others on this matter. Please consider the "Gifts and Leadings" article in the September *Newsletter* and seek clarification when questions or concerns arise for you. The coordinators also ask all members who have served on committees to share their views of their experiences and to offer suggestions for better ways to organize our work.

Asia, the reversal of the global makeup of the Society of Friends. This was certainly an uncomfortable reminder about privilege, race, and borders. Though we were seeking to break down the borders of our religion, we were thwarted by our governments' policies (because the U.S. would have done the same, or worse) that deny the oneness of God's (all) people.

Additionally, many of the North American Evangelical Friends groups did not approve sending their impressionable youth to congregate with non-Christocentric Friends. (at least that's how I understood it). We were not as diverse as we had hoped, and our experiences were changed from what we had expected.

For me, this had the effect that I was surrounded by North Americans, and it was (mostly) North Americans that were making me uncomfortable. I was annoyed by the composition of the gathering, and I was annoyed by loud American Quakers, whom I didn't want to associate with. But, in fairly short order, I realized that God had given me a different learning challenge than I had anticipated. It might be easier for

Keep ME warm

Maine is a cold place in the winter. There's no arguing that fact. And, for those on fixed incomes, the coming winter could be even colder than last year, due to the even higher heating costs.

These are some of the cold facts. Heating oil prices are already over \$2 per gallon in Maine; 80% of Maine people heat with oil. Heating costs are projected to be 25% higher than last year's, but federal fuel assistance dollars are projected to remain the same. Last year Maine was able to provide \$480 per household in heating fuel assistance to 51,000 Maine people; this year the Housing Authority projects it will only be able to provide \$435. The heating assistance program has 15,000 households waiting for weatherization but can only do 1,000 with current resources. Last year, 1,000 volunteers winterized homes for 1,500 Maine seniors. Our goal this year is to winterize 3,000 homes. Each homeowner will save about \$80 in energy costs per year.

This is the second year of Maine's highly successful, unique, public-private partnership, which sends volunteer teams to winterize the homes of Maine's neediest citizens. They install energy conservation and efficiency products to reduce energy usage and energy bills and to improve comfort.

On October 29 and 30, volunteer teams from Maine businesses, houses of worship, schools, and civic groups will be deployed from sites in each county to button up a total of 2,000 houses—a 33% increase over last year's goal." Andy Burt, 882-6848, and Sally Wood, 633-7461, are organizing a team for Midcoast Friends. Please contact them to join the Midcoast team.

me as a Universalist Friend to accept Friends' paths to the Truth from very different religious expressions than to accept Friends from my own tradition and culture. I had (still have?) work to do.

Whether because we were on holy ground, or because I'd come from a week of spiritual seeking at New England Yearly Meeting, or because I was just ready, I felt very open all the time to the power of the Holy Spirit among us and within myself. And I think this was true for all of us. It seems that we were a group of individuals who were open to the transformative power of love, of the Spirit, of Christ, God, or whatever we called the power that we all felt. Our theme was "I am the vine, you are the branches, now what fruit shall we bear?" We really came to feel part of the vine: a course of divine SOMETHING running through us all.

It's really exhausting being so open to the Spirit for nine days straight. We had powerful challenging addresses by some remarkable older Friends, who challenged us to feel God's love and to heed God's call, among many other things. (You can listen to their addresses online at www.wgyf.org)

We had workshops and small groups during the day and also had presentations about each yearly meeting, and we shared various forms of worship. Every morning I started the day by going to programmed worship, which was led by Kenyan, Latin American, and Philipino Friends from evangelical traditions. I was challenged to make sense of concepts of Satan and the irrefutable truth of the Bible. Early on I was deeply challenged by this and found a Friend with whom to gather after programmed worship, to sit with these challenges in some extended unprogrammed worship before our breakfast. Other Friends joined us as well, and this was a valuable start to my journey that day, a good opportunity for synthesizing what we'd heard that morning and in the days prior, and preparing for the lessons yet to come after breakfast.

Fortunately, just as our souls were getting oversaturated, every couple of days we were able to get out and see some sights. Particularly meaningful to me was a visit to Swarthmore Hall, where Thomas and Margaret Fell welcomed George Fox and created a haven for the growing Friends' movement. Margaret's role in early Quakerism spoke quite strongly to my condition, and I want to learn more about her ministry of hospitality.

For me the experience of this gathering was powerful corporate worship, resulting in deep inward growth. Sometimes I gathered with Friends from my tradition to share these lessons, sometimes I journaled them out, and sometimes I just sat alone and took them deeply in my heart. Never did I share them with Friends from other traditions. Language was a barrier, and intimacy and comfort were barriers. Nevertheless,

continued on next page

I do feel I have strong connections with some of these Friends from outside my tradition. The love at the gathering was so strong and so present, few words were necessary to connect to someone's heart.

As the week went on, the messages we heard (or at least the ones I heard most clearly!) were increasingly about this group of Young Friends being faithful to our calling and the power we have as a group to transform the world. How unusual to be among 20- and 30-some-things who were quick to whip out a Bible when something valuable was referenced and who had words for the divine movement inside of them, and those who didn't have words for it, but felt it. And simply, how remarkable to be in a huge group of young people who can FEEL the spirit at work in them personally and among us as a group. I feel that we were all listening for Truth more faithfully than ever in our lives.

And what did I hear? I heard that the Bible has more meaning for me than I had thought. I heard that I must—we must—let our lives speak of our devotion to God and our understanding of the Truth. I heard that if I open myself to listen, God will speak to me. And I heard that when I am not open enough, when I can't remove all the human, ego-related blocks, God will speak to me through my friends. It was not through my own heart, but through the faithful listening of other Friends that I learned that God wants me to go to Kenya to be part of the next World Gathering of Young Friends for those who couldn't go to Lancaster. It was a struggle for me to accept that calling, honor and responsibility, but through the love of Friends, I heard and accepted. I also reflected a lot on our ability to mishear or block the Truth as we try to discern the Way. Certainly just because we have asked God to help us with a decision doesn't mean we've discerned the Truth correctly. We must continue to faithfully listen.

So now I prepare for a trip to Kenya!! I will almost certainly meet with more intercultural challenge than on this trip. We will be nine Friends from this Gathering—from Maine and Utah, El Salvador and Colombia, Australia and the Phillipines, from England, Ireland, and South Africa. We will represent this gathering, the tradition(s) from our region, and the Truth we have in our hearts. We'll gather at the end of October, God willing. More on this to come as I learn about it.

So my expectations, hopes, and questions from earlier? The corporate discomfort was not as tangible as the corporate love. I think the end result is the same, but the road there was different than I anticipated. I personally left England with a clearer understanding of how God works in my heart, and what I understand of divine Truth. And a strong sense that I need to find a way to share that in the world—but not a very strong understanding of how to do that! As far as the purpose of the gathering, I think it's hard to tell. I certainly

think we each left individually transformed. We will—you will!—see how we shall let our lives speak of the transformation we have experienced.

Thank you for your love, prayers, and support for me and for us thus far. Some of the most moving times for me at the gathering were when I was able to reflect on all the Friends at home who were upholding us and this gathering. Thank you.

Love, Holly

For more information about the World Gathering go to www.wgyf.org Holly has a new email address: baldwin.holly@gmail.com

Stop the Torture Campaign

The following petition is from The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee Stop the Torture Campaign. It was agreed at this month's meeting for worship for business that our clerk should sign it on behalf of the meeting.

We Cannot Remain Silent

As men and women of faith and conscience, we write today to express our profound opposition to the torture practices being utilized by the United States government today. The ever-increasing evidence makes it all too clear that these grim abuses are not isolated incidents but rather, constitute official policy.

Although our beliefs are rooted in many different religions, and although we worship in different ways and in different languages, we stand firmly united on this crucial moral issue. We have weighed and considered the many statements offered by our government officials to excuse or justify the practices in question. We remain unswerving in our demand for an immediate cessation of the use of torture. Our condemnation of torture is not based upon any political opinion or on the laws or treaties of any nations. Rather, we are guided today by a higher law that serves as a compass for all of humanity.

An act of torture is an act of evil. There are no exceptions. Such actions dehumanize both the victim and perpetrator. In many sacred writings, it is said that men and women are created in the beauty of God's image. The wanton cruelty and horror of torture is a desecration of that image. It denies and debases the splendor of creation and the beauty of life itself.

For centuries, our most revered moral and religious leaders have given their very lives in the quest for peace, humanity, and justice. So have many of our beloved friends and colleagues. Today we honor their memories and the tenets that guide us all, by speaking out in one voice. As we witness the pain and suffering of so many human beings, we cannot remain silent. Stop the torture now.

My Experience at NEYM

By Joannie Piccard

This year at NEYM was my best yet. I think because I decided to go to every business meeting and every Bible session, it put me into a deeper appreciation of all that being a Friend is about.

I had signed up to help with registration, but was not needed there, so I spent time at my favorite job—helping in the bookstore. I tend to see lots of people that I might not see elsewhere and also have a chance to see all of the new publications from various sources.

Because of our concerns about Friends United Meeting matters, I probably was more apt to be there in those business meetings. It is clear that there is much to be done and thought of around these issues. I am not clear as to how folks from Midcoast Meeting are concerned with what comes out of each year's get-together. I left my full package of various matters at the meetinghouse but no one seemed to want to read up, which is just okay. This year there were I think only three of us from this meeting there. So I am not sure how much enthusiasm exists. I know I could not have gone without the help of this meeting, and I am very grateful for that support.

One special event I attended was the presentation by Tenzin Norbu, the spokesman for the Tibetan Parliament in exile, as he spoke on "Tibet, Now or Never." He was a gentle, sweet person who will be returning to India soon. He showed some slides which more than backed up his message about what Tibet is going through because of China. His name was given to him the Dalai Lama. He has a 10-year-old daughter, a 7-year-old son, and another son who is 2.

He has a law degree and also one in political science and is the legal advisor to the Tibetan Parliament and soon will be serving as the deputy secretary. He earns \$70 U.S. a month. There is much to be shared, and I would be happy to share more, perhaps with the other two of us who were there as well.

The first evening was spent in listening to Skip Sheel, who has traveled the world doing his incredible photography of places most of us will probably never see. Following this presentation, after dark, almost all of us circled one of the lakes on campus. The lake has a thirty-foot fountain in the middle. As we surrounded the lake, each of us held a lit candle in memory of the conflagration in Japan. Each year, there is at least a small circle who stand in silence, but this year, I believe it sent all of us into the week following with a deep spiritual experience.

I spent more time walking in silence by the lakes, watching the geese who are always present, and once again being grateful for my spiritual roots and for the chance to share much with others there.

Planting Seeds at JYM

by Patience Thomas

The theme of this year's Yearly Meeting centered around planting seeds. Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM) is fertile ground in which seeds are nurtured. I was fortunate to be with children (ages 5-12) who participated in the very fertile ground of the JYM Program. As assistant to the coordinator of the Afternoon Choices for the children, I learned and partnered with a wonderful staff, veterans at cultivating the growth of young children in the realm of the light-filled universe. That of the Light within was flowing through everything we did.

Betty Ann Lee was the coordinator of JYM, which comprises a very large group of staff members and children. She facilitated a very well-organized team effort, which made me feel "held" from the onset and throughout the week. When I got there I received a small bag of thank-yous, which was a wonderful way to begin my new adventure. Among the gems in the bag were a pair of small candles with the tag, "This little light of yours makes JYM a lighthouse." There was also a seed packet with the words, "We plant our seeds in the belief that they will flourish regardless of our ability to see the final blossoms." And, of course, the bag included some some nourishment in the way of snacks and chocolate!

Here I was, growing where I was planted, along with veteran JYM staff members (some of whom had grown up considering Yearly Meeting their extended family). We had our little garden of life-giving energy amidst the wondrous energy of the entire yearly meeting.

I loved having the chance to be a part of JYM. Two years before, I was part of the staff for high school age Young Friends. My calling was to be with the smaller ones, and that felt good. I really liked the fact that I was able to participate in the adult offerings in the morning and night. It made for a good balance. Staying in my single room in a quiet residence was a far cry from my earlier experience with Young Friends, where we lived and learned together 24/7. I realized how much I relish my quiet time to walk and talk with other Quakers. I loved being able to rekindle old friendships with Friends from Portland Friends Meeting. I gained so much, personally, from the diverse offerings of the workshops, bookstore, Meeting for Business, morning meditation, early morning lap swims, contradancing, and so on.

Participating on the staff of JYM filled me with spirit. Working with children necessitates a lot of preparation, flexibility, prayer, and inordinate energy. I was ready to come home when Sessions ended, but I did so with a smile. Today I reflect with a smile, knowing that I will once again be joining these children, their families, and the JYM staff next year. I have accepted the role of coor-

continued on next page

dinator of JYM Afternoon Choices and will have two assistants who were with us this past summer. I am looking for one more person to work with us. With that position comes a stipend of one-half room and board and one hundred percent of the fun and rich experience. So many seeds are sprouting from the wealth of fertile soil within the New England Yearly Meeting.

345th NEYM Sessions Sinking Down to the Seed Together

by Louisa Gray

This is my own title, not the official one! The theme this year was based on the parable of the sower, tied in with the parable of the Good Samaritan from last year, which yielded such powerful, interwoven responses from the gathering. Both are from the Gospel of Luke.

One of the main attractions of NEYM for me has always been the Bible Half-Hours, held each day preceding the morning business sessions. The auditorium fills up with an awesome, rich mix of Friends from the gamut of traditions—unprogrammed, semi-programmed, programmed, and evangelical—many of them still Christ-centered and many of them recorded ministers. Coming as I do from a background of two other completely unprogrammed meetings and a mix of God-centered Quaker roots on my dad's side, Presbyterian on my mother's, plus a wealth of other religious influences, I guess I thirst, if you'll excuse the expression, for this mix. It does very much more realistically reflect the overall make-up of Quakerism in the world today. In addition, I like to imagine that, in certain settings, my presence can function as a "bridge." My hope is that we can rediscover our "underlying unity," our "oneness" in the midst of all our differences. "We are a nation and a culture at war with other nations and peoples," said Christopher McCandless, presiding clerk at the gathering, challenging us in our time-honored role as traditional peacemakers. And, indeed, even among our own present-day Society of Friends, it is quite evident that we are experiencing basic conflicts of belief, as we work to iron out our conservative and liberal societal differences.

The five Bible Half-Hours were led by Max Carter, North Carolina recorded minister, director of Guilford College Friends Center, and former teacher at Ramallah Friends School. Carter developed the theme of the parables, especially that of Jesus urging his disciples to attend to the Word of God; i.e., the "Seed" planted in each of them—and us—at our making and to hold it in the goodness of our hearts, learn to listen very closely, then take it out to plant a crop and bring forth fruit.

The depth of the varied responses arising from the period of silent worship following each morning's presentation was rewarding for many of us. We were queried as to what kind of soil we were and whether

seed would germinate in our soil. Did we need to plow deeper? Did our souls need plowing, for example. One comment referred to our taking care of the earth by disturbing the soil. There were allusions to the hard and rocky paths of today, of seed falling on rocks and withering from lack of moisture, and of thinness or even the rigidity of the soil of so much of our culture with its hardness of heart. We need more porous, fertile soil in order to discern the clear signs of God's truth all around us and to act on them. Carter cautioned us that our familiar, well-beaten paths may not be the ones to follow today. We need to look within ourselves as well as outside ourselves more carefully for fresh springs of the spirit to arise. We were even urged to "take back our time" which has been stolen from us in our overdoing, so that we can make room for that seed to grow in us today.

Throughout these Bible Half-Hours and the deeply pondered and concerned silent worship periods following each one, a number of us were reminded strongly of Isaac Pennington's wise words about "sinking down to the seed":

Give over thine own willing
Give over thine own running
Give over thine own desiring to
know or to be anything, And
sink down to the seed God
sows in thy heart, And let that
Be in thee, and
Grow in thee, and
Breathe in thee, and
Act in thee.

So this is really what draws me back—to sink down in deep, quiet worship every morning among Quakers of many backgrounds. To see dear, familiar faces I see only once a year and to have visits or meals with these friends. To wander idly on the campus, reflecting on stimulating conversations or events and enjoying the activities of the kids of all ages. To attend, selectively, workshops and special programs, without overloading my schedule. The NEYM meetings for worship for business make up a large part (at least four hours) of each day, and they offer a model of excellence in their conduct, perhaps unsurpassed anywhere today. The variety of programs, activities, committee meetings, and volunteer work needed is simply nonstop from dawn till long after dark.

I urge those of you who have never attended to go! It is very friendly, welcoming, and stimulating in every way! The food is so abundant and delicious at Bryant University, it is embarrassing! The noise level this group of Quakers achieves is astounding! And for all you fine, dedicated Quaker activists, this is the place for you. Come, get fired up, and leave with renewed vigor and purpose!

Epistle from the World Gathering of Young Friends

by Holly Baldwin

Dear Friends,

I sit down to write to you from the comfort and beauty of Rote Farm, my home in South Bristol. I am surrounded by a gentle breeze that is drying my clothes in cooperation with the warm sun. I'm surrounded by the green of the trees and fields that make this space so precious to me. All I want is to lie in the sun here, drink a beer, and be at peace. So why would I leave this oasis in the most fleetingly beautiful time of year?

Let me try to convey a bit about the power and value of the love I experienced at the World Gathering of Young Friends. I had only a few expectations and hopes of and for this gathering. I hoped that we would gather as a diverse body of Friends committed to one another through our love for the Religious Society of Friends. I yearned for periods of great uncomfortableness that would challenge us to listen together for Divine Truth—and to hear it. I hoped that through listening in love to Friends from Evangelical traditions, I would find a greater sense of conviction of my own beliefs and an increased desire and ability to share the importance of my faith with those around me.

An Irish Friend planning this gathering shared about selecting Lancashire, England, the cradle of

Quakerism, 1652 Country, as the site. He'd really wanted a facility near London, but as he prayed about it, he asked God, London? And God kept coming back strongly, clearly, Lancaster! So Aidan altered course, and from all corners of the earth, we were called by an undercurrent of Truth inside us to the place where Quakerism began. We were called together in the very place where George Fox, our founder, had a vision of a great people to be gathered.

But once gathered, what was our purpose? Was something powerful going to happen at this gathering, or were we to leave the experience much the same as we had entered it? Would the true purpose for our gathering be revealed before we left, or will it reveal itself gradually as we lead our lives as strengthened people of faith?

So there we were in Lancaster, some 225 of us. We had wanted there to be more of us— around 50 Friends, mostly Kenyans, were denied visas to enter the UK (despite heroic work on the part of the event organizers). Liberal unprogrammed Friends from North America and Europe greatly outnumbered the programmed Friends from Latin America, Africa, and

continued on page 6

Midcoast Meeting of Friends
PO Box 714, 77 Belvedere Road
Damariscotta, ME 04543

Midcoast Monthly Meeting of Friends • Clerk: Jean Crawford, 236-4176 • Recording Clerk: TBA • Treasurer: Paul Diamond, 236-0283
The Newsletter • October 2005 • Volume 17 • Number 9 • The Newsletter is published every month except August.
Editor/design/production: Nancy Terrell Hall, phone/fax 529-5771, moonlite@incoln.midcoast.com • Copy Editor: Betsy Terrell, captainbetsy@fastmail.fm • Address changes to: Pat Spock, 729-0826, wspock@gwi.net. 10 Curtis Street, Brunswick, ME 04011