

Fifth Month

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

May 2009

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Then came Peter to him, and said, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" Jesus saith unto him, "I say not unto thee, until seven times: but, until seventy times seven."

-- *Matthew 18:21-22 (KJV)*

Maybe the reason it seems hard for me to forgive others is that I do not fully believe that I am a forgiven person. If I could fully accept the truth that I am forgiven and do not have to live in guilt or shame, I would really be free. My freedom would allow me to forgive others seventy times seven times. By not forgiving, I chain myself to a desire to get even, thereby losing my freedom.

-- *Henri Nouwen in The Road to Daybreak*

May

Thursday	May 7	2:00 p.m. 5:30 p.m.	Finance Committee Joint Meeting: Ministry & Counsel/Pastoral Care
Saturday	May 9	9:30 a.m. 3:30-7:30 p.m.	Library Committee Meeting *Maine Council of Churches Fundraiser O'Natural's, 83 Exchange Street, Portland
Sunday	May 10	11:30 a.m.	Presentation by Linda Cote-Small on Alternatives to Violence Program [<i>See last newsletter for details.</i>]
Friday	May 15	7:00 p.m.	Showing of <i>Iran</i> documentary by Rick Steve [<i>Watch for forthcoming press release.</i>]
Sunday	May 17	Rise of Meeting	Monthly Meeting for Business
Sunday	May 24	11:30 a.m. 11:30 a.m.	Peace Center Steering Committee Meeting *Work Hour [<i>See announcement inside from Meetinghouse & Grounds Committee.</i>]

June

Sunday	June 21	Rise of Meeting	Monthly Meeting for Business
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*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—April 26, 2009

A **letter from Joyce Young** expressed regret she can no longer attend meeting because of sensitivities to chemical fragrances.

A **letter from Thomas and Lisa Steele-Maley** requested creation of a clearness committee to explore leadings about starting a new school. A committee composed of the Cadburys, the Havilands, Linda Cote-Small, and Holly Baldwin was suggested. Others are encouraged to express interest in serving on this committee.

Committees will please submit **budget requests** for 2009-10. The Finance Committee hopes to submit a draft budget at the May meeting for business. Treasurer Paul Diamond reported the 2008-09 year-end balance is expected to be lower than usual.

Ministry & Counsel hopes to receive the remaining write-ups from committees for the **State of Society Report**. Pete Haviland suggested we may need to have a worship-sharing hour to bring forth other ideas from the meeting. Pete has agreed to draft a Query about political expression as contrasted to social or religious expression as appropriate for vocal ministry.

Meetinghouse & Grounds – Paul Diamond expressed regret present circumstances prevent his continuing to clerk this committee. It is hoped workdays will be organized. Bill Hallett and George Waldman have agreed to co-clerk care of the grounds. Claire Darrow will advise. Much volunteer help will be needed. Paul will write a newsletter item [*Ed. note: See item p. 5*] on supplies Friends can donate to meet regular meetinghouse needs.

Peace & Social Concerns – The question of the future of this committee and the possibility of combining it with the Peace Center Steering Committee will be considered at the May meeting. Does the meeting have human resources sufficient for both committees?

Information on a program about Haiti by **Partners in Health** founder Paul Farmer, costing approximately \$300, will be referred to the Peace Center Steering Committee.

Rachel McGinnis for the **Religious Education Committee** reported a source for a swing set has been found.

Volunteers to close meeting for worship, or find a volunteer to do so, are needed.

Kate Nordstrom and husband Aaron visited the all-purpose room to plan a **storage rack for mugs**. The meeting approved a 36"-x-36" rack to hold 54 mugs. Please bring a labeled mug from home (also plate and flatware to next shared meal.)

Alice Lacy's new book about the family's Portuguese Water Dog is being published. It was suggested the Meeting send an autographed copy to Sidwell Friends Lower School Library.

The clerk will talk with Pat Spock about a new **directory** or an insert to update the current directory. The co-clerks are moving forward slowly with ideas for a new **handbook**.

The **next meeting for business will take place Sunday, May 17**, at the rise of meeting for worship. All are welcome. Please bring a bag lunch. The entire pending minutes of the April session are available at the Meeting website www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org and on the bulletin board at the meetinghouse.

QUERIES

Personal Conduct--Do you live with simplicity, moderation, and integrity? Are you punctual in keeping promises, careful in speech, just and compassionate in all your dealings with others? Do you take care that your spiritual growth is not sacrificed to busyness but instead integrates your life's activities? Are your recreations consistent with Quaker values; do they refresh your spirit and renew your body and mind?



NEWSNOTES

Last month **Anna Needham** had a minor stroke, which slightly affected her eyesight. She is doing well and plans, as of now, to be in Maine by late May. We look forward to her visit.



The Autobiography of Pacos Tacos, "edited" by **Alice Lacy**, is the lovely and amusing story of a regal Spanish Water Dog who makes his home in New Harbor with Alice and John Lacy. The book chronicles Paco's origins and journey, his opinions, and some of the significant events of his life, and is dedicated to Paco's cousin, the First Family's Portuguese Water Dog, Bo.

It is available for \$24 with a special inscription by Paco's best friend, Alice. At monthly meeting, it was agreed that a copy would be sent to Sidwell Friends Schools, where Malia and Sasha Obama are students.

~MINUTE ON MARRIAGE EQUITY~

At its May 2 meeting at Friends Camp, Vassalboro Quarterly Meeting approved the following Minute, which will be sent to the majority and minority leadership of the Maine Legislature:

Reflecting our Quaker tradition of valuing all individuals with equal respect, care and love, and the preciousness of the separation of church and state, we support the action of the Maine Legislature in removing the state as a barrier to same-gender marriage. This allows the many faiths and religious institutions of our state to choose whether or not to endorse and/or conduct same-gender marriage ceremonies as they wish.

Friends are urged to get in touch with their local representative concerning L.D. 1020.

The Friends Committee on Maine Public Policy is an organization made up of representatives from most of the Quaker meetings in the State of Maine. It has been active since the early 1990s, and has selected criminal justice and Maine Indians as continuing priorities for action.

WHY A FRIENDS COMMITTEE ON MAINE PUBLIC POLICY?

The Friends Committee on Maine Public Policy (FCMPP) arose out of a concern at the 1991 Fall Retreat of Vassalboro Quarterly Meeting at China Lake. Friends in Maine had no statewide voice on public policy issues; New England Yearly Meeting represented other states as well, and neither of Maine's two quarterly meetings encompassed the whole state. Tom Ewell, executive director of the Maine Council of Churches, especially noted the value of an organization that might represent Friends statewide.

After an extensive process of consultation and discernment with Friends meetings around the state a "Statement of Principles and Implementation Process" was approved at Belfast, May 9, 1992. Friends in Maine are concerned about many issues, but it was recognized that effective action requires concentration on public issues "where Friends in Maine have some experience, credibility, unity, and ability to make a difference." After discussion, it became clear that Friends had considerable experience with the criminal justice system--as legislators, social workers, academicians, lawyers, educators and prison visitors--and that this should be a priority. Another concern was for Maine Indians. Through work camps and the AFSC Wabanaki program, Quakers in Maine had gained some familiarity with the many difficult issues facing Maine Indians.

WHO PARTICIPATES?

Friends and attenders of Friends meetings in Maine. Friends meetings in Maine are invited to appoint two members or attenders to act as a liaison between the Meeting and FCMPP. We believe our program may be of special interest to young adult Friends, and we urge meetings to consider this. Needless to say, we welcome one person or more than two if meetings so choose; and we welcome others at any time, especially when we have outside speakers. Friends meetings across the state have given strong financial support to FCMPP's modest budget.

We meet four or five times a year. Customarily 10-15 Friends from 8 to 10 of the 20 meetings in the state attend. For a number of years we have been meeting in Waterville, as a centrally located spot, since people

Article continues on next page.

have come from Machias, Bar Harbor, Orono, Farmington, Portland, Brunswick, and the mid-coast and Waterville area. Currently we meet at the Alford Youth Center in Waterville.

ACTIVITIES REGARDING CRIMINAL JUSTICE

-- Testimony to legislative committees against capital punishment, in favor of more funding for rehabilitation and counseling, and in support of "restorative justice";

--Strong support for Commissioner of Corrections, Joseph Lehman, Governor Angus King, and the leadership of the Maine Council of Churches, in making "restorative justice" rather than "retributive justice" a basic value in Maine's criminal justice system; periodic meetings with Department of Corrections officials; meeting with NAACP chapter members in the Maine State Prison at Thomaston;

--Study of how to promote a more positive interaction between Maine's penal system and its mental health institutions;

--Support for pretrial release programs, victim/offender mediation, and restorative justice programs. Our members have helped create such programs in several communities around the state;

--Publication of an 8-page paper on "Conflict Resolution in Schools and Beyond" and a 13-page paper "HOPE for Our 'At-Risk' Youth in the State of Maine."

MAINE INDIANS

On Maine Indians, we have testified in support of legislation of concern to Indians. We have sought to listen to their concerns through invited speakers such as the Penobscot tribal representative to the legislature and the Chief of the Houlton Band of Maliseets. We have sent regular observers to meetings of the Maine Indian Tribal State Commission (MITSC). One of our most active FCMPP participants, Cushman Anthony, was elected chairperson of that group by the four Indian representatives and the four representatives of the State of Maine.

We consult with and support the work of Denise Altvater, AFSC staff person at the Passamaquoddy reservation, and the AFSC Wabanaki Committee.

We are a major proponent of LD 291, requiring the teaching of Maine Indian history and culture in all Maine K-12 grades. We promote the use of the AFSC book *The Wabanakis of Maine and the Maritimes* in schools as a major way to help teachers meet the requirement. We have struggled with the competing claims of gambling and Indian sovereignty. We strongly support constructive economic development among the Indians through the Four Directions Development Program and otherwise. We urged Governor Baldacci to appoint Wayne Newell to the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System.

In addition--

- A questionnaire on public-policy issues was sent to all candidates for governor in 1994, 1998, and 2002. Their responses were distributed to Friends meetings, editorial writers, and other organizations;
- FCMPP opposed a 1994 referendum to limit the rights of gay and lesbian residents and supported a 1996 citizen initiative for campaign finance reform.
- We attempt to educate ourselves through invited speakers at our meetings, study groups, attendance at legislative hearings. We seek to share our views with policy makers through personal visits, letters, and phone calls and with fellow citizens through articles and letters in local papers.
- For more information contact Ed Snyder at 207-288-8968 or edsnyder@207me.com. Also available: Five-page "Chronological History" of FCMPP 1991-2005 to accompany documents to be filed with the Maine Historical Society, Portland.

Bulletin from Meetinghouse & Grounds: Spring has arrived, at long last, with customary unexpectedness. The Meetinghouse & Grounds Committee, gratified by the size of the turnout for Work Hours last summer and fall, would like to propose that we devote an hour per month for this purpose, starting as soon as possible.

The Committee thinks that working in fellowship together after the monthly potluck lunches might be the best idea, subject to modification in the light of experience, and a proposal to this effect will be made to the next Monthly Meeting for Business.

Meanwhile, the grounds are sorely in need of cleanup and attention. There are events already scheduled after Meeting on May 10 and May 17, so the first day available for a full scale Work Hour mobilization is May 24.

In other Meetinghouse & Grounds news, the Committee wishes to announce that Bill Hallett and George Waldman have agreed to serve as co-clerks, effective immediately.

The Committee also considers it to be imperative to develop a manual or "Bible" of all the routine functions that need to be performed to keep the Meetinghouse and its grounds in good order. With the active membership of the Meeting changing, it is necessary to have recorded for easy reference a basic record of maintenance needs and routines that we should be aware of. The Committee hopes that those who have good knowledge of one or another aspect of our stewardship needs will be in contact with Bill Hallett, George Waldman, or Paul Diamond to arrange for a formal exchange of information.



On Tuesday, May 12, at 7 p.m., **FRIENDS SCHOOL OF PORTLAND** will present the first in its Parenting for Peace lecture series with Susan Linn. This is free and open to the public. Susan Linn, author of *The Case For Make Believe* and *Consuming Kids: The Hostile Takeover of Childhood*, is a psychologist at Judge Baker Children's Center and Harvard Medical School and the co-founder/director of A Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood. She is an award-winning ventriloquist, internationally recognized for her pioneering use of puppets as a tool in play therapy with children. Her work has been seen on "Mister Roger's Neighborhood," the "Today Show," and "Good Morning, America." For details, visit the school's web site, <http://friendsschoolofportland.org>.

ADVICES: Personal Conduct--Let us bring the whole of our daily lives under the ordering of the Spirit. Let our faith free us from crippling fears so that we may live adventurously. In relations with others, let us exercise imagination, understanding, and sympathy. Let us live and work in the plainness and simplicity of true followers of Christ.

In view of the evils arising from the use of tobacco and intoxicating drinks and from the abuse of drugs, Friends are advised to consider whether they should refrain from using them, from offering them to others, and from having any share in their manufacture or sale. We should not let the claims of good fellowship or the fear of seeming peculiar influence our decision.

Let us maintain integrity in word and deed. Holding to the simplicity of truth, let us keep free of oaths. Remember how widespread and diverse are the temptations to grow rich at the expense of others, and how apparently harmless indulgence often leads by degrees to wrongdoing. Let us avoid and discourage every kind of betting and gambling and commercial speculations of a gambling character.

Friends have always held that the sacred nature of a sexual relationship is affirmed only in marriage. In recent times, however, some Friends have found such affirmation in other contexts. Let us be certain, in any case, that we hold up to the Light any sexual relationship we may be considering and reject any relationship that may violate the integrity or spiritual welfare of either of the partners or of others. No relationship can be a right one which makes use of another person through selfish desire.

UPDATE: Local Friend Needing a Kidney. The Meeting continues to follow the condition of area Friend Lisa MacKeeman. Doctors now estimate Lisa will need a kidney transplant during the summer of 2009. For further information, please contact Kristen Pelletier, R.N., Transplant Coordinator, Division of Transplant Surgery, Brigham and Women's Hospital, by mail at 75 Francis St, PBB215, Boston, MA 02115 or by e-mail at kpelletier@partners.org.



Did you know that more than 78,000 Americans are waiting for a kidney?

MAINE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES FUNDRAISER
Environmental Presentation - Silent Auction - Plant Sale - Children's Activities



On Saturday, May 9, the Maine Council of Churches will hold a program and fundraiser at O'Natural's, 83 Exchange Street, Portland, from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m. At 4:00 and 6:00 p.m., their Environmental Justice Consultant (and Midcoast Friend) Andy Burt will present a program on climate change and the role Maine's churches and communities are playing in addressing this critical issue. There will also be a sale and silent auction. The sale will include books, plants and other modestly priced items. The silent auction will be conducted from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Auction items include trips, tickets to sporting events,

original artwork, and more. A children's craft table will keep little ones busy! O'Natural's will donate 10% of the afternoon's proceeds from food sales to the Maine Council of Churches.

The Council hopes to see you there. This event is a great opportunity for MCC staff and friends to reconnect and raise much-needed funds for the Council. And you might find a great last minute Mothers' Day gift or something for yourself while supporting a good cause. There is no charge to attend the environmental presentation or children's activities or to participate in the auction.

For more information on this event, including a list of auction items, please contact the MCC office at 772-1918 or go to our website, www.maineCouncilofchurches.org.

Rooted in the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, the mission of the Maine Council of Churches is to inspire congregations and people of faith to unite in good works that build a culture of justice, compassion, and peace.