

10th Month

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

October 2008



Truly my soul waiteth upon God:
 From God cometh my salvation.

-- Psalm 62:1

Not so in haste, my heart;
 Have faith in God, and wait
 Although He linger long,
 He never comes too late.

--Anon.

October

Saturday	Oct. 4	2:00 p.m.	*Memorial Service for George Sparks.
Sunday	Oct. 5	Rise of Meeting	Potluck Lunch/*Work Hour
Wednesday	Oct. 8	7 p.m.	*"The Election & World Affairs"--Session II
Sunday	Oct. 12	8:30 a.m.	*Reading Group
		11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.	Quakerism 101 [See Sept. newsletter for details.]
Sunday	Oct. 19	Rise of Meeting	Monthly Meeting for Business/Annual Meeting
Wednesday	Oct. 22	7 p.m.	*"The Election and World Affairs"--Session III
Sunday	Oct. 26	8:30 a.m.	*Reading Group
		Rise of Meeting	*Work Hour

November

Friday	Nov. 7	6 p.m.	*Maine Council of Churches 70th Anniversary Dinner Freeport, ME
Sunday	Nov. 9	11:30 a.m.	"Simplicity & the Environment: A Celebration of John Woolman & the Installation of Solar Panels on Midcoast Friends Meetinghouse"

*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

Meeting for Business, Ninth Month 21, 2008

Ministry & Counsel--Willow Rowntree reported. The committee has been considering the difficulties it had producing a state of the society report for 2007 and ways to improve the situation. It recommended that assessment of the state of the meeting be viewed as an ongoing process, that committees keep this in mind as they go about their work, and that, once or twice a year, committees include reflections on the state of their work in written reports to monthly meeting. This was an informal request for a trial period.

The committee has also been considering ways to counsel the meeting on vocal ministry. Finding little reference to vocal ministry in the queries of Faith & Practice of New England Yearly Meeting, it is led to create its own queries. After disseminating copies of "Guidelines for Vocal Ministry" to Friends, the committee will gather feedback on which to base written queries. A member of Ministry & Counsel will read one of these queries at meeting for worship on the first Sunday of the month. On the third Sunday, a query from Faith & Practice will be read. The meeting agreed with these recommendations.

Meetinghouse & Grounds Committee--Paul Diamond reported. Final work hours of the season are scheduled for October 5 and 26. Since October 5 is also the date of our monthly potluck lunch, the food will be set out following rise of meeting so that those who need to can eat then. Others who choose to work before they eat will do so.

Peace Center Steering Committee--Brewster Grace reported on projects being undertaken in three areas. In the area of environment, alternative energy, and climate change: on November 9, there will be a community presentation of Midcoast Meeting's solar panels and a presentation by Ruah Swennerfelt and Louis Cox; in the winter/spring there will be a presentation by Andy Burt on Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* and a community seminar called "Perspectives on Climate Change." In the area of militarism, Carmen Lavertu will present her workshop "The Election & World Affairs" on September 24, October 8, and October 22. In the area of the "War Is Not The Answer" film series, there will be one film per month: *No Man's Land* in December, *Body of War* in January, *Conspiracy* in February, and *Stop Loss* in March.

Religious Education--Karen Cadbury reported. First Day School will soon be underway. Karen, Rachel McGuinness, and Sally Tukey will teach the first three Sundays of the month. Willow Rowntree and Deb Haviland have offered to teach on occasional fourth Sundays of the month. It is hoped that other Friends will volunteer to make up a rotation for the fourth Sunday of the month.

New Business--George Sparks, who died September 6 of this year, had two requests that his family have told us about. He wanted a traditional Quaker memorial service and a memorial stone placed on the meetinghouse property. This is the first time the Meeting has had a request for a memorial stone, and we have found no guidelines in our records. There was a clear sense of the meeting that we honor George's request for a memorial stone. A Committee of Oversight for the memorial service, to be held Saturday, October 4, at 2 p.m. at the meetinghouse [*Ed. note: see next newsletter item*], consists of Pete Haviland, Paul Diamond, and Nancy Booth. They will meet with the family and tell them that the Meeting would like to honor the request for a stone and that details will be worked out.

The next Meeting for Business will be on October 19, 2008. All are welcome. Please bring a bag lunch. The entire pending minutes of the September meeting may be found on the Meeting's website at <www.midcoastfriendsmeeting.org>and on the bulletin board at the meetinghouse.



The Passing of George Sparks



Our dear Friend George Sparks died on Saturday, September 6, 2008, in Pensacola, Florida, at the age of 92. George moved to Florida two years ago to be closer to his daughter Susan McFarland and her family. His presence will always be a part of our Meeting, which he nurtured for years with his wisdom, his service, and his love of life. He lived his life according to his strong belief in Quaker principles. George was a "Man for all Seasons." He was an artist, a jeweler, an astute businessman, an inventor, a pilot, a musician, a sailor--and more. Three children survive him: Susan McFarland of Pensacola, Florida; Deborah Sparks of East Sound, Washington; and Jared Sparks of Flourtown, Pennsylvania.

There will be a memorial service for George on Saturday, October 4, at 2 p.m., at the meetinghouse. This will be followed by a reception.

QUERIES: PEACE & RECONCILIATION

Do you "live in the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars"? Do you faithfully maintain Friends' testimony against military preparations and all participation in wa, as inconsistent with the teachings and spirit of Christ? Do you strive to increase understanding and use of non-violent methods of resolving conflicts?

Do you take your part in the ministry of reconciliation between individuals, groups, and nations? When discouraged, do you remember that Jesus said, "Peace is my parting gift to you, my own peace, such the world cannot give. Set your troubled hearts at rest, and banish your fears"? (John 14:27 NEB)

A Message from Visiting Friends

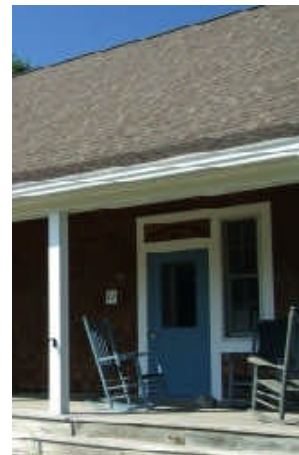
The following note was left in the door of our meetinghouse in September. We'd like to share it with all Friends:

Dear Friends,

On September 18, mid-afternoon, we sat on your front porch and had mid-afternoon worship together, sitting in your rocking chairs. Thank you for your hospitality.

Blessings on your journeys,

*Bill Walker and Allison Randell
Keene Friends Meeting*



GIFTS & LEADINGS

The Gifts & Leadings Committee will begin meeting in October. It is time again for each of us to consider how we can serve our Meeting. Many of us serve on committees, bring refreshments, offer spiritual and pastoral insight, plan special events, and help in many other ways. According to our gifts, we all give support.

The committee's charge is to help people discern their gifts that will contribute to the Meeting's well-being--and also to help you discern what contributes to your well-being. We ask everyone who is a part of the Meeting to think about these things. The committee members are Linda Cote-Small, Deborah Haviland, Willow Rowntree, and Sally Tukey. Please talk to any of these persons about concerns and/or questions. And leave yourself open to the Spirit.

Maine Council of Churches 70th Anniversary Dinner

On Friday November 7, 2008, at 6 p.m., the Maine Council of Churches is celebrating its 70th anniversary at the Hilton Garden Inn in Freeport. The honoree is United Methodist Bishop S. Clifton Ives who has given more than 50 years of volunteer service to the council. The guest speaker is Maine Attorney General Steven Rowe, who will speak about his personal faith, values, and the calling to public service. The cost for the dinner is \$50 per person and reservations must be made by October 24. Call (207) 772-1918 with any questions.

For more information about Maine Council of Churches, visit: <http://www.mainecouncilofchurches.org>.

ADVICES: Peace & Reconciliation: Every human being is a child of God with a measure of God's Light. War and other instruments of violence and oppression ignore this reality and violate our relation with God. Let us keep primary, therefore, Friends' concern for removing the causes of war. Let us seek, through God's power and grace, to overcome in our own hearts the emotions that lie at the root of violence. At every opportunity, let us be peacemakers in our homes, in our communities, and in our places of work. Let us take care that we who declare against war do not nourish the seeds of war in our possessions. Friends are urged to support those who witness to their governments and take personal risks in the cause of peace, who choose not to participate in war as soldiers nor to contribute to its preparations with their taxes. Let us support in all possible ways the development of international order, justice, and understanding.

"The Election and World Affairs," a series of three Wednesday evening workshops, will be presented by Carmen Lavertu at Midcoast Friends Meetinghouse, September 24, October 8 and October 22, at 7 p.m. Carmen has taught several classes on this subject in Coastal Senior College. Members of the public are welcome, and there is no admission charge.

Participants will study the role of militarism in our government's foreign policy and consider opportunities for strengthening diplomacy that may exist in a new administration.

The first session will focus on the militarization of foreign policy. The current conflict in the Caucasus and Eastern Europe provides examples. We will study the extent to which the U.S. military provides security to most nations of the world by treaty or military-to-military cooperation and how the United States conducts worldwide surveillance through 16 intelligence agencies.

The second session will compare the State Department with the Department of Defense, focusing on the State Department's relative weakness, exemplified by its limited budget (about one-fortieth of the D.O.D. budget) and by the transfer to D.O.D. of some of State's traditional roles, especially in the humanitarian and intelligence services.

The third session will examine the foreign-policy positions of candidates for president and congress and the dearth of public discourse about foreign affairs. What does it mean that our country is the sole "superpower" in the world? And what does the "resurgence" of Russia mean? We will also look into progressive ideas offered by select think tanks, books, and journals.

Everyone is welcome, and you are encouraged to contact Carmen to get advance study materials: 354-9556 or clavertu@gmail.com.

Comments on the Annual New England Yearly Meeting Gathering--Bryant University, RI

There were three of us there this year, Carmen, Rachel and me--they, full-time, and me, commuting about half time from my daughter Elizabeth's in Barrington, on the other side of Providence. In the past, I have shared much enthusiasm with you about these large gatherings of Quakers of every age, background and belief, always a great social gathering and a very good time to recharge your batteries and be exposed to as many different Meeting for Business concerns and as many different workshops and stimulating evening gatherings as your mind, body, and spirit can possibly assimilate! And if you are looking for a new cause to throw yourself into, believe me it is there! I always leave with a renewed sense of purpose and an amazingly uplifted spirit! This year, I found increasingly that my hearing impairment put me at a much greater disadvantage, causing stress at my inability to hear much and to tolerate the wonderful ferment of the background noise of the happy community, as I visited with old and dear friends as best I could. Many of us are increasingly grateful just to still be able to show up!

That said, I have become increasingly aware of the diversity between programmed and unprogrammed membership of NE Friends each year concerning just about every pressing issue facing us in our culture today. I have ordered a tape of Peter Crysdale's Bible Half Hours for all week, (the auditorium was crowded every morning) and will share parts of it with you later. He started off by reminding all of us of the deep division between early Puritans and Quakers in New England over our courageous stand for freedom of worship, justice, and non-violence, so opposed to the rigidity of theirs. The 17th-century peace covenant, Crysdale suggested, is now "breaking our hearts." The whole week was biblically aimed to inspire healing between us in all our present diversities. Much deep, gathered, silent worship occurred every day during the week. He reminded us right off that "We are here together to learn to love and forgive each other again, to listen to each other--and . . .to remember love does not ask its own way."

I attended the workshop on racism given by a convinced Quaker, George Williamson, born a white Southern Baptist (he called it being "born Jim Crow") and who miraculously, slowly shunned his deeply ingrained and horrifying beliefs as he turned and opened to the convincing presence and power of Martin Luther King. All I could think when I left--and fervently keep hoping--is that that kind of attitude towards blacks [like Williamson's early attitude] does not remain as prevalent in our culture today.

Faithfully,

Louisa Gray

Report from the Meetinghouse & Grounds Committee

Implementation of the current plans for the Meetinghouse grounds is continuing on schedule. By the end of September, we hope to have had a party of workers from the county jail clear the shade garden (to the right of the Meetinghouse) and spread mulch, prepare the bed under the meetinghouse windows for blueberries, and clean out the drainage ditch next to the parking lot.

Monthly Meeting has approved two **work hours** in October, one on **October 5** and the other on **October 26**. The first of these dates coincides with the October potluck lunch, but hopefully Friends who are willing can do a little work first to build up an appetite! (There will be food available early for those not able to participate in the work hour.) The second work hour will be spent preparing the Meetinghouse for the fall, including bringing benches in, some more garden cleanup, and some insulation work in the basement.

The Committee will shortly be considering ideas for capital improvements to the grounds or the meetinghouse or both. The installed solar panels are already having an impact on the electricity bills, and we are ready to consider other projects or significant plantings that would enhance the meetinghouse or its grounds. Friends who have ideas in this regard are invited to share them with members of the Meetinghouse & Grounds Committee. Any proposals that emerge from this review will be forwarded to the Finance Committee for consideration and then sent to Monthly Meeting.

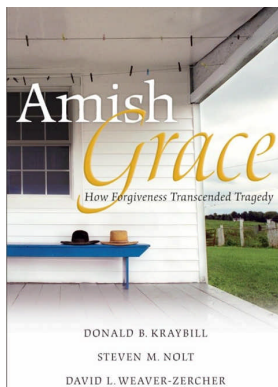
The Committee is delighted to welcome Suzy Hallett as a member and remains open to other Friends who may be interested in joining.

--Paul Diamond, Clerk

Meetings for Worship in the Camden/Rockport Area

Thanks again to Kathie and John Gass's generosity, the Megunticook Worship Group will meet in the studio at the Gasses' home at 14 Cobb Road in Camden, the second Sunday of each month, beginning on October 12. These unprogrammed meetings for worship are from 9 to 10 a.m., and all are welcome. If you need directions, please contact John or Kathie at 236-0333, johng14@gmail.com, or kathieg14@verizon.net.

READING GROUP



The Reading group will meet at the meetinghouse at 8:30 a.m. the second and fourth Sundays. The group has finished Nicholson Baker's *Human Smoke*, and the book for October is *Amish Grace: How Forgiveness Transcended Tragedy* by Donald B. Kraybill, Steven M. Nolt, and David L. Weaver-Zercher. *Amish Grace* is about the "remarkable response of the Amish community to the horrific shooting of ten schoolgirls at Nickel Mines, Pennsylvania, in October 2006." How and why were the people in this Amish community so ready to forgive the shooter and his family? If you would like to join the book group and purchase *Amish Grace*, contact Carmen at 354-9556 or speak to her after meeting.

Forgiveness is giving up the right to retaliate. Forgiveness is the willingness to have something happen the way it happened. It's not true that you can't forgive something; it's a matter of the will, and you always have the choice. Forgiveness is never dependent on what the other person does or does not do; it is always under our control. Forgiveness is giving up the insistence on being understood. . . . Jesus forgave those who crucified him. This is a radically new way of thinking. For those who accept and practice this discipline, there is a release of energy and a sense of freedom.

--Pixie Koestline Hammond, from *For Everything There Is a Season*

MIDCOAST MONTHLY MEETING OF FRIENDS, P.O. Box 714, Damariscotta, ME 04543. Co-Clerks: Karen Cadbury, 230-0436, and Deborah Haviland, 354-8714; Recording Clerk: Jean Crawford, 236-4176; Treasurer: Paul Diamond, 236-0283. Newsletter--Oct. 2008, Vol. 20, No. 10. Published every month but August. Editing/design: Diane Kirkman, 236-9078, diane_kirkman@hotmail.com, 18 Atlantic Ave., Apt. 3, Camden, ME 04843. Address changes: Pat Spock, 729-0826, wspock@gwi.net, 10 Curtis St., Brunswick, ME 04011. Web: Guy Marsden, 443-8942, guy@arttec.net, 61 Delano Rd., Woolwich, ME 04579.