

11th Month

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

Nov. 2006



To wait open-endedly is an enormously radical attitude toward life. So is to trust that something will happen to us that is far beyond our imaginings. So, too, is giving up control over our future and letting God define our life, trusting that God moulds us according to God's love and not according to our fear. The spiritual life is a life in which we wait, actively present to the moment, trusting that new things will happen to us, new things that are far beyond our own imagination, fantasy, or prediction. That, indeed, is a very radical stance toward life in a world preoccupied with control.

- Henri J. M. Nouwen

October

Sunday October 29 Rise of Meeting *Second-Hour Discussion re: Gifts & Leadings

November

Sunday November 5 Food Pantry Day
Sunday November 12 8-9:30 a.m. Meeting Breakfast
Friday November 17 6 p.m./7p.m. Potluck Supper/Meeting for Business & Corporation Meeting
Sunday November 19 1 & 3:30 p.m. *Portland Homeless Program, Skidompha Lib., Damariscotta

December

Sunday December 3 Food Pantry Day
Rise of Meeting *Second-Hour Discussion
Sunday December 10 Rise of Meeting Meeting for Business (Brown Bag Lunch)
Sunday December 17 Rise of Meeting Christmas Party (details next month)

*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.

The Entirely Unofficial **MONTHLY MEETING NOTES**, 10th month of 2006
Based on draft minutes by Deb Haviland

The Clerk opened the meeting at 7 p.m. by reading from a sermon written by William Sloane Coffin entitled "Alex's Death (March 1983)." After hearing some very moving passages the meeting settled into silence.

The agenda was reviewed. Since it was a long agenda, the clerk asked that we postpone the reading of last month's Minutes until the end of business meeting or until next month. We were asked to try to be brief with reports.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Ministry & Counsel: M&C expressed the committee's gratitude for the Meeting's support for a the fall event series, for the assistance of Guy Marsden with AV equipment and the donation of solar lights to light up the road sign, and for Jean Crawford's PR effort. "Our needs for aliveness, cooperation, community and support are being met." In addition to a focus on an evening series open to the public, the committee is exploring ways to encourage a dialogue on corporate worship.

Charlotte Ritter's memorial minute has been discussed, and Peter and Deborah Haviland have been asked to assist with it. Others will also be asked.

The date of November 5 has been set for a Welcome Reception for Andy Burt, who has transferred her membership to Midcoast. Hospitality will organize refreshments.

Membership is being discussed by the committee since there is a realization that many attenders have not become members. The discussion will start with M&C since most of them are not members.

Members and attenders are asked to give feedback to the committee about the greeting process, which includes asking people who arrive after 10 a.m. to wait until 10:15 to enter the meetingroom.

Pastoral Care: The committee is feeling the need for more structure and is looking to find new ways to organize.

Peace & Social Concerns: This will be part of the discussion on the Peace Center.

Peace Center: This was Old Business but it was decided to move forward with a discussion about it at this point in the meeting. The discussion had much depth and listening and sharing. Some of the highlights follow:

- We have had two workshops; what is the next step?
- How do we fit M&C and P&SC into the idea of a Peace Center?
- We are starting Gifts & Leadings now and need to know where to fit in P&SC since it was a committee last year.
- P&SC comes out of the spiritual life of the meeting. If it doesn't, it becomes too individual.
- What we are doing (fall series of talks) is wonderful, and we shouldn't be too concerned whether it comes from M&C, P&SC or a Peace Center.
- Perhaps we should expand the Events area of M&C and pull in others who are interested, to help out.
- We need to take advantage of the momentum we have now. There is much interest in the community.
- There is a dichotomy between service, which is outward, and prayer, which is inward. What is missing to bring these two together is a special focus – prayer.
- Articulate what it is when Quakers talk about peace. What are two or three issues to focus on?
- We should give more support to Carmen Lavertu, Andy Burt, Gretchen Hull, each with individual leadings.

- We have a growing identity in the community as a Quaker meeting, and a Peace Center will grow from that.
- We think of ourselves as a Peace Center; the ideas, and projects can come from anywhere.
- How do we support people in the meeting with their individual concerns and how can we effectively do something corporately?
- The Meeting needs to find ways to give Leadings Support (clearness) to those who have a concern and need to follow it. This will help people do what they are called to do.
- Rowan and Willow Rowntree and Peter Haviland will work on a Letter of Support to be given to Carmen, Andy, Gretchen. It will come from those at the business meeting tonight.
- Appreciation was expressed to Karen Cadbury for her leadership in the peace center discussions.

Agreed:

- **To have a Peace Center sign outside somewhere.**
- **To provide a Leadings Support Group to those who ask for it.**
- **To encourage all areas in Meeting to bring forth projects.**
- **To write a letter of support for Carmen Lavertu, Andy Burt, Gretchen Hull.**

Public Relations/Outreach: Jean Crawford presented a draft of an advertisement for us to consider. The ad was from Friends General Conference with our additions. Some specific changes were suggested, and Claire and Carmen agreed to have their phone numbers there, rather than the answering machine at the meetinghouse. We decided to look at ads like this in local newspapers and discuss it again next month.

Fellowship: It was agreed we needed more opportunities to enjoy each other's fellowship and to have time to discuss things on our minds and in our hearts. A gathering once a month was suggested.

Agreed: to have a Meeting Breakfast on Sunday, November 12, 8-9:30 a.m. David Cadbury volunteered to make pancakes, Karen C. to bring real coffee, Deb H to make a frittata. Other breakfast contributions will be welcomed.

Gifts & Leadings: The committee has met, and there will be a 2nd hour discussion on Sunday, October 29, with committee clerks speaking of committee descriptions and what gifts are helpful to make the committee function well.

New Business: Since Andy Burt was not able to be there, the clerk told us of some events coming up that Andy is involved with that are connected to her job with the Maine Council of Churches:

- Sunday, October 29, a soup lunch will be sold to raise money for the Heifer Foundation. It must be ordered ahead.
- Sunday, November 19, a drama produced by the homeless will be shown in Damariscotta. Last year (date?) the meeting had agreed to support this organization and its effort with a \$200 contribution. The Clerk will ask the treasurer to give a check to the organization. Since that is Monthly Meeting Sunday, we needed to change monthly meeting.

Agreed: to have Monthly Meeting on Friday, November 17, at 7 p.m.

Old Business: M&C's request for funding for audio-visual equipment: Last month, in September, M&C presented a proposal to business meeting for this fall/winter for a series of talks on spirituality and peace that would be open to the public. They proposed that meeting purchase audio-visual equipment to support

these programs and make it possible to do more in the future. The estimated cost for this equipment is \$1,616. This proposal is attached to last month's minutes. Monthly Meeting did not approve this last month. However communication became confused and M&C was advised they could go ahead. The equipment has been purchased. There was concern expressed as to where this equipment would be stored.

Agreed:

- **To endorse the purchase of this equipment.**

- **To have Meetinghouse & Grounds and a representative from M&C work together and decide where to store equipment. It is possible that the rolling cart may need to be shorter.**
- **To have implementation of shades and viewing screen be worked out with Meetinghouse and Grounds and a M&C representative.**

Meeting closed with silence at 9:15 p.m. Next meeting for business 7 p.m. Friday, November 17, following a potluck supper at 6 p.m.

CLERK'S CORNER

October 22, 2006



At our October Business Meeting the ten of us who were there had an exciting all-out discussion of the interaction of Peace & Social Concerns of the Meeting, the Peace Center, and Ministry & Counsel's already-going Fall Series of programs for us and the rest of the local community. We ranged far and wide, and you will be hearing more about this as time goes on. It is a discussion that would be better if everyone in the Meeting participated. We will undoubtedly schedule a time for all of us to gather and have more input. That way we will get more good ideas and a sense of where we are best headed.

To begin with, it was mentioned that many of us are active in our own fields of interest and doing good work, much of it in the area of peace work. Someone suggested we arrange a support system for these people, somewhat like a Clearness Committee but not quite, somewhat like a group of friends holding the worker in the Light, enabling that person to move forward as he or she is led. We all liked that idea, and you will hear more about it as it coalesces.

Another part of our talking was about outreach, how to do it well and what we are hoping to glean from it. Should we put an ad in the papers, and if so, what should we say? We welcome input on this new venture.

Ministry & Counsel's Fall Series of programs has been an unequivocal success. We have attracted people from around the area to hear talks about peaceful interactions and peace, or lack of it, in the Middle East, and to see Al Gore's film *An Inconvenient Truth*, with a wide-ranging discussion afterwards. The place was packed! Rick and I came late, because we had already seen the film, and we had to park along the street side!

You will hear more about the Winter Series as plans are finalized.

The hardware for these programs has already been purchased, and room-darkening shades will be installed. And if you come to an evening meeting you will see the new solar lights Guy Marsden has installed over our sign by the road and along the ramp walkway. We are surely coming into the energy-saving era with a bang!

And one last word: Don't miss the program at Skidompha Library on November 19th sponsored by area churches--including ours--put on by homeless people to tell their stories to us. It is a powerful depiction of what life is like as a homeless person. These people are finally finding a way to make their voices heard in this country of the many loud voices they have to compete with. We have a choice of 1:00 or 3:30, so many of us are planning to bring a bag lunch to the Meetinghouse and have a bite before going over to the library. Do plan to come! You will find more information elsewhere in the newsletter.



A little birdie told us . . .

Rob Patterson is currently recovering from double knee surgery. Please keep him in your thoughts and prayers!

Reflections about Israel and Palestine

by Carmen Lavertu

It took a long time for me to have the plight of the Palestinians penetrate my wholehearted support for Israel. Right after high-school graduation in northern Maine, I went to New York City and encountered Jewish people. I came to love, and still do, all things Jewish--the writers, philosophers, artists; the high ethical political thought and liberal activism in our government; Western civilization in so far as it is informed and inspired by the sacred scriptures. I cannot reflect on my moral and intellectual development without acknowledging the debts I owe from the very beginnings of my adult life in New York City. Part of that milieu was Israel, not only in the news, but in the stories of people who went to visit. I dreamed of living in a kibbutz.

It seems to me now that my very first awareness of the plight of Palestinians came through Quakers. (One knew of the refugee camps, of course.) A Friend brought news regularly from the Ramallah Friends School to our meeting in Oxford, Ohio. Another time, the Dayton AFSC arranged the visit of Palestinian women. One was from Jerusalem, and her sister, a Hamas resister, was in prison. Another lived in Lebanon. Her family had fled Palestine, and their home and business were being occupied by Israelis. Eventually I read Edward Said. At NEYM sessions, there have been excellent reports from the Friends School at Ramallah and by the Christian Peacemaker Teams.

I have searched for the peacemakers in that tragic land and for people and groups in our country that have a concern for both communities. For some years, the Meeting had a subscription to *Tikkun* magazine, edited by Rabbi Michael Lerner, and some of us have read one of his

books, attended a lecture he gave at Bowdoin, and still receive his messages on the Internet.

What I try to do now is hold both peoples in my awareness, in my heart and hope.

I believe the best way to understand a people, when it is not possible to encounter them in person or by visits to the country, is through their literature. What interests me most is the encounter of Israelis and Palestinians as neighbors. An unforgettable book is *Revenge*¹, in which an American woman went to Jerusalem to look for the young terrorist who had shot at her father. The author says of her book that it is "a story of hope."

I have read excerpts of a new book, *The Lemon Tree*². The tree of the title grew in the garden of a house in Palestine/Israel built by a Palestinian family who was forced out and fled in 1948, and which came to be occupied by a Jewish family from Eastern Europe. The story is about the meeting of the Palestinian man who had lived in the house as a child and the Israeli woman who lives there now.

We could revive the reading group in our Meeting to read *The Lemon Tree*.

¹*Revenge: A Story of Hope* by Laura Blumenfeld, Simon & Schuster, 2002 (ISBN 0684853167).

²*The Lemon Tree: An Arab, a Jew, and the Heart of the Middle East* by Sandy Toland, Bloomsbury USA, 2006 (ISBN 1582343438).

SECOND-HOUR DISCUSSIONS

October 29--Gift & Leadings

On October 29th the Gifts and Leadings Committee invites you to a Second Hour of discussion. Members of the different areas of the Meeting will be present to talk about their activities and what help they need. We are encouraging new attenders to Meeting as well as those more familiar with 'the ropes' to attend and add their two cents to the discussion. We hope to open people up to where they might help the Meeting with the gifts that they have, whether it's wisdom, connections, energy, interests and more. It will be a lively and informative time for us all. The more people who take the time to come, the more interesting and helpful it will be for the Meeting's activities, and the more we will make those activities become what we really want to have. Please plan to come!

December 3--AFSC & NCNL

On Sunday, December 3, the "Second Hour" discussion will feature a report by Jim Matlack on the Annual Meetings both of the American Friends Service Committee and the Friends Committee on National Legislation, which he will have attended in early November. Questions and discussion to follow.

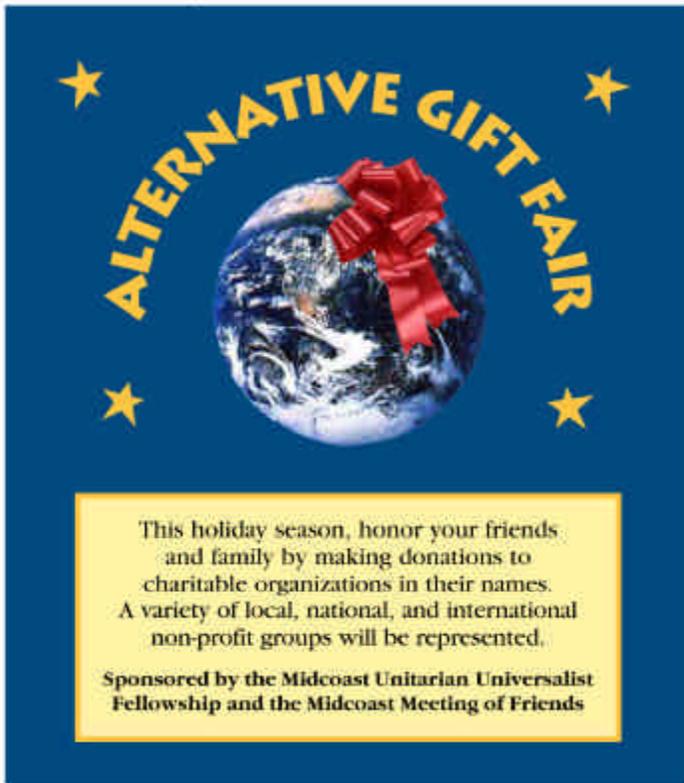
Holiday Double-Header

Sunday, November 19, 1 to 5 pm
Skidompha Library, Damariscotta

with Soul!

Purchase gifts that give back to your
Community and to the World...

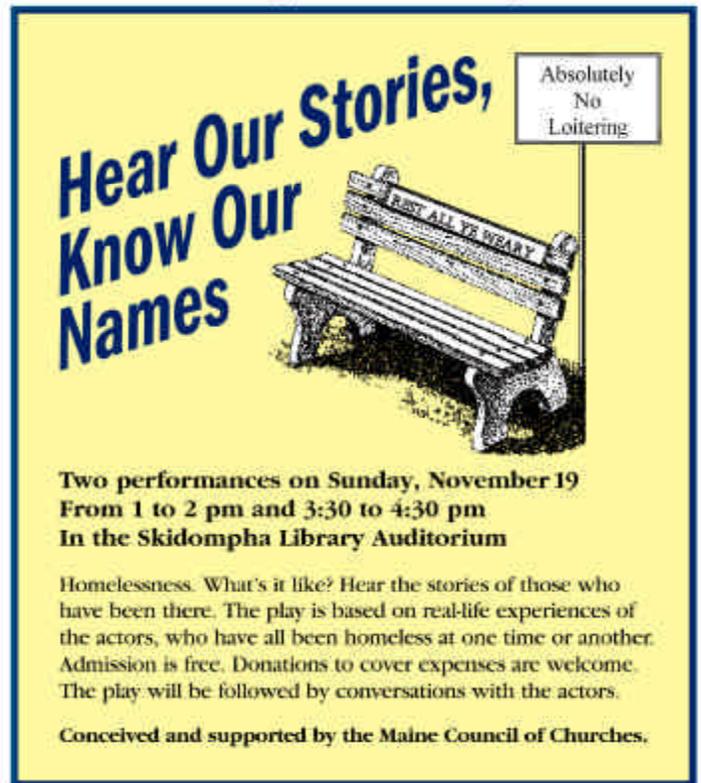
...and see a Play that makes you Think.



ALTERNATIVE GIFT FAIR

This holiday season, honor your friends and family by making donations to charitable organizations in their names. A variety of local, national, and international non-profit groups will be represented.

Sponsored by the Midcoast Unitarian Universalist Fellowship and the Midcoast Meeting of Friends



**Hear Our Stories,
Know Our Names**

Absolutely
No
Loitering

REST ALL YE WEARY

Two performances on Sunday, November 19
From 1 to 2 pm and 3:30 to 4:30 pm
In the Skidompha Library Auditorium

Homelessness. What's it like? Hear the stories of those who have been there. The play is based on real-life experiences of the actors, who have all been homeless at one time or another. Admission is free. Donations to cover expenses are welcome. The play will be followed by conversations with the actors.

Conceived and supported by the Maine Council of Churches.

Refreshments including hot soup, breads, beverages, and sweets will be available for purchase.

NEWS NOTES
by Deb Haviland

Things are going well for Jerry and Sally Wood in Charlottesville. Jerry's health is improving, and they love sharing a home with their daughter Ruth and grandchildren Nathaniel and Laura. They welcome hearing from friends in Maine. Their address is 527 Whitcover Circle, Charlottesville, VA 22901, and phone is 434-962-8763. Their e-mail is unchanged: mainewoods@gwi.net.

We are happy to welcome Donna Eder and David Duffee as winter attenders at Midcoast. Donna and David are on sabbatical from Bloomington, Indiana, and are living in Camden at 17 Harden Rd. Their phone is 236-6063.

QUERY: Outreach

Do you welcome inquirers and visitors to your meeting? Do you encourage their continued attendance and participation? Do you seek to share and to interpret the faith of Friends and to cooperate with others in spreading the Christian message? Are you patterns, examples: do your lives preach among all sorts of people, and to them? Do you walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one?

Some Thoughts on Faith

≈ *"God writes my music."*

-- Johann Sebastian Bach

≈ *"Give us grace and strength to forbear and to persevere. Give us courage and gaiety and the quiet mind, spare to us our friends, soften to us our enemies."*

--Robert Louis Stevenson

≈ *"Hope is putting faith to work when doubting would be easier."*

--Anonymous

≈ *"Faith is much better than belief. Belief is when someone else does the thinking."*

--R. Buckminster Fuller

≈ *"The great act of faith is when man decides that he is not God."*

-- Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.

≈ *"People see God every day. They just don't recognize him."*

--Pearl Bailey

≈ *"Faith is the bird that feels the light and sings when the dawn is still dark."*

--Rabindranath Tagore

≈ *"God is hiding in the world and our task is to let the divine emerge from our deeds."*

--Abraham Joshua Heschel

ADVICE: Outreach

The power of God is not used to compel us to Truth; therefore, let us renounce for ourselves the power of any person over any other and, compelling no one, let us seek to lead others to Truth through love. Let us teach by being ourselves teachable.

Friends are advised to witness to the power of Truth and justice and to foster growth of the divine community at home and abroad. While remaining faithful to our Quaker insights, and ready to share them with others, let us seek to understand the contributions made by the people of God everywhere. Whenever possible, let us seek to enter into prayer and work with the wider community of faith.