

10th Month

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

October 2009



For God alone my soul waits in silence.

-- from Psalm 62

The fruit of silence is prayer.

--Mother Teresa

October

Fri.-Sun.	October 2-4		Creating a Culture of Peace Workshop [<i>Please see last newsletter for details.</i>]
Saturday	October 3	6:00 p.m.	*"Friends and Flicks," Vassalboro Friends Meeting
Sunday	October 4	Rise of Meeting	Potluck Lunch and Work Hour
Tuesday	October 6	6:30-8 p.m.	Opening Session of "Menu for Future" [<i>Please see last newsletter for details.</i>]
		7-8:30 p.m.	*End-of-Life Series Session, Winthrop Center Friends Church
Sunday	October 11	8:30 a.m.	Book Discussion Group
		Rise of Meeting	Quakerism 101
Monday	October 12	5:00 p.m.	Peace Center Steering Committee
Tuesday	October 13	6:30-8 p.m.	"Menu for the Future"
		7-8:30 p.m.	*End-of-Life Series Session, Winthrop Center Friends Church
Sunday	October 18	Rise of Meeting	Monthly Meeting for Worship for Business
Tuesday	October 20	6:30-8 p.m.	"Menu for the Future"
		7:00 p.m.	*"Parenting for Peace," Friends School of Portland Program, USM-Portland
		7-8:30 p.m.	*End-of-Life Series Session, Winthrop Center Friends Church
Sunday	October 25	11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.	Discerning Jobs Essential to the Meeting (refreshments provided to keep you going!)
Tuesday	October 27	6:30-8 p.m.	"Menu for the Future"
Saturday	October 31	9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.	*"Quaker Quest," Durham Meeting

*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--September 20, 2009

Minutes of the June meeting for business were corrected to say, "The meeting agreed all members will be listed in a new directory. Some others will be asked if they wish to remain in the directory."

The **State of the Meeting Report for 2007-2008** is in process. Ministry & Counsel will consider changes and send the report forward.

The **Meetinghouse & Grounds Committee** was thanked for recent refurbishing of the driveway.

Peace Center --Brewster Grace reported the book study group on *Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy* will meet the second and fourth Sundays of the month, 8:30 a.m. The main project of the committee at present is Connection and Collaboration with Congregations. Area ministers will meet October 19 for discussion and planning. Another project, Menu for the Future, will be facilitated by Linda Cote-Small during October. It centers on a book on the food industry. See Linda to order books. Friends approved a minute recommended by the Peace Center Steering Committee that the Peace & Social Concerns Committee be suspended at this time (not laid down).

Religious Education--Rachel McGuinness reported the 2009-2010 program became active today. She expressed appreciation for Kate Nordstrom's poster.

Hospitality--Anne Spencer reported there is a sign-up sheet in the entry hall for Friendly Eights groups. We will continue buying fair-trade coffee as a matter of principle. Friends are asked to take home any leftovers from their contributions to coffee hours to avoid spoilage.

Gifts & Leadings--Linda Cote-Small reported the worship sharing session today was the beginning of the committee's planning process. Notes were taken, and the committee will decide what was learned during worship sharing. In its planning, it may not solicit Friends for jobs per se; rather it may focus on what the Meeting wishes to emphasize during the coming year.

Old Business: A stone in memory of Friend George Sparks is being prepared and will be installed at the convenience of family members. A new revised Directory is in process.

New Business: Linda Cote-Small will facilitate a series on the Alternatives to Violence Project during October. News from New England Yearly Meeting tells us the theme for the next two years will be Sabbath & Jubilee Year. Carmen Lavertu attended the recent gathering of Vassalboro Quarterly Meeting and urges Friends to attend in the future. Quarterly Meeting has a strong young people's program and intends to sustain it.

The **next meeting for business will take place Sunday, October 18**, at the rise of meeting for worship. All are welcome. Please bring a bag lunch. The entire pending minutes of the September session are available at the Meeting website www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org and on the bulletin board at the meetinghouse.



Parenting for Peace, the FSP-sponsored speaker series, will partner with Physicians for Social Responsibility to host its second event, on October 20 at 7 p.m. in Hannaford Hall at the Abromson Education Center at USM in Portland. For more information: on this and other programs at Friends School of Portland, please visit the school's Web site: <http://friendsschoolofportland.org>.

QUERIES

VOCATIONS-- Do you respect the value of all useful work, whether paid or unpaid, whether physical or intellectual, whether performed in the home or in the larger community? Does your daily work use means and serve goals which are consistent with the teachings of Jesus? Are you honest and trustworthy in all business transactions, prompt and just in payment of debts? By counsel and example, do you encourage young people to enter vocations which will serve society?

HOW CAN WE KEEP OUR MEETING VITAL? Worship Sharing--September 20, 2009

On Sunday, September 20, following meeting for worship, Friends were invited by Gifts & Leadings to be part of a worship sharing to consider the query "How Can We Keep Our Meeting Vital?" Sixteen friends attended and gave prayerful consideration to the query. Our worship sharing comments seemed to fall into several different categories, although many links between categories were obvious.

1. Quality of worship at meeting for worship.
2. Meeting the needs of younger Quakers, including children and their families.
3. Individual spiritual growth and development.
4. Witness outside the Meeting/Outreach.
5. Strengthening connections within our Meeting.
6. Discernment of need for change in our processes, structures for meeting our needs.
7. Preservation of tradition.
8. In addition, outside of the worship-sharing, one person expressed a need for the Meeting to respond with greater attention and support to individual leadings.

Following are some specific highlights:

- To be vital, it is essential to meet the needs of the younger generation. We need to make this a home for young children and their families.
- This place is a gift. When a person serves on more than one committee, this person serves as a bridge. The person speaking feels led to bridge Ministry & Counsel and the Peace Center.
- Why do young people come to meeting? If it is a spiritual search, then we need to get the message to the community that this is a unique experience. Friends also have a history of work camps and reaching out to the community.
- We should reach out to young people in other churches and have joint concerns with them.
- Vitality comes in two directions: enthusiasm from members for what they do and the feeling that the organization is providing valuable service to the community.
- Two questions: What do you get from meeting, and what do you give to meeting? The quality of ministry is critical. What Quakers can share is a sense of exploration. On Sunday we come here to take a journey and the silence has to be about something. We need to nurture our spiritual life.
- My sons need to be part of a vital community. They need a community of peers and need to be engaged in action and service.
- An individual spiritual direction drew me here. We should consider timing of meeting for worship and other gatherings in relation to times that are good for young families.
- We need to talk more and bring people together as people.
- A realization of a strong wish for a core encouragement of my spiritual journey.
- It would be beneficial if meeting could be open to change and a new way of doing things.
- Perhaps things don't need to change as much as I need to change. At first I did not hear how God had touched others but I heard about social concerns. I now know that I hear whatever is vital to someone.
- The Meeting should grow in members.
- Can we find support in the larger Quaker family – adults and children? The larger fellowship is important.
- Our ministry and pastoral care are most important. I would like to understand what membership means to those do not join but are a vital part of our community.

END-OF-LIFE SERIES AT WINTHROP CENTER

Winthrop Center Friends is hosting a series of discussions in October on end-of-life issues. They invite Friends from other meetings join them for these informational and exploration sessions, which are also open to the public.

End-of Life-Series

Our culture talks a lot about life and how to live it, but it doesn't give equal time to talking about death and how to face it with dignity. Because we don't talk about it, death can be filled with fear, pain, and emotional stress, both for individuals and loved ones. Winthrop Center Friends Church will be hosting a series of three sessions in October on various aspects of preparing for and dealing with death.

Session One, Tuesday October 6: Talking About Death led by Karen Garcia. In this session we will begin the conversation, looking at these and other questions: Have you ever thought about death - your own, someone else's, or death in general? Have you experienced the death of someone close to you, and if so, can you share something about that experience? How do you care for someone close to you who is dying? Is it okay to talk with them about their death? What does our faith teach us about death?

Session Two, Tuesday October 13: Making Preparations – What Are the Options? Led by Ernest Marriner of Funeral Consumers Alliance. This will be a session of practical information about funeral and burial options. Bring your questions.

Session Three, Tuesday October 20: Befriending Our Losses led by Jim Gill. In contrast to a world that often asks us to deny the darker emotions in our lives, such as grief, anger, and despair, we will explore ways in which to befriend and even to surrender to those emotions as our teachers.

**Each session runs from 7:00-8:30 p.m. followed by light refreshments.
Winthrop Center Friends Church is on Winthrop Center Rd. Rte. 135 south.
Contact Pastor Maggie Edmondson at 685-4797 with any questions.**

Setting a Green Example

You can't get much greener than the Woolwich home of Midcoast member Guy Marsden and his wife, Rebekah Younger. Guy recently installed a 3.2 kW solar power system that will drop their electric bill by an average of about 75%. He did the whole project himself with the help of friends and neighbors and documented the entire project, from financing to real-time operating statistics, on his Web site, www.arttec.net.

When Guy and Rebekah refinanced their home last spring, they made sure they'd come away with enough to cover the cost of new solar panels and parts. They opted to install brand-new micro-inverters that mount behind each solar panel, rather than having one big "black box" inverter, to convert the DC power from a panel to AC for the home. Guy says, "The whole system is plug-and-play and about as simple as plugging in extension cords." The home also features a self-installed solar heating system for Guy's workshop and solar water heater for the house.



Guy and Rebekah are committed to living sustainably in every way they can. Rebekah decided to buy a new car back in 2001, when the Honda Insight, a sporty little 2-seater, was the first ultra-high-mileage hybrid on the streets--and at 60 m.p.g., it is still the most efficient hybrid on the road. And while they continue to drive the Insight, a few years ago, Guy replaced his gas-guzzling Chevy Blazer with a used 2006 Ford Escape Hybrid that gets over 32 m.p.g.

(The Marsden/Younger home, 61 Delano Rd., Woolwich, will be featured in the National Solar Home Tour, Saturday, October 3.)



Religious Education--*First Day School has started back up again. There will be a teacher present on Sunday during meeting with a planed program. We are happy to present a new swing set purchased from Cedarworks. Meeting member, Charlotte Ritter, left a bequest to First Day School, and the education committee purchased the swing set. Several children have already been able to climb on and enjoy the swings, climbing structure, and slide.*

The **book group** has been meeting on the second and fourth Sunday at 8:30 am. We are reading the book *Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy* written by Quakers Peter G. Brown and Geoffrey Graver. Here are a few queries presented to the Meeting at rise of meeting last Sunday:

What do I daily to remind myself of my connections with people, other creatures, and all that sustains life? How does this bring joy, thankfulness, and nourishment into my spiritual life?

How do I bring my life into harmony with the natural rhythms of life, so that I may pass on to future generations a sustainable world?

Where is my growing edge in living in right relationship?

Come and join us at the next book group meeting!

~Quaker Quest~

A second training for all Friends interested in learning about and from Quaker Quest has been scheduled for Saturday, October 31, at Durham Meeting. This training will refresh previous participants or provide new skills to interested Friends and will be modeled after the training that was offered last spring. Please plan on being there from 9:30-3:30. Lunch and morning beverages will be provided. For more information on this training event, contact Leslie Manning at (207) 592-2659.

A Brief Description--Quaker Quest is a dynamic new approach to outreach that has brought seekers to meetings all over England. It is based on the idea that Quakerism--"a spiritual path for our time"--is simple, radical, and contemporary.

The project began in 2002 as the leading of a group of seasoned Friends in London, the "core group." Quaker Quest sessions have been so popular that they are currently offered at Friends House, London, every Monday night of the year except official bank holidays. Two years ago the core group began, upon request, to train meetings outside London. Quaker Quest is now being offered by meetings throughout the United Kingdom and in Australia.

Program--In essence, Quaker Quest is a series of public open meetings on Quaker topics, which are presented in repeated cycles. The sessions follow a lively format which engages seekers intently for two hours. During each session, three Friends speak briefly from the heart about the evening's topic. Seekers then divide into small groups, each facilitated by a Friend who makes certain that everyone has a chance to share. The three presenters then offer a second, shorter set of talks. A question-and-answer period follows. The program closes with a 30-minute Meeting for Worship.

Topics for Quaker Quest sessions at Friends House have included: "Quakers and Worship," "Quakers and Simplicity," "Quakers and Faith in Action," "Quakers' Experience of God," and "Quakers and the Practice of Peace Making." The core group has found that seekers who come to Quaker Quest are interested in exploring our contemporary spirituality. With this in mind, they have been careful to avoid topics such as yearly meeting structures and Quaker history, which do not engage most seekers today. Members of the core group attend every session. They emphasize that their sessions have improved over time because they study participants' evaluation forms, because they regularly give each other candid feedback, and because they gain experience as they repeat their cycles of classes.

Vassalboro Monthly Meeting invites you to **Friends and Flicks**, Saturday, October 3, beginning at 6:00. Friends should bring a bag dinner and drinks (we'll provide coffee and tea). At 6:45, we'll show Sicko, Michael Moore's 2007 documentary. The film investigates the American health-care system, focusing on its health-insurance and pharmaceutical industries, and compares the for-profit, non-universal U.S. system with the non-profit universal systems of other countries. Although it opened to positive reviews, Sicko also generated controversy. A discussion of the film, health-care issues, and what Friends can do will follow organized by the VMM Peace & Social Concerns Committee.

The Worship & Ministry Committee has been exploring the topic of vocal ministry in our Meeting and found the following two passages helpful in their deliberations.

Worship, according to the practice of the Society of Friends, is entirely without any human direction or supervision. A group of devout persons come together and sit down quietly with no pre-arrangement, each seeking to have an immediate sense of leading and to know at first hand the presence of the living light. It is not fully accurate to say that such a meeting is based on silence; it is more accurate to say that a meeting is based on holy obedience.

Those who enter such a meeting can harm it in two specific ways: first by an advance determination to speak, and second by an advance determination to remain silent. The only way in which a worshiper can help such a meeting is by an advance determination to try to be responsive in listening to the still small voice and responding to what is asked. Such a meeting is always a high venture of faith.

--Paraphrased from a statement by Friends attending a World Council of Churches meeting, 1948

The Meeting affects its ministry quite as much as the ministry affects the Meeting. When the Meeting comes together in expectant faith and in genuine love and sympathy, striving to put far from them thoughts of criticism and fault finding, the right person may be led to speak and the right message be given. In such an atmosphere, the Holy Spirit can work effectively to bring forth the utterances that are needed and to check those that are not required. On the other hand, the spirit of indifference or of cold and unfriendly criticism injures the whole life of the Meeting, and we need not wonder if in such an atmosphere speakers mistake their guidance.

--Paraphrased from London Yearly Meeting Revision Committee, 1911

Both original passages are located in: *Faith and Practice*, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Revised 1972