

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



And the angel said unto them, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."
-- Luke 2:10-12 (KJV)

Holiness comes wrapped in the ordinary. There are burning bushes all around you. Every tree is full of angels. Hidden beauty is waiting in every crumb.
-- Macrina Wiederkehr, O.S.B. in *A Tree Full of Angels*

December

Thursday	Dec. 4	4:00 p.m. 5:30 p.m.	Gifts & Leadings Committee Meeting Ministry & Counsel Committee Meeting
Sunday	Dec. 7	Rise of Meeting	Welcome Reception for New Members Followed by Potluck Lunch
Sunday	Dec. 14	8:30 a.m. Rise of Meeting	*Book Group *Christmas Fair & Party (please bring finger good to share)
Sunday	Dec. 21	Rise of Meeting	Monthly Meeting for Worship for Business
Sunday	Dec. 28	8:30 a.m.	*Book Group
Wednesday	Dec. 31	5 p.m.	*Potluck Supper Followed by Candle Lighting/Meeting for Worship

January

Sunday	Jan. 4	Rise of Meeting	Potluck Lunch
Friday	Jan. 16	12 noon-3:30 p.m.	*Open House, Friends School of Portland Mackworth Island, Falmouth, Maine

*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--Eleventh Month 16, 2008

Ministry & Counsel – Regarding guidelines on memorial stones, the committee has recommended to the Meeting that the right to have a memorial stone placed on Meeting grounds be made on a case-by-case basis. There was an idea expressed for a type of stone to be used, a natural stone. To coordinate varying ideas from Ministry & Counsel and Meetinghouse & Grounds, an *ad hoc* committee comprised of Deb Haviland, Suzy Hallett, and Nancy Booth was appointed. The committee is asked to come to monthly meeting with proposed guidelines on memorial stones. Standing committees will please send their contributions for State of the Society reports to Ministry & Counsel by February at the latest. The committee is planning to welcome new members during the December potluck lunch.

Meetinghouse & Grounds – The committee's recommendation on Joyce Young's request to build a garden on the Meeting's grounds is that "it did not consider that the time was right to embark on a community vegetable garden, although such a development may be viable in the future. It also felt uncomfortable in offering our premises for personal advantage. There is the possibility that there are members of the Meeting who have space in their gardens that might be made available on a private basis... We are glad that Joyce has joined our Meeting community, and we hope that her talents will find expression here." Friends agreed with the committee's recommendation, encouraging Joyce to share her expertise sometime soon on naturopathic medicine, growing whole foods, and chemical exposure.

Peace & Social Concerns – The committee will contact Brewster Grace about possible dates when it could sponsor a visit to the Meeting by a friend of Brewster's who represented AFSC in Haiti.

Religious Education – The committee is still hoping to find youth-size chairs at a reasonable price. The Meeting agreed that, at the rise of meeting, a Friend will let the First Day teacher know it is time for the young people to come join us in the worship room.

New Business – A candlelight meeting for worship to express thoughts for the coming year will take place on New Year's Eve. There will be a potluck at 5 p.m. followed by the service. Carmen Lavertu and Joyce Young will submit information to the newsletter on non-toxic candles to be provided for the ceremony. [*Ed. note: The Meeting will provide candles. See article, p. 3.*] Friends will please bring their own candleholders suitable for taper candles.

Other Concerns – The following Friends have volunteered to close meeting for worship during the next three months: Paul Diamond will cover December; Thomas Steele-Maley will cover January, and the Havilands will cover February.

The next meeting for business will convene Sunday, December 21, at the rise of meeting for worship. All are welcome. Please bring a bag lunch.

For the entire pending minutes, please see the Meeting's website, www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org or the bulletin board at the Meetinghouse.



CHRISTMAS FAIR & PARTY



The Meeting will celebrate Christmas with a Holiday Fair and Party on Sunday, December 14. Sylvia Tavares and Jane Dwyer will come with their lovely handmade jewelry as they have for many years. Friends are asked to bring "lightly used items" that might be just the thing to purchase for our gift-giving this year. Please put a price on each item. Friends are also encouraged to bring art and crafts to sell. We are all asked to bring finger food for the festive table. The money raised in the sale will go to a worthy cause yet to be determined.

THE QUAKER MOTTO CALENDAR--A GIFT FROM THE HAVILANDS

For many years at Christmas the Havilands have enjoyed giving family and friends the Quaker Motto Calendar. Once again Pete and Deb would like to give this gift to all members and attenders of Midcoast Meeting. Calendars will be on the credenza in early December. Please take one and enjoy it. It comes with love and wishes for a peaceful and joyous 2009.

AFSC Maine--Program on Youth & Militarism--An Opportunity to Help

For the past five years, the Steering Committee has been meeting monthly to learn about military recruitment in the schools and to get that information to Maine high school students. Their goal is to ensure that all students have all necessary information before considering enlistment in the armed services. (Until recently, the committee was meeting at Midcoast Friends' meetinghouse, but now it meets in Woolwich, in the home of a committee member.)

A recent report described the committee's work:

1. The State Level: Recommendations for policy change through the Maine Department of Education. We have succeeded in getting Education Commissioner Susan Gendron to write to all school superintendents recommending that all parents be sent, with the emergency card, information about opting out of providing student information to the military. (An emergency card must be completed and returned for every student.) With the committee's prodding, some schools are cooperating.
2. The School Level: Building relationships with guidance counselors and principals. Through repeated letters and visits, we have gotten to know school personnel supportive of our goals and familiar with our materials, and we have affected school policies on giving the ASVAB test and on where and how recruiters may meet with students. We have developed a brochure about alternatives to military service and have been invited by several schools to participate in Career Day events.
3. The Student Level: Through Career Day events and civil-rights teams, we have gotten to know several students interested in meeting outside school to learn more about the issues and our concerns and to become active in their school communities. Some schools award students community-service credits for this work.

Hoping to establish a contact in every junior-high and high school, the committee has refined its process so that new volunteers can easily assume their tasks and will have materials such as brochures and films available for school events and individual interactions. This is the perfect opportunity for any Friend seeking a well-organized, meaningful, and important project! For more information, please contact Rosalie Tyler Paul at 371-2077 or gaia@gwi.net or speak with Thomas Steele-Maley or Carmen Lavertu of our Meeting.

ADVICES

Spiritual Life--Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts, which are the leadings of the Holy Spirit. It is God's redemptive love that draws us, a love shown forth by Jesus in all his life, on the cross, and in his abiding presence.

Friends are advised to make a quiet place in their daily lives for prayer and communion with God and to be constant in the reading of the Bible and other devotional literature.

Let us cherish the seed of God in ourselves and in others, that we may be open to new revelations of truth. Let us look to our meetings to guide and stimulate our spiritual growth.

A Grateful Thank You

Dear Friends,

It is with much gratitude that I thank you for approving \$150 toward my tuition to the Non-Violent Integration Program starting in January. I appreciate your support, which is helping me be a more peaceful person and thus hopefully creating peace in our community and world.

In Peace,

Linda

New Year's Eve Potluck and Candlelight Ceremony



We will have our New Year's candlelight ceremony this year after a 5 p.m. potluck dinner on New Year's Eve. Please bring a favorite dish to share, a holder for a tapered candle (the Meeting will provide the candles), and a wish or prayer for the New Year. This is a lovely way to welcome the New Year, with friends and good food--and our dreams. See you there!

QUERIES: *Spiritual Life*--Do you live in thankful awareness of God's constant presence in your life? Are you sensitive and obedient to leadings of the Holy Spirit? Do you seek to follow Jesus, who shows us the way? Do you nurture your spiritual life with prayer and silent waiting and with regular study of the Bible and other devotional literature?

Local Vigil for Disarmament

The Advent Vigil for Disarmament at Bath Iron Works will be from 11:30 to 12:30 on all of the Saturdays of Advent-- November 29, December 6, 13, and 20--across from the Administration Building. As the organizers put it, "Now more than ever we need to prepare for peace by resisting the building of warships that are essentially weapons of mass destruction and, as such, crimes against humanity. A society that commits its resources and economic development to building such warships is not doing its part to bring about a peaceful world. It is time to beat such horrendous swords into plowshares. Preparing for peace means committing our hearts and working through our fears so that we can share our resources more equitably with our brothers and sisters worldwide. Rejoice all ways." For more information, contact Smilin' Trees Disarmament Farm at 763-4062.

--Submitted by Carmen Lavertu

AN INVITATION FROM FRIENDS SCHOOL OF PORTLAND

Hello, fellow Maine Quakers,

I am a member of Portland Friends Meeting and the Assistant Clerk of Friends School of Portland. As many of you know, the school is now in its third year and we're positively thriving, with 70 students in grades Pre-K through 8.



We at the school would like to throw open our doors to the entire community of Maine Quakers! I am writing to ask you to share with your respective meetings the attached invitation to a Quaker Outreach Open House on Friday, January 16, from 12:00 to 3:30 p.m. We are inviting every member and attender of a Maine meeting or worship group to visit us for the afternoon.

For those traveling long distances, we will be able to arrange overnight accommodations if given enough advance notice.

There is no charge for this event, and we welcome as many of you as possible. Lunch will be served, and we kindly request RSVPs so we know how much food to prepare. The RSVP slip also has a box to check for those who cannot attend the Open House but are interested in the school.

We hope to see you in January!

Many thanks,

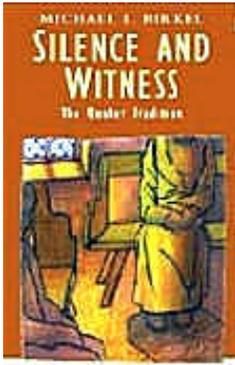
Rob Levin (207-774-8026 or rob@roblevin.net)

[Ed. note: Copies of the invitation/RSVP are available on the credenza or by contacting Diane at 207-236-9078 or diane_kirkman@hotmail.com.]

The school's web site is: www.friendsschoolofportland.org.

THE COURAGE TO RESIST

Carmen Lavertu recommends the Courage to Resist web site, <http://www.couragetoresent.org/x>, which, in the organization's words, works to "support the troops who refuse to fight" and "strives to provide political, emotional, and material support to all military objectors critical of our government's current policies of empire." The web site features numerous profiles of war-resister soldiers, as well as a bi-monthly newsletter designed to keep subscribers "up-to-date about upcoming military trials, coordinated actions, letter-writing campaigns, and more."



The Book Group gathers at the meetinghouse at 8:30 a.m. the second and fourth Sundays of each month. In December, we will be reading and discussing *Silence and Witness: The Quaker Tradition (Traditions of Christian Spirituality)* by Michael L. Birkel (Orbis Books) to continue the spiritual work of the Quakerism 101 readings. For January and February, we are considering *The Great Work: Our Way into the Future* by Thomas Berry, a visionary philosophical/spiritual book. We thought that in the winter we might re-schedule one of our bimonthly meetings to after the rise of meeting for worship, and we would like to hear from those who would like to participate should we arrange this change in schedule. You may contact Carmen Lavertu or Rachel McGinnis.

A Reminder from Ministry & Counsel

M&C reminds you that Yearly Meeting is looking for feedback by February 1 on the working paper for Chapter 4 of *Faith & Practice*: "Integration of Faith and Life--The Meaning, Understanding and Use of Testimonies." Packets containing the working paper--as well as the revised Chapter 9, "A Brief History of Friends in New England"--are available for you on the credenza in the meetinghouse. Should you have any questions, please contact Linda at 563-6712 or chezcote@roadrunner.com.

John Woolman Meets Joan Woolwoman at the Peace Center

By Brewster Grace

At the Peace Center on November 9, Louis Cox and Ruah Swennerfeldt of Burlington (Vermont) Monthly Meeting enacted a lovely imagined dialogue between John Woolman and the wife of a Quaker slaveholder, Joan Woolwoman, as part of the center's workshop on "Quaker Simplicity and the Environment."

The message of their dialogue was less about the abolition of slavery and than about our contemporary environmental crisis from global warming and the abuse of natural resources. Inspired by Woolman's traveling ministry in the 18th century, Ruah and Louis have performed their dialogue for Friends in a 1,400-mile walk from Vancouver to San Diego. The message they brought to the Peace Center was to listen and to share about living simply and justly in a world with limited resources. Woolman warned his generation about "a great injury to succeeding ages" because of their "strivings after ease and luxury . . . [and] outward greatness." Ruah and Louis see Woolman's prophetic message as relevant today because so many wars develop out of the unjust and unsustainable use of nonrenewable resources.

The workshop also celebrated the installation of our meetinghouse's new solar electric system. Andy Burt, who arranged for Ruah and Louis's visit, gave a tour and presentation of the system.

The Peace Center is planning future events on the environment, climate change, and alternative energy.

Welcome, Suzy Hallett

In October, we received a generous contribution and note from a dear friend of Suzy Hallett. We had just welcomed Suzy as a new member to our Meeting, though she had a long-time connection with Friends. The note reads:

Enclosed please find a contribution in honor of my long-time friend and soul mate, Suzanne Hallett. We began our spiritual journey together in a local Congregational church 30 years ago. The Quaker tradition is part of her heritage--and so she now returns home. Godspeed to each of you.

--Katy Ver Hagen

Claire Darrow Recovering at Home

Claire Darrow is recovering at home from a severe fall she suffered in late October while visiting her daughter Leslie in New Hampshire. Claire reports that she is feeling better every day and hopes to be driving in a few weeks. She welcomes phone calls, notes, and occasional visits. Occasional contributions to the dinner menu would also be welcomed!

Please call before visiting.

INCARNATION

When the Holy One stepped from endless order
into the chaos of our days, it was winter.
Weather blew everywhere. Time itself was dying.
The squirrel, with a tail soft as breath,
curled inside the maple trunk.

The cold stayed. Five-fingered leaves pressed the ground,
their stems perpendicular, thin wrists above each flame-tipped palm.
Cataclysm scanned the days; like any future, like our own.
The Holy One took face and voice, beginning with an infant cry,
took food and sleep, nestled in arms not unlike yours.

He listened to the dropping rain, watched it bead the naked twigs,
saw it polish stones and faces, stood once under this lift of sky
and still, in a word, understands.

--From *I Am: Teaching Sermons on the Incarnation*
(Abingdon Press, 1998)

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