

# Midcoast Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends



## MIDCOAST MONTHLY MEETING OF FRIENDS

P.O. Box 714  
Damariscotta, ME 04543

Clerk/Interim  
Treasurer: Deborah  
Haviland, 354-8714

Recording Clerk: Jim  
Matlack, 236-0903

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Editing/design: Diane  
Kirkman, 236-9078,  
[diane\\_kirkman@hotmail.com](mailto:diane_kirkman@hotmail.com), 17 Grove St.,  
Camden, ME 04843

Address changes: Pat  
Spock, 729-0826,  
[wspock@gwi.net](mailto:wspock@gwi.net), 10  
Curtis St., Brunswick,  
ME 04011

Web: Guy Marsden, 443-  
8942, [guy@arttec.net](mailto:guy@arttec.net), 61  
Delano Rd., Woolwich,  
ME 04579

### November

|        |         |                      |                            |
|--------|---------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Sunday | Nov. 28 | 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. | Quakerism Discussion Group |
|--------|---------|----------------------|----------------------------|

### December

|          |         |                 |                         |
|----------|---------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Sunday   | Dec. 5  | Rise of Meeting | Potluck                 |
| Thursday | Dec. 9  | 4:00 p.m.       | Peace Center Meeting    |
| Sunday   | Dec. 12 | Rise of Meeting | *Holiday Fair and Party |
| Sunday   | Dec. 19 | Rise of Meeting | Meeting for Business    |

### January

|           |         |                 |  |
|-----------|---------|-----------------|--|
| Sunday    | Jan. 2  | 10:00 a.m.      | New Year's Candle Lighting (Format<br>for Meeting for Worship--candle<br>lighting and worship sharing<br>Potluck |
|           |         | Rise of Meeting |  |
| Wednesday | Jan. 12 | 10:00 a.m.      | Ministry & Counsel, Waldmans'<br>home, Bath  |

\*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](mailto:diane_kirkman@hotmail.com). Thanks!*

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**For newsletters, important links, & a current calendar, visit our website:**  
[www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org](http://www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org)

## Highlights--Monthly Meeting for Business--November 21, 2010

There were 18 in attendance.

The Meeting has received a **grant of \$715 from the Maine Humanities Council** toward the Peace Center's winter-spring program, "Cultures and Conflicts." The Meeting is asked to match this amount.

**George Chappell's** request for membership was welcomed and referred to Ministry & Counsel.

**Meetinghouse & Grounds** is preparing a recommendation for replacing the floor in the social room. The Meeting approved the project in concept.

Notes on the worship sharing on the **health of the meeting** will be reviewed at Ministry & Counsel's meeting January 12, 10 a.m., at Mallory Waldman's home. Any member/ attender is welcome to attend this discussion.

The **First Day School** was the featured committee this month. Kathie Gass read queries and distributed a mission statement.

Proceeds of a recently matured CD will be used for **driveway surfacing and floor replacement**.

**Ministry & Counsel**--Mallory Waldman reported that the new welcome brochure is being printed.

**Pastoral Care**--Carmen Lavertu distributed Guidelines for the Emergency Fund for review. Confidentiality is respected whenever emergency grants are made. The revised Guidelines will be published in the Newsletter. [*Ed. note: see item page 5.*]

**A Christmas Party & Fair** will be held Sunday, December 12. Friends are asked to bring lightly used items for sale and special foods for gift-giving. The proceeds will benefit a charity of the young people's choice. Sylvia Tavares will also be there with her jewelry. [*Ed. note: see item page 3.*]

**A New Year's candle-lighting ceremony** will be held Sunday, January 2, 10 a.m., instead of regular meeting for worship. The format will be candle lighting with worship sharing.

The **next Monthly Meeting will be held on Sunday, December 19**, at the rise of meeting for worship. All are welcome. Please bring a bag lunch.

The **entire pending minutes** of the meeting are available at [www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org](http://www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org) and on the bulletin board at the meetinghouse.

### ADVICES

**Vocations**--In our relations with others in our daily work, let us manifest the spirit of justice and understanding and thus give a living witness to the Truth. While trying to make provision for ourselves and our families, let us not be anxious, but in quietness of spirit trust in the goodness of God. When we suffer from unemployment, let us seek the support and encouragement of our meetings. When we have a choice of employment, let us think first of the service that we may render. Let us be ready to limit our engagements, to withdraw for a time, or even to retire from a business that we may be free for new service as God appoints it.

### THE QUAKER MOTTO CALENDAR-- A GIFT FROM THE HAVILANDS

For many years, the Havilands have enjoyed giving family and friends the Quaker Motto Calendar at Christmas. 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 2011.

## MIDCOAST FRIENDS & THE ECUMENICAL FOOD PANTRY

by Wendell Stephenson

Midcoast Friends is one of eight local churches supporting the Ecumenical Food Pantry, which operates in the basement of the Second Congregational Church in Newcastle and is open every Tuesday morning from 9 to 11.

The present unemployment situation has made even seasonal employment unavailable to many people who traditionally relied on it for much or all of their income. The food pantry has become a major source of food for them and record numbers have come this year. We expect this winter will put more people at risk and that they will come to the food pantry.

The food pantry is presently spending its savings and will be out of funds for this important mission in a few months. We are appealing to all who can to donate money or food .

Send checks to:

Ecumenical Food Pantry  
P.O. Box 46  
Newcastle, ME 04553

Bring food to:

Second Congregational Church  
Tuesday 9 to 11 a.m.

If you have any questions, please call me at 563-8681.

### Hunger in Maine . . .

- 13.3 percent of Maine households, representing over 175,000 people, experience food insecurity or are unable to consistently access adequate amounts of nutritious food necessary for a healthy life.
- 19.5 percent of Maine children under the age of 18 are food insecure.
- 18.8 percent of Maine children under the age of five are food insecure.
- Maine ranks ninth in the nation for food insecurity and has the highest food insecurity ranking of any state in New England.
- Many Mainers that are food insecure report choosing between purchasing food or paying for other necessities such as fuel, rent and medicine.

Statistics courtesy

[http://gsfb.org/hunger/hunger\\_statistics.php](http://gsfb.org/hunger/hunger_statistics.php)



### CHRISTMAS FAIR & PARTY

The Meeting will celebrate Christmas with a Holiday Fair and Party on Sunday, December 12. 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 and to bring special foods to be sold for gift giving. We are also asked to bring finger food for the festive table. Sylvia Tavares hopes to come with her lovely handmade jewelry as she has for many years. The money raised in the sale will go to a worthy cause to be determined by our First Day youth.

### Paul & Viki Diamond's New Address

Friends House, 684 Benica Dr., Santa Rosa, CA 95409

## WORSHIP SHARING--OCTOBER 3, 2010

In October the Meeting had a wonderful worship sharing on the Health of the Meeting. A query was read and then people shared their thoughts. The notes of the worship sharing are below. On Wednesday January 12, 2011, Ministry & Counsel will have a discussion of the worship sharing, looking at the notes, and then considering thoughts to follow up on. Attenders/members are welcome to attend this meeting on January 12 at Mallory Waldman's home at 10 a.m.

Query: When you think of the health of this Meeting, what celebrations and/or what concerns arise?

Twenty people were present; all were given opportunity to speak. The notes are not exact quotes, but we tried to use many of the speakers' words. (The following has been synthesized from notes taken by Karen Cadbury and Willow Rowntree.)

1. Celebration and hope for continuing and perhaps expanding ways of supporting individuals' leadings in a broad sense, including both leadings to serve our Meeting and leadings to take the strength of our Meeting out to the wider community. Celebrated that Linda Cote-Small had asked for, felt, and expressed appreciation of our support of her efforts (e.g. her leading to become a facilitator in the Alternative to Violence Program).
2. Three Celebrations: (i) The spirit of M&C and G&L working together to produce this worship sharing. (ii) The success of, and nourishment provided by, the Peace Center both outward (to the community) and inward (to the Meeting). (iii) The successful effort of persons in the Meeting to bring the Coastal Kids School to our Meeting House to reflect our Advices for children.
3. Concern that the spiritual dimension of the Meeting not be diminished by time and energy spent on the mechanics of running the Meeting.
4. I treasure the community, support, and psychic space given by the Meeting to delve inside and listen for the Voice. Trying to find balance in giving of time so that supporting the Meeting does not become formalized pressure.
5. Quaker principles have never been more important in this world. My concern is that our Meeting is not self-perceptive, that our structures are antiquated. We don't see ourselves as others, especially young people, see us. Our ways are not comfortable for newcomers. We can think about this and change it.
6. In comparison to other meetings I've attended, this Meeting has special challenges. We are a geographically-dispersed, aging cohort. Many of our treasured friends are seasonal. Younger people are notably absent. This makes it difficult to share our patterns of life. But, given all this, we do pretty well. We need to be more engaged and socially connected. The Meeting for Worship is nourishing and revelatory sometimes but not always. I welcome the Peace Center and Coastal Kids as growing dimensions of the Meeting.
7. I celebrate the outreach to the community through the Peace Center. I value awareness of Quaker principles and Quaker understanding. I learned of the Peace Center first from a Methodist minister who came to visit with us when we first moved here. This shows an awareness of Quakers in this community. I appreciate those in our Meeting who made the Coastal Kids school here happen and other outreach such as the Matlacks' hosting the Joe Volks' visit.
8. I celebrate the aliveness in the Meeting during the last few months. It helps connect me with the aliveness that is the essence of life. I'm grateful for that.
9. I, too, celebrate the aliveness of this Meeting, the wonderful life experiences gathered here. Membership here allows me to deal with the political and social challenges of the outside world. I'm speaking of experiences both spiritual and cerebral.
10. I've been perplexed as to why Friends have been a diminishing group in my lifetime. The principles are so integral to how I see the world. Are we cloistered? Perhaps it is a matter of taking our message out into the world in a less serious way, but more joyfully.
11. It's wonderful to have small children present every day, and I hope that we could do something for alternative education for high school students, particularly with regard to the military.
12. I was reading on line about keeping the mind young and active. It's better to do new things, go new places, make different efforts in areas where we are not experts, where we're not comfortable.
13. I celebrate changes in this Meeting that I have observed over 25 years. We have grown. People have come and left. We are different from 25 years ago. We (and I) are able to listen and are more open to new ways of doing things. We don't handle conflict too well. I hope we could develop ways of dealing with conflict in ways that can be helpful. Just a thought: why is membership today not important to some people who are active in the Meeting.

*[continued next page]*

*[continued from page 4]*

14. I celebrate the long-ago yard sale. It brought us together, and we felt alive and useful to a faraway school. I hope we are about to feel like taking on another such project.
15. I celebrate the warmth and friendship that I feel every time I come in these doors. I trust the discernment of those who speak in Meeting for Worship, which helps me to continue my search.
16. I don't want to seem negative because I value this community greatly. My concern is that younger people are vanishing. We are not meeting their needs, and that bodes ill for the future.
17. I've been spending summers in this area for 20 years. All those years I've been looking for you, but I didn't know you were here. I celebrate finding you and having meaning in my life. I sense that there are many more people like myself who are looking for you and don't know how to find you.
18. I think we're being too hard on ourselves. Reflecting on all that has been said, we are who we are. I found something important here. The rest of the world doesn't have to be here for this to be impressive. It's amazing what we've done here with limited resources. We are who we are. We need to be generous in sharing what we know how to do as widely as we can. I personally feel very strongly that I have been a part of this community, and I value it. I was told by people who used to come here, "You talk all the time. I came from a silent meeting where no one ever said anything." Maybe we should invite back some of these people who thought we were too noisy.

### ***First Day School News***

On the First Sunday of December, our youth will join the Midcoast Unitarian Universalist of Damariscotta's youth group in a special youth program. We will leave following a short period of silent worship at Midcoast Meeting, carpooling to the Damariscotta Library, where the UU service begins at 10:30. Those families who are interested, may travel directly to the library if they wish. We will return following our youth activity, which will involve making gifts for our annual Holiday Sale--the proceeds of which will benefit a charity decided by the youth. Any questions or ideas please contact Kathie Gass at 236-0333.

### ***GUIDELINES FOR EMERGENCY FUND***

A modest fund is maintained to help members or regular attenders meet financial emergencies. It is not expected to assist ongoing needs or to fulfill desires which could best be met by budgeting or special fund-raising. Any help extended is considered a gift, but recipients are asked to consider repayment when circumstances improve so that others may be similarly helped.

The fund is administered by a committee consisting of the Clerk of Pastoral Care and two other members of Meeting chosen for indeterminate terms by the Pastoral Care Committee, who may ask Gifts & Leadings for recommendations. A request for assistance should be made in writing to the clerk of Pastoral Care and should include the nature of the emergency and the amount of the need.

Each request will be evaluated by at least two members of the committee, giving consideration to: the amount in the fund, the applicant's participation in the life of the Meeting, and the needs of others in the Meeting. A confidential record of the use of the fund will be kept by the committee.

Once a decision is reached, the Treasurer will be informed of the amount to be paid, to whom, and at what date. Each quarter, the Treasurer will report to the Meeting the amount in the Emergency Fund, but not the identity of any recipient. Friends are urged to consider making specific contributions to this fund so that it continues to serve our emergency needs.

*These guidelines were updated and approved by the Monthly Meeting on November 21, 2010.*

## FOUR PROGRAMS AT WOOLMAN HILL NEYM MINISTRY & COUNSEL

We received a letter from NEYM Ministry & Counsel this fall inviting our Meeting to work on the following priorities: “the call to forgiveness; the call to strengthen our ability to love and build our community; the call to name, cultivate and exercise gifts of ministry, eldership and leadership; and the call to undertake clear leadings for witness.” NEYM M&C wanted us to know about four exciting programs that they are co-sponsoring this winter which may help:

**Exploring Spiritual Accountability** is a weekend retreat January 21-23, which offers individuals and meetings new to these issues an introduction to how spiritual accountability can be implemented and how it can enrich the meeting community.

**Practicing Spiritual Accountability** combines a weekend retreat (January 21-23) with online learning (through April) using the Quaker Studies online learning site [*Ed. note: see item below*].

**Caring for One Another: A Skill-Building Workshop**, February 18-20, will examine how we can build stronger spiritual communities by caring for one another more effectively.

**Quaker Leadership: Paradoxical Phrase or Doorway to Faithfulness**, March 18-20, will identify how we can strengthen our ability to name and nurture gifts in our communities.

Fliers are posted on the bulletin board. If Friends are interested and want to talk about these weekends, please get in touch with Ministry & Counsel, Gifts & Leadings, or Pastoral Care. Each program sounds very exciting, and any or all could be that “handful of yeast” that livens and raises up our meeting community.”



*Adult religious education in New England  
Beacon Hill Friends House  
Salem Quarterly Meeting*

**Quaker Studies**, a program of Beacon Hill Friends House, offers you an opportunity to explore Quakerism through study and workshops. Their online courses are open to all--wherever you live, whether you've ever been to a Quaker meeting or not--and they continue to offer the in-person courses in the Boston area which Quaker Studies has been presented since 1993!

For further details, including course offerings, visit their Web site at <http://www.bhfh.org/qsp/QspIndex.html>.

### *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?

## The Quaker Message

George Fox, one of the early founders of the Society of Friends in seventeenth century England, had as a youth suffered great anguish as he sought an answer to his spiritual quest. His answer came, after much reading of the Scriptures and visits to many ministers and counselors, when he heard a voice within him which said: "There is One, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition." "And when I heard it," he later reported, "my heart did leap for joy." He had found God directly without the aid of ritual or clergy, and henceforth his distinctive message was: Christ speaks directly to each human heart who seeks Him; listen to the teacher within; He placed His light within each of us, and as we follow the way He directs we shall be led into life and Truth.

The first names for the new movement were Children of the Light and Friends of Truth. William Penn thought of it as "primitive Christianity revived."

Since those early beginnings, Friends have continued to hold that their faith is one of first-hand experience of God in their lives. Spiritual life, they say, does not depend upon the acceptance of certain doctrines, nor the observance of certain rites, but comes as persons are obedient to the light of Christ within them. They feel free to reject much of the ecclesiastical structure of the times, including priests, church dogmas, outward sacraments, and external authority in religion, because they feel that for them these do not serve the life of the spirit.

This has not been a solitary faith. From the beginning, the Quaker faith has flourished in a group, in a society, in a beloved fellowship. While God may be found in one's inmost life, one is always conscious of being part of a larger group of persons who are likewise joyously following the inward way and seeking to be obedient to the light of Christ within. They seek to be obedient not only in the quiet gathering for worship together, or in their meeting for settling practical affairs, but also as they are led as a group to be concerned for those about them, particularly those suffering injustices or inequities. While Friends had great respect for the individual person, the real unit in the Society of Friends has always been the Meeting.

Friends traditionally allow great freedom in describing their own religious life and experience. They have no formal creed. They try to weave their faith into life. Are they seriously trying to follow their inward guide? Does the Sermon on the Mount come alive for them as setting standards for Christian action? Are they endeavoring to live by Quaker testimonies of integrity, simplicity, equality, peace, and community? In other words, one can often tell Quakers not so much by what they say as by the way they live.

from *Faith & Practice* of New England Yearly Meeting, 1985, p. 53

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