

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



And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.

--1 Kings 19:11-12 (KJV)

Silence is God's first language; everything else is a poor translation. In order to hear that language, we must learn to be still and to rest in God.

--Thomas Keating quoted in  
*The Sun & Moon Over Assisi*  
by Gerard Thomas Straub

### May

Sunday	May 4	Rise of Meeting	Potluck--AND CELEBRATION OF BIRTHDAYS!
Thursday	May 8	7:00 p.m.	*Peace Center Film Series: <i>Paths of Glory</i>
Sunday	May 18	Rise of Meeting	Meeting for Worship for Business
Sunday	May 25	Rise of Meeting	*Work Hour

### June

Sunday	June 1	Rise of Meeting	Potluck Lunch
Sunday	June 8	Rise of Meeting	*Work Hour
Sunday	June 15	Rise of Meeting	Meeting for Worship 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.

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**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

Meeting for Business, Fourth Month 20, 2008

**Finance**--The budget proposal for 2008-09 was presented. The total is approximately \$2,000 below last year's budget. Bill Spock led discussion of proposed financial policies and procedures. The proposal recommends consolidation of the Capital Account, sets aside as permanent \$50,000 of the Reserve Account, and puts off dipping into the remainder of the Reserve Account for at least 5 years. It recommends annual submission of a proposed Capital Account budget be delayed until June or July.

**Ministry & Counsel**--Paul Diamond's application for membership was enthusiastically approved. Two more applications for membership are in process.

**Religious Education**--There is a need for a volunteer to teach one First Day per month.

**Hospitality**--Anne Spencer reminded Friends all are responsible for set up and clean up at the monthly Potluck Lunches.

**Peace Center**--A flyer on the "War Is Not the Answer Film Series" is ready for distribution. Other current projects include creation of a mission statement and Alternatives to Violence Workshops.

The next monthly meeting for business will be Sunday, May 18. All are welcome. The entire pending minutes of the April meeting may be found on the Meeting's website at [www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org](http://www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org) and on the bulletin board at the meetinghouse.

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**ADVICES--Care of Children:** Care of the children of the meeting should be the responsibility of every Friend.



Let us share with our children a sense of adventure, of wonder, and of trust and let them know that, in facing the mysteries of life, they are surrounded by love. Both parents and meetings need to guard against letting other commitments deprive children of the time and attention they need.

Friends are advised to seek for children the full development of God's gifts, which is true education. All Friends are cautioned against harshness of tone or manner when offering counsel or reproof. To the child, even a seeming harshness may check the beginnings of repentance or growth, and a lack of sympathy may cause harm where only good was intended. Let us nurture a spirit of common concern, thereby giving children a sense of belonging to a larger community.

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**At the March 30th "threshing session"** led by Jim Matlack, the following five issues were selected to be forwarded to Friends Committee on National Legislation in Washington, D.C., as part of its broad consultation among Quakers regarding priorities for its work with the 2009-10 Congress. These five concerns are thus commended for inclusion in the next FCNL Statement of Legislative Priorities to guide its work over the next two years.

1. Economic conversion from military spending and production to civilian needs, especially to promote green energy sources and programs as well as "green jobs" throughout the faltering economy.
2. Seek ways to curb the undue influence of money and corporate power upon government policies and priorities, including ethical standards for public officials and the privileged legal status of corporations.
3. End the U.S. occupation of Iraq and promote regional diplomatic initiatives as the U.S. draws down its forces.
4. Respond with funds and policy emphasis to the urgent needs and crisis situations globally involving refugees, displaced, and victims of violence.
5. Seek full U.S. engagement with international treaty and policy efforts focused upon climate change and global warming.

## **Work Hours**

Please join your fellow Friends in sprucing up the meetinghouse and grounds during a work hour after rise of meeting on any (or all!) of the following Sundays in the spring-- May 25 and June 8--and in the fall-- September 28 and October 26. Bring some tools and a smile!



## **Bridges for Peace**

Bridges for Peace gathers each Sunday from 12 to 1 on the Damariscotta Bridge. For more information, contact Gretchen Hull at 563-5416.

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**QUERIES: Care of Children**--Do children receive the loving care of your meeting? Does the meeting nurture their religious life and give them an understanding of the principles and practices of Friends? Are you an example to your children in your faithfulness to the ideals you profess? Do you promote your children's moral and spiritual development by loving oversight of their education, recreation, and social activities? Do you listen to children, recognizing that the Spirit may lead them along paths you have not foreseen? Do you assist them to assume their rightful responsibilities in the home, the meeting, and the community?

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## **"War Is Not the Answer" Film Series**

The Peace Center will present a series of films portraying the folly and horror of war, and the misery and anguish of those it engulfs. Classic films from Japan, Italy, Bosnia, France, and Russia depict these themes in the lives of soldiers and civilians, victims and vanquishers--and show that war was not an answer. All films will be shown at the meetinghouse.



**Thursday, May 8, 7:00 p.m.--*Paths of Glory* (Stanley Kubrick, 1957).** In one of his finest roles, Kirk Douglas plays a commander of a battle-worn French regiment held in their trenches in 1916 under German artillery. The regiment is ordered on a suicidal mission to capture an enemy stronghold. When the mission inevitably fails, French generals order the selection of three soldiers to be tried and executed on the charge of cowardice. The commander is appointed the scapegoats' defense attorney, and what follows is a travesty of justice that has remained relevant and powerful for decades. In the wake of authentic and devastating battle sequences, Kubrick brilliantly explores the political machinations and selfish personal ambitions that result in battlefield slaughter and senseless executions. Though it touches on courage and loyalty in the context of historical realities of World War I, its impact and artistic achievement remain timeless.

### **Some other films, dates to be announced:**

***The Burmese Harp*** (Kon Ichigawa, 1957). The meaninglessness and waste of war is masterfully illustrated in this moving tale of a Japanese regiment in Burma during the final days of WWII.

***The Cranes Are Flying*** (Mikhail Kalatozov, 1957). A wrenching WWII Russian romance between a pretty woman and a sensitive factory worker, who marches off to the German front and is reportedly killed.

***No Man's Land*** (Danis Tanovic, 2001). An Academy Award-winning satire of the Balkans war, an astounding and acidic black comedy grounded in the brutality and horror of war.

***Two Women*** (Vittorio di Sica with Sophia Loren, 1961). The portrait of a widow and her teenage daughter struggling to survive amidst their personal ravages in WWII Italy.

***Conspiracy*** (Frank Pierson, with Kenneth Branagh, 2001). A dramatic reconstruction of the 1942 Wannsee Conference in Berlin, where the SS set out the details of the final solution.

## Midcoast Friends: Let Your Light Shine

by Andy Burt

Friends, this is a reminder that the Peace Center is asking everyone to consider contributing to the "Solar on the Meetinghouse" project. Several of our members have donated to the project already. Our budget for the project reflects our hope that everyone will play a role in this effort to reduce our contributions to global warming. If 50 Friends each gave at least \$20, we would reach our goal to purchase the solar panels that will provide electricity to our meetinghouse. We would like to purchase the photovoltaic system this month, after which Guy Marsden will schedule an installation date. We have invited Lincoln Academy students to help with the installation as part of a service learning project. A celebration program, to which we will invite the public to see our new panels, is being planned for late June.

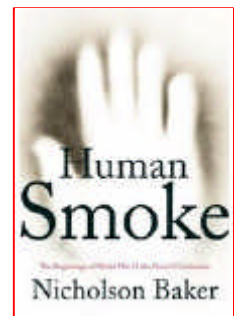
Checks may be made out to Midcoast Friends Meeting and deposited in the "solar collector" jar on the credenza. Future generations will thank you for helping to restore the Earth.

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### *A Book Review--and an Invitation to Friends*

*Human Smoke* by Nicholson Baker is a book that will interest pacifists. The author has called his unusual book an "amateur history." It is composed of vignettes from the newspapers, diaries, and memoirs of the years leading up to World War II, "the Good War." It's clear the author was a skeptic as to the "goodness" of this war--or any war--and his research and thought have confirmed the pacifist view. He dedicates the book in the very last paragraph:

I dedicate this book to the memory of Clarence Pickett and other American and British pacifists. They've never really gotten their due. They tried to save Jewish refugees, feed Europe, reconcile the United States and Japan, and stop the war from happening. They failed, but they were right.



The value of this book is to show clearly how leaders prepare for war and persuade their constituents to go to war, against all efforts for non-violent resistance, regard for harm to civilians, or the means to rescue the innocent victims (in this case, the Jews). How can we account for the erroneous mindset of leaders, who, for example, held the belief that killing German civilians and burning the Black Forest with incendiary bombs would persuade the German people to rise against Hitler? There are shocking things in this book. The horrid and grim details of war are included, but more important for our understanding are the behaviors of "the good leaders" who are only too eager for war. Churchill "positively enjoys war" one of his colleagues remembers.

I would like to read this book with Friends and other pacifists to follow the efforts of resisters to WWII and to understand why they failed. This is a popular book now, and the reviews are greatly puzzling to me. Although mainly appreciative, the reviews show that the belief in militarism persists among the intelligentsia--those who otherwise have learned something in the current American war. (See especially Katha Pollitt in *The Nation* and Louis Menand in *The New Yorker*.)

What do Friends say?

--Carmen Lavertu

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### *Bunchberry Farm Introduces the Veggies-Only Share*

Bunchberry Farm is still welcoming Friends to participate in the first season of its new CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) program. In response to requests for a produce-only share, they have developed a \$300 summer option that will run for 18 weeks (that's a little more than \$16 per week), June 1 to September 30. You will receive about \$18 worth of produce each week based on local market prices. Depending on interest in the Meeting, it may be that these shares can be delivered on Sundays after Meeting for Worship. If not then, they will be organizing a pick-up time and location that works for our members. Please sign up using the new brochures at the meetinghouse or contact Heather Burt at [info@bunchberryfarm.com](mailto:info@bunchberryfarm.com) or 882-9235. Thanks!

## From our Overseas Correspondent: The God Thing!

*Anna Needham, who graces us with her company during the summer, sent an e-mail the other day, saying, "This may be of some interest to Damariscotta Friends. Friends at Carlton Hill Meeting, Leeds, were tired of attenders saying that they couldn't join the Meeting because they didn't believe in God. One of our discussion groups decided to talk about 'god', and I made a few notes. The full discussion was fascinating." Here are Anna's notes on the group's understanding on the nature of God:*

Extreme goodness and love--the opposite of evil. Everyone else is in-between.

It will never be possible to comprehend God.

I like the image of the ocean and waves. Perhaps in Meeting there is a joining of the waves.

I like the idea that we are part of God and He is part of us. It is very exciting.

I always go back to the *Tao Te Ching*. The Way that is named cannot be named. Any idea of God cannot be right. It is a paradox--acceptance within silence. Religion is that quality of life without division.

God is love.

You are what you think. All you have is beliefs. The whole picture is without limitations--beyond systems. It's mind-boggling, belief.

The Incarnation was important when I went to Church. God as a life force--a river going through the desert.

God is Being. Worship is divine light scattered across the ages, cultures, times. Jesus represents some measure of this divine light--it is the spirit of love played out in a human life.

It's difficult to think about God with my mind--I get tied up in knots if I am challenged to make a statement. Knowledge of God is given by grace.

I know what I don't think about God. I don't want coded words. I can't get there by trying, only by experience.

Listening [to the group], there is a common core, which I entirely share. I can't know--I'm not going to struggle to know. Yes, maybe it is the blue colour in the sky. Jesus was a fascinating philosopher but not god-like.

God is not a noun but a verb. It's a conundrum--if God is great, He is not good; if She is good, She is not great. When I have experienced grace, I know without doubt that there is a presence. God is in the now.

We cannot understand God with our limited human perceptions. For all the searching after the theory of everything, we can never know what was before the Big Bang, but I know that I can connect with something--call it Energy if you like. It's awesome, and that is what I worship in Meeting.

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## From the Library Committee

The Library Committee has spent some time organizing recent donations to the library. When there were already multiple copies of a book, we put the extra in the basket below the credenza. Look them over; if you want one, just take it home to add to your own library.

We are in process ordering books; if you would like a book added to our collection, please leave a note with the title, author, and your name, so we can get more information if necessary.

Thank you!

--Theta Torbert

**FRIENDS COMMITTEE ON MAINE PUBLIC POLICY**  
**HIGHLIGHTS OF MEETING MARCH 29, 2008**  
**(from Jim Matlack's Minutes)**

**CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND CORRECTION SYSTEMS IN MAINE:** The morning session was an informative conversation with **Denise Lord, Associate Commissioner of the State Department of Corrections**, who graciously and candidly answered questions and provided her views and best current information. She explained that resistance to the governor's consolidation proposal intended to cut costs has resulted in a compromise now under consideration in the state legislature to create a new Maine State Board of Corrections with broad oversight, investigative, and budgetary authority. She also shared FCMPP's concern to seek the widest possible adoption of alternative and community-based programs for pretrial detention, sentencing, and release phases in dealing with offenders. The goal must be to reduce both the number of inmates in custody and the recidivism rate, despite the constant tension between those seeking to adopt new approaches and the jail and prison staffs, who see security (i.e., control over inmates) as paramount. Widespread public attitudes favoring severe punishment and long prison terms also pose serious obstacles to more flexible and constructive programs and, when cost-cutting is required, lead to cuts in programs benefiting inmates. Although it will be difficult, we must separate punishment from accountability in public awareness and promote the view that an offender can be held accountable in ways that do not require lengthy imprisonment. Commissioner Lord is convinced that given enough start-up funding and implementation time, alternative and community-based programs will prove effective and save money. Reducing the inmate population is the surest way to cut expenses (currently \$104 per day per inmate) while producing more positive social outcomes. Lord explained that all programs for offenders, both inside the jails/prisons and in the community, will be assessed on the basis of evidence-based criteria. She also covered ways to improve pretrial confinement and early-release programs, which currently meet resistance from system staff. Lord said that the success of such programs depends on developing a strong community base of volunteers and advocates to work with staff and public officials. Local initiative and control are the lifeblood of successful programs such as the Restorative Justice Project in Belfast/Waldo County.

**Some other topics covered:** ? There are no moves to privatize any part of Maine's correctional system in Maine, although services such as medical and mental-health care are contracted out. ? New regulations have been issued which should help inmates to engage in ceremonies and practices central to their religious faiths. ? Accurately maintaining a public Sex Offender Registry remains a perplexing concern.

Commissioner Lord encouraged Friends to promote local support for much-needed alternative and community-based programs in sentencing and release of offenders.

The afternoon discussion focused on the four "Public Members" of the **proposed State Board of Corrections**. Once such a Board is created, Friends could help in identifying well-qualified nominees for those seats who would understand our concerns and work for the innovative programs. The following names were put forward: Peter Lehman, former inmate and activist now living in Thomaston; Cush Anthony, lawyer and former State Representative with experience on Judiciary Committee (also a member of FCMPP); Richard Snyder, lead figure in creating the Waldo County Restorative Justice Project, and Craig McEwan.

**Ernie Foust** was thanked for representing FCMPP at the Jail Consolidation, where he presented a statement on behalf of the committee and Friends generally.

**NATIVE AMERICAN ISSUES:** The Tribal-State Work Group's report is now under consideration by the legislature. LD 2221 incorporates the group's final recommendations. **Friends are encouraged to urge their state legislators to support LD 2221.**

## NEWS NOTES

The Meeting recently received a letter from former attendee Aimee Phillippi, who is happily living in Jackson with husband Mick Womersley and an assortment of sheep, chickens, dogs, and cats. She reports that "after completing a ridiculously long and agonizing search process, [she] was hired onto the regular faculty at Unity College, beating out nearly 200 other applicants" as Assistant Professor of Conservation Biology. (Congratulations, Aimee!) If you'd like to catch up with Aimee, you can write to her at:

Aimee Phillippi  
Womerlipp Farm  
53 Great Farm Rd.  
Jackson, ME 04921



or e-mail her at [aphillippi@unity.edu](mailto:aphillippi@unity.edu). (*Ed. note:* I also invite you to look at her web pages starting at <http://www.unity.edu/facultypages/aphillippi/>. She and Mick are doing fascinating stuff!)

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**from *The Sea and the Bells***  
*by Pablo Neruda*

If each day falls,  
inside each night  
there exists a well  
where clarity is imprisoned.

We need to sit on the rim  
of the well of darkness  
and fish for fallen light  
with patience.

submitted by Louisa Gray

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***Toward Peace & Justice*--American Friends Service Committee's Monthly E-Newsletter**

In the latest issue:

- Keep the momentum rolling for true living wages
- "Guest worker" program: Quick fixes will not work
- Jubilee Act passes the U.S. House!
- Show you're a "Peace Voter" with our new T-shirts
- Download educational resources about the Iraqi refugee crisis
- AFSC opens a National Military Recruiter Abuse Hotline
- Make a Mother's Day gift for peace and justice

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