

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



For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

--Matthew 18:20 (KJV)

[Early Friends] made the discovery that silence is one of the best preparations for communion [with God] and for the reception of inspiration and guidance. Silence itself, of course, has no magic. It may be just sheer emptiness, absence of words or noise or music. . . . But it may be an intensified pause, a vitalized hush, a creative quiet, an actual moment of mutual and reciprocal correspondence with God.

-- Rufus M. Jones, "Spiritual Message of the Religious Society of Friends," 1937

### October

Fri.-Sat.	Oct. 5-6		Listening to the Spirit Worship, Cobscook Mtg. (Please see July-August Newsletter for details.)
Fri.-Sun.	Oct. 5-7		*"Living in the Spirit" Program Begins, Rindge, NH.
Sunday	Oct. 14	Rise of Meeting	Workhour
Sunday	October 21	Rise of Meeting	Meeting for Worship for Business
Tuesday	October 23	7 p.m.	*Film: <i>The Ghosts of Abu Ghraib</i>
Thursday	Oct. 25	7 p.m.	Performance: "The Thinking Heart" (Please see Sept. newsletter.)
Sunday	Oct. 28	Rise of Meeting	Pizza Party, Food & Conversation arranged by Gifts & Leadings Committee. <b>Everyone come!</b>

### November

Sunday	November 18	Rise of Meeting	Meeting for Worship 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.

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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

Midcoast Monthly Meeting for Business--Ninth Month, Sixteen, 2007

The meeting approved two expenditures proposed by **Meetinghouse & Grounds**: completion of the **handicapped access ramp railing** and provision of **parking lot lighting**, hopefully in time for winter. It encouraged Meetinghouse & Grounds to continue exploring installation of a **solar panel on the roof**, purchase of an **electric heat-on-demand water heater**, and various **security measures** within the meetinghouse, and to consult with the Finance Committee. The meeting invited the **Finance Committee** to report recommendations for Meetinghouse & Grounds expenditures, in the light of our overall financial condition, to a future business meeting.

**Ministry & Counsel** has recommended renewed activities in **Creative Listening** and a new round of **Friendly Eights** get-togethers. These could be combined if a group so chooses. Two opportunities for spiritual enrichment are available to us: New England Yearly Meeting's year-long **Spiritual Transformation Program** (*Ed. note: please see article below*) and Vassalboro Quarterly Meeting's **Listening to the Spirit weekend** at Cobscook October 5-7. Ministry & Counsel's fall activities, open to the public, include: September 27, the film *An Angel for May*; October 25, a performance of *The Thinking Heart* (*Ed. note: For details of this film and performance, please see the July-August newsletter*); and a film to be announced for November 8 or 15. For winter, the committee is planning a panel series on "**What about Quakerism is important to the way we lead our lives now and in the future?**" Suggestions of speakers are welcome.

**Pastoral Care**--Deb Haviland visited Sally Wood in Charlottesville. Sally, who is suffering from cancer, is receiving loving support from Charlottesville Meeting.

**Peace & Social Concerns**--Upcoming events include showing the film *Ghosts of Abu Ghraib* on October 23 and the **Alternative Gift Fair** on December 1. Carmen Lavertu's course on **War, Peace & Elections** is at the Senior College in Rockland. All are welcome.

**Hospitality**--Please sign up to bring refreshments. The committee will plan a reception for our two new members.

**New England Yearly Meeting Sessions/Vassalboro Quarterly Meeting Reports** by Carmen Lavertu--NEYM approved a **minute to Friends United Meeting (FUM)** asking for continued dialogue about their personnel policy and encouraging FUM to pursue the study of sexuality (*Ed. note: see article elsewhere in the newsletter*). The programs at Quarterly Meeting, including one about Quaker process, were most worthwhile.

**Other Matters**--Penobscot Bay Medical Center is planning a new **training for pastoral visitors**. See Diane Kirkman or call Laura Edwards at 596-8546 for further information.

**Announcements**--We will host a **potluck supper** for an FUM group on October 9 or 10. We will **host VQM** on November 3. Overnight hospitality and youth activities/childcare during the meeting will be needed. We will provide a program for adults. Suggested topics are Creative Listening and environmental initiatives at our meetinghouse.

The **next meeting for business will be on Sunday, October 21**, at the rise of meeting for worship. All are welcome. Please bring a bag lunch.

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### **SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION PROGRAM--Living in the Spirit: Putting Faith into Action**

A nine-month program for teens and adults will be initiated October 5-7 at the Meeting School in Rindge, New Hampshire. This program is envisioned as a second phase of the Spiritual Formation program (but does not require prior participation in that program). The curriculum includes spiritual work: strengthening daily practice, intellectual work: setting Peace Testimony in its historical and experiential context of nonviolent action, and community work: building a network of Friends who are called to spirit-led action.

The program is led by John Humphries, of Hartford Meeting and the Quaker Peacebuilding Camp, and Brian Drayton, peace educator. The opening retreat is on Columbus Day weekend at the Rindge School. Small, regional-group gatherings will meet five or six times during the year. A closing retreat will be held in early June.

To find out about Friends in Midcoast and Vassalboro Quarterly Meeting who will be participating, call Carmen Lavertu (354-9556), or contact John Humphries (860-236-5175 or [jhumphries@igc.org](mailto:jhumphries@igc.org)).

## *The Meeting's Finances*

by Paul Diamond, Treasurer

The finances of the Meeting are generally sound, although there are a few things for the Finance Committee to keep an eye on. The meetinghouse mortgage has been fully paid off for several years, and the building, now almost ten years old, is holding up well. The various committees supporting the life of the Meeting have budgets which enable help them to carry out their programs, and the Meeting contributes to local charities as well as to Quaker organizations such as the Friends Committee on National Legislation and Yearly and Quarterly Meetings. Operating costs like landscaping, mowing, snowplowing, and utilities are met routinely, and there have generally been funds left over to contribute to reserve accounts. These reserve accounts are used for bigger-ticket items like installing fans, equipping the meetinghouse for showing videos, and completing the Memorial Garden.

Generous annual contributions from Friends and attenders have fully covered the annual operating costs, contributions to other organizations and committee expenditures, although in recent years the amounts left over for transfers to reserves have been diminishing to some extent. These reductions have been more than offset by a number of bequests the Meeting has received from deceased Friends who have remembered us in their wills and from returns on investment of growing Meeting funds.

In summary, over the past five fiscal years, from June 1, 2002 to May 31, 2007, the picture has looked like this:

### ANNUAL OPERATING FUNDS

	<u>Contributions</u>	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Transfers to Reserves</u>
2002-2003	19,376	14,124	5,000
2003-2004	19,722	12,469	5,000
2004-2005	19,509	13,708	4,000
2005-2006	17,284	15,079	7,366
2006-2007	16,170	14,398	1,772
Five-year totals	92,061	69,778	23,138

### RESERVE FUNDS

	<u>Bequests</u>	<u>Transfers from Operating funds</u>	<u>Investment Return</u>	<u>Capital Expenses</u>
Prior to 2002-03		16,997		
2002-2003	5,000	5,000	(240)	781
2003-2004		5,000	1,069	12,384
2004-2005	57,137	4,000	1,023	1,295
2005-2006	20,667	7,366	5,760	4,801
2006-2007	7,000	1,772	6,247	3,923
Five-year totals	89,804	40,135	13,839	23,184

The strength in the reserve funds, thanks in large part to bequests from Cully Miller, Pat Geiringer, Chouteau Chapin, Bronson Clark, Natalie Wriggins and Charlotte Ritter, has enabled the Meeting to raise its asset level to about \$125,000 at the end of the fiscal year 2006-2007. Of this amount, \$10,000 is loaned to a development corporation based on Indian Island, \$52,400 is with the New England Yearly Meeting Pooled Funds account, and the remainder is in certificates of deposit and money market and checking accounts.

### **Film: *The Ghosts of Abu Ghraib***

Peace & Social Concerns, together with Midcoast Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship, will show *The Ghosts of Abu Ghraib* at 7 p.m., October 23, at the meetinghouse, as part of a nationwide focus on torture by the National Religious Campaign Against Torture. NRCAT aims to distribute copies of the HBO film to 1,000 congregations during the week of October 21 through 28. The film is for mature audiences. The showing will be followed by discussion, and a facilitator's guide has been prepared. (Carmen Lavertu said, "The valuable part of the film for me was the interviews of the soldiers (MPs) who were commanded to abuse/torture the prisoners.") For more information, see Carmen (354-9556) or check the website: [www.NRCAT.org](http://www.NRCAT.org).

### ***QUERIES: 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?

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### ***Lighting for the Parking Lot***

Monthly Meeting has approved a proposal from the Meetinghouse & Grounds Committee to install lighting in the parking lot.

The committee's proposal is one of a number designed to make the meetinghouse and its grounds safer and more welcoming while taking environmental concerns into consideration wherever possible and practical. Other proposals, which are to be given further consideration by the Meetinghouse & Grounds and Finance Committees, are to purchase a solar-panel system for installation on the roof, which will diminish our need to purchase electricity; to replace the use of the oil burner for hot-water heating by purchasing an electric heat-on-demand water heater; and to install a monitoring system designed to respond in case of emergencies such as fire, frozen pipes, or electrical failure.

The lighting project will involve 6 or 7 relatively low lights on the western and northern perimeters of the parking lot, connected to the main source of meetinghouse power by wiring in an underground trench. They will be controlled by light sensors and timers and will use low-power spotlights designed to minimize light pollution for our neighbors. Finding our cars after dark will be made much easier, since they will be silhouetted against the lit background.

Should the meeting later approve the installation of solar panels, a large part of the ongoing cost of lighting the parking lot will be met through the use of solar power, thereby minimizing the meeting's environmental impact.

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**The major "business" at Sessions in August** concerned the FUM (FRIENDS UNITED MEETING) personnel policy. The 2004 and 2005 Sessions had set up a working group to enter into dialogue with FUM. This year the work went much deeper in asking monthly meetings to undertake an exploration of sexuality in its fundamental and broadest meanings and experience. A "Minute of Commitment" was approved to guide the conversations among Friends. In part the Minute is as follows:

We commit ourselves as individuals and as a yearly meeting to work with one another in witnessing God's movement among us by doing the following:

- Engage in conversation about the deepest meanings of family, marriage and committed relationships and explore what it means to have all of these under the care of the meeting.
- Support the work of our Ministry & Counsel Working Party on Sexual Ethics and Spirituality. We need to articulate our sexual ethics and the spirituality of sex.

We commit ourselves to undertake this work in love and forbearance, caring tenderly for one another. We acknowledge that there is great pain in our community felt by the people who are affected at the deepest levels of their identity and relationships by the homophobia that exists within New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM). We recognize that these actions ask all of us to re-examine our most deeply held beliefs. It is hard for us to challenge each other. We need our behavior and words to be tender as we explore hard topics. We commit ourselves to undertake this work by educating ourselves, by exploring these issues within our monthly and quarterly meetings, and by undertaking intervisitation within NEYM. We seek healing, wholeness, and God's blessing as we move forward.

*--Carmen Lavertu*

**ADVICES--Meeting for Worship:** 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.



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### **Vassalboro Quarterly Meeting at Midcoast on Saturday, November 3**

Vassalboro Quarterly Meeting will meet at Midcoast Meeting on Saturday, November 3. People begin gathering at 8:30 am. Meeting for Worship is at 8:45, and Meeting for Worship for Business is at 10:00. Lunch follows at 12:00. Our Meeting will provide casseroles (probably lasagna), bread, and beverages. Visitors will be asked to bring fruit, cookies, or finger desserts. After an intergenerational activity, there will be a program at 2:00.

The Meeting hopes that many members and attenders will participate in this gathering at Midcoast. You will be contacted for contributions of food or for other help.

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**MINISTRY OPPORTUNITY:** PenBay/KnoWallIn Hospice Chaplain Laura Edwards has asked if anyone at Midcoast Friends might be interested in serving residents of Merry Gardens in Camden with "some kind of spiritual offering . . . because right now they have nothing spiritual." They are open to any format, preferably nondenominational, and it need not be on Sunday. If you find yourself called to help in this way, please contact Laura at 596-8546 or [ledwards@penbayhealthcare.org](mailto:ledwards@penbayhealthcare.org).

*Roadside Wisdom:*



--from *Great American Book of Church Signs* by Donald Seitz

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