

MIDCOAST MONTHLY MEETING
OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Damariscotta, Maine

NEWSLETTER



As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew.

—Abraham Lincoln, *State of the Union*, 1862

March

Saturday	March 1	6:00 p.m.	Middle Eastern Dinner fund-raiser for Seeds of Peace Camp, Congregational Church, Newcastle
Sunday	March 2	1:30 p.m.	Food Pantry Day Meeting and dialogue with Baha'is of Midcoast Maine
Thursday	March 6	6-8 p.m.	Maine AFSC Peace and Justice Committee
Sunday	March 9	8:30 a.m. rise of Meeting	Book Discussion Group Second meeting of "Where we are and where we are going" planning meeting, light lunch
Tuesday	March 11	4:00 p.m. 5:00 p.m.	Peace & Social Concerns committee meeting Ministry & Counsel committee meeting
Friday	March 14	6:00 p.m.	* Report on FWCC Conference by Holly Baldwin, Rockport
Saturday	March 15	10 a.m. - 3 p.m.	FCMPP meeting, Waterville
Sunday	March 16	11:30 a.m.	Meeting for Business. Bag lunch.
Monday	March 17	asap	Deadline for April <i>Newsletter</i>
Sunday	March 23	8:30 a.m.	Book Discussion Group
Sunday	March 30	rise of Meeting	* Kakamega slide show. Bag lunch

~Advance Notice~

Saturday	April 12	9 a.m. - 4 p.m.	Silent Retreat
Saturday	April 26	all day	All Maine Meeting at China Lake (Vassalboro and Falmouth Quarterly Meetings)
Saturday	May 10	10 a.m. - 3 p.m. all day	FCMPP, Waterville Maine AFSC P&C workshop on draft counseling and counter-recruitment, details TBA

* 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

Back Issues of the Newsletter, along with other Meeting Information, are available at:
OUR NEW WEB SITE! www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org OUR NEW WEB SITE!

The Entirely Unofficial **MONTHLY MEETING NOTES**, 2nd month of 2003

based on draft minutes by Rob Patterson

Treasurer's Report

Paul Diamond reported that with just three months left in the fiscal year we have \$6,214.00 available of the \$14,400.00 budgeted for the year. Of annual pledges totaling \$23,089 we have received \$20,328. Contributions for the year were budgeted at \$18,700. An unanticipated but welcome gift was the \$5000, received from the Cully Miller Trust. A discussion ensued about how we formally express our thanks for gifts to the Meeting, both financial and physical. The treasurer sends letters of acknowledgment for tax purposes to donations above a certain amount, but we have no established process for communicating our appreciation. An ad hoc committee was formed and charged with the responsibility of addressing this issue and will report back to Monthly Meeting in due time.

Ministry & Counsel

Pete Haviland reported that the committee has received applications for membership from several people and is in the process of forming clearness committees for those people. Rob Patterson has agreed to be the recording clerk for Ministry & Counsel. Jean Crawford has offered to be co-clerk with another member of the committee. The revised memorial minute for Connie St. John was read by Ernie Foust and approved.

Peace & Social Concerns

The committee has agreed that Holly Baldwin will lead

FWCC Conference Report

Friday, March 14th, 5:30 p.m.

At the home of Paul and Viki Diamond, Rockport Following dinner at 5:30 Holly Baldwin will give a report on the Friends World Committee for Consultation conference, "Friends Peace Witness in a Time of Crisis," which was held at Guilford College in North Carolina in January. For information and directions, call Viki Diamond at 236-0283.

Query #2

Meeting for Worship

Are Meetings for Worship held in expectant waiting for divine guidance? Are you faithful and punctual in attendance? Do you come in a spirit of openness with heart and mind prepared for communion with God? Do both silent and vocal ministry arise in response to the leading of the Holy Spirit? Do all other activities of your meeting find their inspiration in worship, and do they, in turn, help to uphold the worshipping group?

the committee this year. The Middle Eastern Dinner to raise money for the Seeds of Peace scholarship will be held on Saturday night, March 1st at the Congregational Church in Newcastle. The dinner is a combined effort of the meeting, the United Universalists and Beth Israel. On the following day, a meeting and dialogue with Baha'is of Midcoast Maine will be held after the rise of Meeting.

The Meeting now has a copy of the video "Greetings from Missile Street," a documentary about the children of Basra, Iraq. There is a very high incidence of cancer in the region, and some suspect that it may be due to American bombing with depleted uranium bombs during the 1991 war.

Friends agreed that the meetinghouse shall be kept open from 9 am til 9 pm each day, should hostilities with Iraq begin. Holly Baldwin and Gretchen Noyes Hull have agreed to be responsible for opening and closing the building.

Maintenance

A discussion of the feasibility of switching to bio-diesel fuel for heating the meetinghouse was opened by Steve Gorry. He has found a supplier of the fuel in South China. As noted in the article on bio-diesel in the last Newsletter, we can use the same tank but may experience quicker deterioration of the rubber seals in the fuel pump. There were a number of questions raised, such as whether the supplier would meet our emergency and maintenance needs and whether we would need to commit for a period of time. Also, are we currently obligated under an existing contract with our present supplier? Because of the number of unanswered questions, it was felt that the Meeting is not ready to make a decision. The issue will be revisited when answers to all the questions are available.

In the process of designing and making a new roadside sign for the meetinghouse grounds, the sign ordinance for Damariscotta is being researched to determine if any size limitations exist.

Hospitality

Viki Diamond introduced us to "fair trade" coffee. This is shade-grown coffee which is harvested in a manner that does not compromise the health and safety of the workers. We will be serving this coffee in the meetinghouse and will be ordering periodically. The current cost is approximately \$6.00 per pound. Viki will be coordinating the orders. See "Fair Trade" on page 4.

Library

Three out of four members of the committee met recently. Many changes have been made to the library, and now the committee is scheduled to meet on March 3rd with the Meetinghouse Committee to discuss the

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Peace Vigils on the Bridges in Maine

The number of bridges where peace vigils are happening continues to grow. Currently there are vigils scheduled in Portland, Bangor, Calais, Falmouth, Augusta, Waterville, Lewiston, Saco, Belfast, Ellsworth, Lincolnville, Thomaston, Bath, Damariscotta, Rockland, Wiscasset, Topsham, Orono, and Rockport. All the vigils are held every Sundays, noon to 1 pm., except in Ellsworth where it's from 5 to 6 p.m. on Fridays.

Come and join the show of support for peace! For information about new locations and other news on Peace Bridges, visit the new Web site put together by Gretchen and Peter Hull at www.peacebridges.org or call Bridges for Peace 207-563-5416 or Peace Action Maine 207-772-0680, www.peaceactionme.org



Kakamega Slide Show

On Sunday, March 30, everyone is invited to attend the Kakamega, Kenya, slide show that will be presented by Molly Duplisea and Sharon Salmon, who are both from Vassalboro Quarterly Meeting. The slide show will follow a brown bag lunch at the rise of Meeting for Worship. Our Meeting contributed to the Kakamega project in 2002 after a number of Midcoast Friends met the two Kakamega Friends who had travelled to the U.S. to raise funds.

Molly and Sharon travelled to Kenya this past December at the invitation of Kakamega Friends, and they will present a slide show and discussion of their November/December '02 mission trip. Images of beautiful Kenyan children, the Quaker orphanage under construction, and life at the Selebwasi farm, where they stayed along with about 16 orphans. There will also be slides of the United Society of Friends Women conference in Kakamega, views of the towns of Kakamega and Nairobi, and some great shots of great beasts.

There will be a follow-up discussion of where the project is now, funds needed to complete it, and the Summer Service Project Trip planned for July/August '03. Feel free to invite anyone you think will be interested in this presentation. The slide show will begin about 12:30 p.m.

Visit
www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org
and watch us grow

New England Yearly Meeting

Faith and Practice Revisions

By Carmen Lavertu

A committee of the New England Yearly Meeting has been working on revising our "guidebook," which was last revised in 1985. All Monthly Meetings have been asked to join the effort and submit questions and suggestions that could make *Faith and Practice* better in informing the Meeting and individual Friends about the common framework and processes of Friends' corporate work and for spiritual guidance and inspiration. As Friends generally believe in the development of spiritual insight and in the changing discernment of our corporate commitments, it is necessary to bring the *Faith and Practice* up to our present understanding and agreement.

The heart of this manual is probably "The Queries," which are read in Meeting for Worship, and "The Advices," which are printed (along with the Queries) in the newsletter. Do Friends think these need thinking anew? Do Friends make use of *Faith and Practice* in other ways? Certainly the clerks and committees do. What can we suggest to improve its usefulness to us?

I invite all of us to spend some time in the coming month to read it critically, all of it or some part, according to our time and interest. The Book Group is willing to set aside a meeting or two for discussion, and we may be able to have another time as well. Let us start, individually and in the committees, and then see by the end of the month what we can collect to send to the NEYM committee to assist in this important work.



Peace and Social Concerns

Cartridges, Cash, and Cows

Peace and Social Concerns committee has organized a computer printer cartridge recycling program for the Meeting. Instead of tossing out your old inkjet or laser cartridge, bring it to the meetinghouse and drop it in the box located under the Peace and Social Concerns committee bulletin board. When the box is full, we'll ship them off to Inkbank. The folks at Inkbank will re-use all the cartridges they can, and send us a check for their value. The money we make from this will be added to the childrens' program money for Heifer Project at Christmas time. Depending on the types of cartridges, a full box can be worth hundreds of dollars. There is a list on the side of the box with acceptable cartridges. Unfortunately, because cartridges can be reconditioned only once, already recycled cartridges cannot be accepted. If you have any questions about the project, contact Aimee Phillippi at 563-7693.

They Who Standcont'd fr. back cover

Camus wrote that we live in a "benign but indifferent universe." The wild winds that flatten the grain in the fields and uproot the trees in the orchard, the rains that flood the valleys, the earthquakes that shake the mountains down and rattle the houses into rubble are not driven by animosity, revenge or greed.

Slavery is a human institution as is war. Neither is inevitable. The German army that swept across Europe in the early years of World War II was fueled in part by the lie on the belt buckles of the individual soldiers, "Gott mit uns." (God with us.) But is that any more of a lie than "...one nation under God..." when the nation conceals its lust for power and for the resources of the world behind a welter of words about lofty ideals? Dante saw many years ago that the greatest sin of humanity is the abuse of the human intellect, that capacity that sets us apart from the beasts when used properly but below them when abused.

Churchill abused that power in the early days of WWII when in his efforts to revive the spirits of the British he spoke of their German enemy (I quote from memory) "as that great dull mass of the German people ever willing to do the bidding of their masters." Surely he knew in both his heart and mind that his words were true of all nations when they function in the tribal mode.

The symbolic meaning of the bridges on which free citizens stand during this present crisis is a reminder to Americans and to all the people of the world that we are one human family. The United States of America is at the peak of its worldly power. What an opportunity this nation has to do what no powerful nation in the world has ever done. We could abandon the use of that worldly power in "the national interest" and apply it honestly and fairly in behalf of the nations of the world. This millenium could mark the beginning of the fulfillment of the hope this soldier had for the end of all wars after having read Wilkie's *One World* on a troop ship headed for Italy and while adjusting to civilian life during the creation of the United Nations. Old soldiers do die, but their living hearts can be broken by the callous disregard of another generation who so eagerly disregards the evil that is war.

Blessings on those who stand on bridges and keep that hope alive.

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 Nancy Terrell Hall at moonlite@lincoln.midcoast.com

Hospitality Committee

Fair Trade Coffee

By Viki Diamond

Friends, the Meeting has decided to buy coffee in bulk through Equal Exchange in Canton, Massachusetts. This firm buys organic coffees from small farmers in coffee-growing regions and they get the product to us at a remarkable price. There are several choices of coffee and tea, and order forms will be on the credenza in the meetinghouse. The Meeting is adding 50¢ per pound to pay the shipping costs, and orders will be placed periodically. There is coffee in the freezer now, and a method for collection of payment is being set up. Please phone me at 236-0283 with questions or for ordering information. The coffee is really excellent, and there will be decaf, eventually. Thanks to all.

Monthly Meeting Notescont'd fr. p.2

acquisition of new bookshelves (which expenditure has been approved).

Quarterly Meeting

Charlotte reported that Quarterly Meeting was well attended. About sixty people were present. It was sad due to the Challenger disaster happening that morning. Meetings reported on what they were doing to nurture the spirit of members. Molly Duplicea reported on the children of Kakamega, Kenya, and the orphanage there which Friends support. She will bring a slide show to our Meeting on March 30th. The "Greetings from Missile Street" film, referred to above, was shown at the meeting.

Planning Meeting

Bill Spock has volunteered to facilitate a planning meeting for the Meeting community using his skills honed in his years in business. He provided a draft agenda for that meeting, which will take place on February 23rd at the rise of Meeting for Worship. He also provided a list of questions about a questionnaire which could help us focus our attention at the actual meeting. Some members felt the agenda was daunting in its breadth of goals. All acknowledge that we need to plan our future and that such a collective dialogue can be useful at this time.

Meeting Web site

Nancy Terrell Hall announced that the Web site is almost a reality! She expects it to be functioning within the week. It can be accessed at www.midcoast-friendsmeeting.org. It will be a wonderful way to open our Meeting to the larger community and to communicate with members, attenders, and interested others.

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The next Monthly Meeting for Business will be Sunday, March 16, 2003, at the rise of Meeting. Bring lunch if you wish. ALL WELCOME.

Constance Anderson St. John ~ 1916 - 2003

Connie was born in Caldwell, New Jersey, and attended Caldwell Country Day School for five years; she said later that she first learned there to be an independent thinker. The clarity and independence of her thinking, always graced with generosity and good humor and sometimes touched with mischief, endeared her to and was an inspiration for all those who knew her.

She graduated from Bennington College in 1937. In 1939 she married Francis Cushman St. John, helping him to run Barlow School in Amenia, New York. Following his death in February 1964, she ran the school herself for the remainder of the year.

In the 1950's, she taught in and helped her husband run the Mexican/North American Institute of Cultural Relations in Mexico City. In 1968 she moved to Putney, Vermont, where she became a member of the Putney Friends Meeting, served on the School Board of Directors, was instrumental in building the Putney Day Care Center and the Putney Friends Meeting House, and led the refurbishing of the Community Center. She was clerk of New England Quarterly Meeting. In 1987 she was named Woman of the Year by the Vermont Women's Crisis Center.

Connie had long been active with The Nature Conservancy, and, together with her husband's family, created the Bates Morse Mountain Corporation, a land trust in Small Point, protecting 750 acres of barrier beach, dunes and uplands with spectacular views of the Atlantic Ocean and Seguin Island.

In 1996 she moved to Bath, and she later transferred her membership in the Society of Friends to Midcoast Meeting, where she was a devoted teacher of First Day School. Many Friends in Midcoast Meeting remember Connie most vividly through her steady participation in the Book Discussion Group. Hers was a voice of reason, rooted in compassion and wisdom assimilated in her long life of learning. She was valued for her gentle good humor, intelligence, wide reading, and depth of understanding. Always modest in presenting her point of view, she was adept at reminding us of the long flow of history and of how little of it any of us actually experience. Her passion for the writing of Thomas Berry was contagious, as was her conviction that the world can be made better.

She is survived by Dangy, the widow of her eldest son, Peter, who died in 1996; 4 children: Susan, Andrew, Elizabeth, and Mary Colman; their spouses and partners; twelve grandchildren; and 4 great grandchildren.

At a celebration of her life held at Midcoast Meeting on January 11, she was remembered with laughter and with tears as well as joyous gratitude by four generations of her family and by many friends. Connie's

daughter, Mary Colman, shared many recollections: her absolute passion for and joy in music—classical, big band, musicals, folk—anything she considered to have a melody and a message; her howling with laughter each time she heard Tom Lehrer; her reading omnivorously—often four or five books at any one time—on a variety of topics, including the environment, politics, religion, and communism; her presiding over family gatherings, sometimes directive, sometimes bemused at her creation—always loving; her boundless energy and enthusiasm for life, new ideas, and people. She was a vehement, articulate, and active pacifist.

Mary Colman quoted her mother's comment that "I always have one eye on the dishes and one eye on the cosmos," and finished her own remembrances saying: "Wherever she is, they are lucky to get her, and we are lucky to have had her—and still have her in our hearts."

CONA's Upcoming Programs

March 12 (Wednesday), 7 p.m., Skidompha Library (rear entrance): The American Emergency—and Some Things We Can Do About It. Presentation by Ronnie Dugger, founder and president of the Alliance for Democracy; followed by a discussion of Instant Runoff Voting as a do-able improvement on American elections and other timely opportunities for action. All are welcome to attend.

March 23 (Sunday), 7 p.m., Skidompha Library (rear entrance): Deadly Deception; Making a Killing (movies and discussion). Double feature on corporate excesses in a globalized world. First: General Electric Co. and the nuclear weapons business. Second: Philip Morris, Kraft and the marketing of tobacco products world wide. (Snow date March 30.)

The Advices

Consider with care how God reaches us in Meeting for Worship. To every Friend is given a share of responsibility for the Meeting. Friends are advised, therefore, to be diligent in attendance at Meetings and in inward preparation for them. Let us be concerned to enter reverently into communion with God and with one another, to yield ourselves to the influence of the divine presence. Then what is evil in us may be weakened and the good raised up. God calls each one to the service of the Meeting; let us be obedient and faithful, whether by word, by song, or by silent waiting, and let us receive the messages of others in a tender spirit.

They Who Stand on Bridges

By Earnest Foust

They who stand on bridges, on street corners, in front of post offices, and other federal buildings because they oppose the present war or a war pending are more highly evolved than most of us. Those I know are compassionate and capable of seeing into the past and discerning what the past foretells. They are good citizens who love their country for its ideals but are not blind to its failures. They know that as individuals their fellow countrymen and women are no better nor worse than the men and women in other countries on this planet who may be labelled evil and called the enemy.

I see these people on bridges as sentinels. In wars sentinels stand guard while the good people behind them sleep uneasily, and on the other side of an artificial line, the enemy sleep uneasily behind their sentinels. They are brothers in their unease, their fear, their distrust. But the people on the bridges, on the street corners, in front of the post office and other federal buildings stand sentinel not against an enemy but against war which is an evil in itself—an evil on the scale of slavery, the other great scourge of humankind.

The moral ancestors of those who stand on bridges today are those who stood in opposition to slavery and



Bridge in snow. Photo copyright Tatiana Brailovskaya

refuted the devious arguments in support of that despicable institution. They saw through the sophistry of racial inferiority to the economics behind it and to the brutality and the crushed spirits of the oppressed. Those few stood separate from the conventions of the time and opposed the legalized abuse of the vulnerable and powerless.

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Midcoast Meeting of Friends

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