

Fourth Month

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

April 2009



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Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

-- Matthew 5:16 (KJV)

So let your lives preach, let your light shine, that your works may be seen, that your Father may be glorified, that your fruits may be unto holiness, and that your end may be everlasting life.

-- Geroge Fox, "Epistle 200"

March

Sunday	March 22	8:30 a.m. Rise of Meeting Cancelled	*Book Club Ice Cream Social Book Signing, Alice Lacy
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April

Sunday	April 5	Rise of Meeting	Potluck Lunch
Sunday	April 12	8:30 a.m.	*Book Club
Fri.-Sun.	April 17-19		*Mid-Year Gathering/Called Meeting, Portland
Sunday	April 26	Rise of Meeting	Monthly Meeting for Business Please note date change!

May

Saturday	May 2	8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.	*All Maine Gathering, China, Maine
Sunday	May 10	11:30 a.m.	*Presentation by Linda Cote-Small on Alternatives to Violence Program
Sunday	May 17	Rise of Meeting	Monthly Meeting for Business

*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—March 15, 2009

The Meeting approved **Holly Baldwin's request for transfer** of membership to Fresh Pond Meeting, Massachusetts, with fond memories of her time of membership here at Midcoast.

The Meeting gratefully received a letter from neighbor DRA (**Damariscotta River Association**) about its intention to install a wind generator.

Treasurer's Report – Committees will please submit information for the next budget to Paul Diamond. Paul distributed reports that showed: outflows are approximately on track; we will stay on budget this year assuming a few additional pledges come in and the existing pledges are honored; our investments show an unrealized loss of 16-17 percent; over a five-year period income has trended down a little and expenses have increased. A Friend raised the question: Should we increase the size of the Emergency Fund as a safety net for our members and friends?

Ministry & Counsel – Thomas Steele-Maley is now contact person. Committees that have yet to submit their state-of-society write-ups should send them to Thomas.

Meetinghouse & Grounds – The committee would welcome new members.

Old Business – In consideration of the timing of Mid-Year Session (April 17-19), the next monthly meeting for business is rescheduled for April 26. For potlucks, the Meeting urges Friends to bring plates and flatware from home, also mugs to be left at the meetinghouse. We will use a minimum of paper goods. We will ask Kate Nordstrom and Aaron for a sketch of a rack or some other means of mug storage. Alice Lacy's book signing, originally scheduled for March 22 has been postponed.

The **next meeting for business will take place Sunday, April 26**, at the rise of meeting for worship. All are welcome. Please bring a bag lunch. The entire pending minutes of the March session are available at the Meeting website www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org and on the bulletin board at the meetinghouse.

ADVICES

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.

The **BOOK CLUB** returns to the 8:30 a.m. meeting time beginning March 22. We are finishing the last two chapters of *Silence and Witness*. On April 12, we will be reading Susan Gelber Cannon's article "Peace Education Sabbatical" available in the March 2009 issue of *Friends Journal*. A copy of the article will be available at the Book Club meeting. After we have read this article, we will take a summer break until September. Please remember that the Book Club is asking Friends what books they might like to read starting next fall. We have read *Human Smoke*, *Amish Grace*, and *Silence and Witness*. Suggestions so far are John Woolman's *Journal*, the Bible, and *Unconquerable World*. If you have a suggestion or questions about the Book Club, please contact Mallory Waldman at mallorw@aol.com or 207-607-0468.

QUERIES: 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?

FIRST DAY SCHOOL EVENTS: Mud Season Hike or Snowshoe on April 5. Please come and bring appropriate clothing, boots, and snowshoes.

ALL MAINE GATHERING

Vassalboro and Falmouth Quarterly Meetings of the Religious Society of Friends

**Where do we stand as a Quaker voice in public policy issues in Maine?
Is there energy for a continued Quaker witness at the state level?
What are the concerns that now energize Maine Quakers?**

Date and time: May 2, 2009, 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Location: Friends Camp, China, Maine

As Quakers, many are drawn to involvement in public-policy forums giving voice to the concerns that are central to our faith and practice. Friends Committee on Maine Public Policy (FCMPP) and Friends Committee on National Legislation both have a strong record of bringing the voice of the Quaker community to policy leaders. As individuals, many Friends address issues based on their own leadings or those of their meeting. Concerns among Friends extend in scope from local issues to international concerns.

The morning program during All Maine Gathering will give us the opportunity, through listening and discussion, to consider where we stand at this time in supporting a formal Quaker voice in Maine policy. FCMPP has a rich history of addressing issues related to Friends' concerns to the policy makers and communities in our State. The voice of Quaker witness through FCMPP is a respected one, especially in the areas of criminal justice and Native American affairs. However, participation in FCMPP among Friends has decreased over time. We are thus called to reflect on where we stand with a Quaker voice in the public policy debates in Maine. Small-group discussion topics include "Criminal Justice Issues," "Tribal Affairs," "Food Economics and Public Policy," "Healthcare," "Education," "State-Level Economics--What Does a Moral Economy Require?" and a seventh topic to be determined at the Gathering.

The day's schedule will include Meeting for Worship and Meeting for Business for each Quarter, as well as a children's program and intergenerational activities. Friends Camp will provide lunch.

A flyer and background material about the Gathering will be distributed soon.

LIGHTHOUSE QUILT RAFFLE FOR KAKAMEGA ORPHAN PROJECT

A stunning handmade quilt with a Maine-lighthouse motif has been generously donated to raise money for the Kakamega Orphan Care Centre. The workmanship of this quilt, made by award-winning Maine quilter Joyce Clarkson, is extraordinary. This queen/king sized quilt measures 94" by 94" and the underside features a smaller print matching the top's blue sailboat border.

Money from the raffle will go for food and operating expenses for the care center. Tickets are \$5 or 6 for \$25. Please send your check to Friends of Kakamega, 51 Hunter Road, Freeport, ME 045032, and "memo" that it is for the raffle. They will fill out your name on the right number of tickets. If you include your e-mail address, they will confirm the receipt of your donation and let you know your ticket numbers. They will also notify you right away if you win the raffle. Good luck!

At 11:30 a.m. on Sunday, May 10, Linda Cote-Small will share with us her involvement with the **Alternatives to Violence** program. Her presentation will include an overview and one activity/exercise as done at a workshop.

Upcoming events at **Friends School of Portland:**



Saturday, March 28, 10-11:30 a.m.

Saturday, April 4, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Tuesday, May 12, 7 p.m.

Family Admissions Open House

Auction & Brunch Fundraiser

Program: "Parenting for Peace"

For details, visit the school's web site, <http://friendsschoolofportland.org>.

REFLECTIONS ON NEYM'S MINUTE ON PEACE

Friends were asked to study and to reflect on the New England Yearly Meeting Minute on Peace, which appeared in the November newsletter. At the rise of Meeting for Worship on March 1, we stayed for "worship sharing." The following are the recorded responses in the order they were received.

Reading of the Minute by Jim Matlack, Clerking the meeting.

My question is about the connection between the two wars and terrorism. This is complex and perplexing.

"How can we repair the damage to our society caused by war? I think of our grandparents who lived simply. How can I become more like them, less of a consumer, and more part of my community? Maine could live off its own resources. Why are we wandering far from our community for the means of life? Wandering afar seems to be a large part of war."

"The roots of war may be in the violence in ourselves. I am concerned about domestic violence, even in Quaker homes (as it has been reported)."

"When I feel hopeless about war and violence, I look at myself before setting out to speak about it."

"A major 'root' of violence in the world and in our communities is breaking people into groups, causing fear and mistrust among people. We need our Quaker practice 'to see that of God in each person.'"

"Our government wages war, and the goals are unclear. We seem to be fighting and killing for some mythical belief. Is terrorism to be stopped by war? Ending war seems impossible--when will we leave and what do we leave them with (in Iraq and Afghanistan)?"

"I think of Shakespeare and his insight 'The instruments of darkness tell us truths, / win us with honest trifles, to betray us/ in deepest consequence.' [*Macbeth*]. We have to identify the instruments of darkness in our culture in order to speak to the world as well as ourselves."

"I am a Universalist Quaker, and I think we are harmed by narrowing the prophetic vision when we rely on our Western religious beliefs and symbols. The words of Jesus may be polarizing--to quote a prophet may be polarizing in other parts of the world. We need to be mindful of the world we speak to and what we offer to the world. We need to be Universalist, to be whole."

"Many wars are started by people who have been deprived or humiliated and see that they are left out. Our life style as consumers is a factor of war. We need to be self-sufficient and not use more than our share of the world's resources."

"The Minute on Peace states that we have a responsibility in creating peace, in bring peace to the world. In this Meeting we yearn for the support we can give to each other for living in more peaceful ways, for being peace."

"Rather than being consumers, we need to build. It is a great fault of our government to label us as consumers. We should give away our goods."

"What are the implications for our Meeting? How can we put together our individual efforts to be stronger as a group?"

"Can Quakers form a foundation to eliminate poverty in America and the world? Can we think big?"

"Can we join the efforts already underway in Maine to address the challenge of climate change? There are local/grassroots groups as well as state-level university and legislative organizations engaged in this work of envisioning the 21st century and proposing bold plans."

"I would like us to share our journey to a more peaceful life, especially in our responsibilities as parents--our journey from consumerism to our active work as builders, inventors, and doers."

"We need to work on several levels: at the personal level in spiritual discipline, on the family and social in our everyday lives, and as citizens of this country in opposing the immense power of the history, traditions, culture, institutions, and machinery of war."

--Carmen Lavertu, Recording Clerk

You can now register online for **Mid-Year Gathering**, scheduled for April 17-19 in Portland, at the web site <<https://date.forest.net/~meeting/neymMidYear/registration.lasso>>. You will need a MasterCard or Visa credit card to complete online registration. If you receive *The New England Friend*, you will find the appropriate paperwork for mail-in registration in the latest issue. Deadline for registration is Saturday, April 4.

Friends will gather at the Clarion Hotel in Portland, Maine, beginning on Friday night, April 17, and ending with lunch on Sunday, April 19. Those traveling from a distance can choose overnight accommodations at the hotel (for a reduced conference price of \$89/night, double occupancy), request to be housed as guests in the homes of local Friends, or bring their own bedding and sleep at the Portland meetinghouse.

For details about the program, accommodations, directions, and the availability of financing for those who need help covering costs, please visit <<http://www.neym.org/MidYearSessions.html>>. You can call NEYM at 508-754-6760. (The Invitation to the Mid-Year Sessions appeared on page 5 of last month's issue of this newsletter.)

~PASSAGES~

We have learned that Jim Brown died on March 18. A devoted Quaker, Jim attended Midcoast Meeting from time to time, and for many years he and his wife, Trudy, maintained the Megunticook Worship Group in the Camden/Rockport area. A graduate of Middlebury College and Yale University, Jim worked primarily as a journalist, beginning in 1948, for entities ranging from the *Portland Press Herald* and *Down East* magazine to the *New York Times*, where he wrote for 10 years, traveling to Pakistan, Russia, and the Middle East on assignment. Inspired by Gandhi, Jim, Trudy, and their children also lived in India at two different times, once when Jim worked delivering milk powder for AFSC and once when he served as a press officer for the U.S. Information Service. Until very late in his life, he was a passionate sailor and a regular early morning jogger (although he called his jogging "shuffling"). Intelligent and outspoken, kind and wise, Jim touched many lives in significant ways, and we will miss him. He is survived by two sons, Clement Brown and his wife, Helen, of Fall River, Mass., and Matthew Brown and his wife, Karyl, of Los Angeles, Calif.; three grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, and two brothers-in-law.

Since [their] 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

O Spirit of that early day,
So pure and strong and true,
Be with us in the narrow way
Our faithful fathers knew.
Give strength the evil to forsake,
The cross of Truth to bear,
And love and reverent fear to make
Our daily lives a prayer!

--From "The Quaker of the Olden Time"
by John Greenleaf Whittier

