

12th Month

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

December 2007



The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon
them a light has shined.

--Isaiah 9:2 (NKJV)

Hope begins in the dark, the stubborn hope that if you just
show up and try to do the right thing, the dawn will come.
You wait and watch and work: you don't give up.

-- Anne Lamott

December

Saturday	Dec. 1		Celebrate the Alternatives, Skidompha Lib., Damariscotta
Sunday	Dec. 9	9-10 a.m.	*Megunticook Worship Group, Camden
		Rise of Meeting	*Christmas Party (Please bring finger foods to share.)
Sunday	Dec. 16	Rise of Meeting	Meeting for Worship for Business (Please bring a Christmas snack to share. We'll have beverages.)
Sunday	Dec. 30	Meeting for Worship	*Candle-Lighting Service

January 2008

Sunday	Jan. 13	9-10 a.m.	*Megunticook Worship Group, Camden
		Rise of Meeting	*Reception for New Members [see "Hospitality" in Bus. Mtg. Highlights]

*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-- Eleventh Month 18, 2007

Ministry & Counsel--Friends will **please review draft revisions** for the new edition of NEYM (New England Yearly Meeting) *Faith and Practice* to be found on the credenza.

The meeting **APPROVED** a **Memorial Minute for Jerry Wood**.

Gifts & Leadings--During the Gifts & Leadings process, we have been sensing an emerging energy within the Meeting for proactive outreach to our broader community. In a time of deep personal sharing today we have recognized our need to allot this new energy carefully among our various committees and to be open to altering committee structure if appropriate. As questions remain, we urge Gifts & Leadings to proceed, expecting that at the January meeting for business Friends will discuss appointment of a small ad hoc committee, representing standing committees, to prepare recommendations on this question for consideration by the meeting.

Hospitality--A welcoming reception for new members Brewster Grace and Jim Matlack is scheduled for **January 13**. There is still need for Friends to sign up to bring simple refreshments on a Sunday. Please see the list on the bulletin board.

Andy Burt reported conversations with members of the Midcoast Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Edgecomb. They are looking for a place to worship and have expressed interest in possibly sharing ours. The Meeting asked Andy to request a specific proposal including willingness to alter their schedule.

Peace & Social Concerns--Nancy Booth reported that **CHIP** (Coastal Housing Improvement Program) needs special financial support in the face of high heating fuel costs.

Friends **APPROVED** a contribution of \$150 to **Celebrate the Alternatives!** alternative gifts fair and performance at Skidompha Library on **December 1**.

Coming Events--We will have a **Christmas Fair** on **December 9**. Sylvia Tavares and Jayne Dwyer will sell their wares. Friends will please bring a used item in good condition for sale. Proceeds will benefit a cause/causes yet to be determined. A **New Year's Candle-Lighting Service** will be held on **Sunday, December 30**, during the usual worship hour. Friends are invited to **bring candles in holders**.

The **next meeting for business** will be on **Sunday, December 16**. Please bring a **Christmas snack to share**.

THE CHRISTMAS PARTY will be held on December 9 in the manner that was initiated last year: Friends are asked to bring "lightly used items" that might be just the thing we would like to purchase for our gift-giving this year. Children may bring a toy they are ready to part with, as long as it is clean. Jane Dwyer and Sylvia Tavares will also come with their lovely handmade jewelry as they have for many years. Bring finger foods to share and to add to the festivities. We would enjoy anyone who is led to share poems or music or to lead in carol singing. The money raised in the sale will go to a worthy cause to be determined at the December monthly meeting. So far the following have been suggested: CHIP (for heating oil), a FUM project in Kenya, and JoePublicFilms (Friend Tom Jackson filmmaker). If the children would like to make a recommendation as in the past, we would very much appreciate their lead in this.

QUERIES: The Meeting Community

Do you love one another as becomes the followers of Christ? Do you share each other's joys and burdens? When conflicts arise, do you seek in mutual forgiveness and tenderness to resolve them speedily? Are you careful of the reputation of others? Do you seek beyond all differences of opinion and circumstances for unity in the divine life?

During the Holiday season, please save **cancelled stamps**. We collect them to raise money for Quaker missions (for example, FWCC projects like Right Sharing). U.S. commemoratives and stamps from other countries are the most valuable. There is a link to this NEYM program on our web site.

ADVICES--The Meeting Community: Let us live in love as members of a Christian community. Let us be ready to give and receive help, to rejoice together in the blessings of life and to sympathize with each other in its trials.

Let us maintain unity: let us avoid tale-bearing and detraction, acknowledge differences and seek to settle conflicts promptly in a manner free from resentment and all forms of inward violence; let us visit one another, making sure that those who are alone are drawn into the wider family of Friends. Thus, we may know one another as fellow workers in the things that endure.



The New Year's Candle-Lighting will take place during Meeting for Worship on First Day, the 30th. Not required, but those who wish may bring a candle to light (in a holder, please). The vocal ministry during this Light celebration is usually about reflections on the past year and hopes for the new year.

Friendly 8s--A January Gathering

Friendly Eights will meet in January 2008, and we'd like to give those who didn't sign up before an opportunity to do so now. Those who have signed up are Mallory and George Waldman, Anne Spencer, Karen Cadbury, Nancy Booth, Deb and Pete Haviland, Cynthia Thomas, Carolyn Miller, and Barb and Ernie Foust. We may have two groups if that works better. Please call Anne Spencer (443-3275) or Deb Haviland (354-8714) if you want to join us. We'll be in touch early in the new year.

The Oratorio Chorale will be participating in the Christmas concert put on by Ray Cornils, the famed organist of the First Parish Church in Brunswick, Tuesday evening December 18, at 7:30 in the Merrill Auditorium in Portland. He will be playing the Kotchmer organ, the pride of the Merrill. This annual event is by invitation only to the participants, and we are delighted to have been asked. We will be singing some new carols and some old ones with new arrangements. It is always well subscribed, so if you plan to come, call the Merrill soon and ask how to get tickets. Or ask me, and I will try to find out how to get in. Please note: my new e-mail address is cmd@singingbridge.net. Thank you.

--Claire Darrow

Megunticook Worship Group to Hold Monthly Meetings for Worship

Kathie and John Gass have offered their "Cobb House Studio" as a venue for meetings for worship in Camden. The Megunticook Worship Group, which has met primarily during the summers at the Children's Chapel in Rockport, will be meeting for worship from 9 to 10 a.m. the second Sundays of December and January (December 9 and January 13), and any and all are welcome to attend. Depending on the turnout for these two meetings, the group may meet again and perhaps more frequently.

Here are the Gasses' directions: Take a left onto Park from Rte. 90, proceed till you can drive no farther, then turn right onto Mechanic Street, and then immediately onto Cobb Road. We are no. 14, on the left, a white cape with a blue flowerbox on the front and a treehouse in the front tree. If arriving from the north: Take a right turn at the French & Braun intersection in the middle of Camden or at any side street following that intersection. Turn left onto Mechanic Street, go about a mile till you see Garden Institute sign on your left, which faces Cobb Road on the right. We are the second home on the left, no. 14. Enter through the garage pedestrian door, take the stairs to the second-story studio. For further details, please call John or Kathie at 236-0333.

THE QUAKER MOTTO CALENDAR: A GIFT FROM THE HAVILANDS

For many years the Havilands have enjoyed giving family and friends the Quaker Motto Calendar at Christmas. Once again Pete and Deb would like to give this gift to all members and attenders of Midcoast Meeting. Calendars will be on the credenza in early December. Please take one and enjoy it. It comes with love and wishes for a peaceful and joyous 2008.

M&C: Faith & Practice Revision Committee Update: This year at New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM) Sessions in August, the "Worship" chapter, which has been revised several times, was given preliminary approval. We are being encouraged to start using this chapter and see how it works in practice. Comments are welcome, as we use the chapter, to prepare for final approval. Copies are available on the credenza.

At NEYM Sessions the Revision Committee presented a working paper for Chapter 9, "A Brief History of Friends in New England." They are inviting comments on the working paper by February 1. Copies of this are also available on the credenza. You may send your comments directly to the committee by e-mail at fandp@neym.org or mail to Jan Hoffman, Clerk, 343 West St., Amherst, MA 01002. Or you may forward comments to Linda Cote-Small at 563-6712 or chezcote@roadrunner.com, and they will be sent along with Ministry & Counsel comments.

From A Very, Very Brief History of Quakerism:

Once upon a time, there was a young man named George Fox. George Fox was looking for God. He went from church to church to church, seeking God. Then, in 1647, when he was 23, he heard a voice saying, "There is one, even Christ Jesus, who can speak to thy condition." This was the beginning of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers).

The beliefs that Fox expressed are the same that most Quakers believe today:

- Every person has direct access to God
- Every person is of equal worth
- There is no need in one's religious life for ceremonies, rituals, creeds—"empty forms"
- Following the inward light will lead to spiritual development

Quakers went along practicing their faith in relative harmony for a couple hundred years. Then, in America, in the 1820s, Quakers split into two groups, Hicksites and Orthodox.

Hicksites

Followers of Elias Hicks from Long Island

Believe in the primacy of Christ within and the relative unimportance of the virgin birth, crucifixion, salvation (Biblical beliefs). They were liberal and emphasized social reform.

This sounds like a lot of us, but that's not where New England Friends were in the early 1800s. We were:

Orthodox

We believed in the infallibility of Scripture and the divinity of Christ. But we didn't stop there. In the 1840s, we split again into Wilburites and Gurneyites. (New England split in 1845.)

Wilburites

Followers of John Wilbur from Rhode Island

Conservative

Traditionalists

Individual spiritual inspiration

Forerunners of our present-day Conservatives

Gurneyites

Followers of John Joseph Gurney from England

Evangelical

Pastoral

Bible-centered

And we took a radical turn after 1870: Revivalism brought 1000s of converts, definitely pastoral, evangelical Protestant

[*Ed. note:* This excerpt, courtesy of Carmen Lavertu, is from Ann Dodd-Collins's presentation at VQM on the history of the Religious Society of Friends. More excerpts will appear in upcoming newsletters. Full copies are available at the meetinghouse or by e-mail from Carmen (clavertu@gmail.com) or Diane Kirkman (diane_kirkman@hotmail.com).]



[November 18, 2007, photo by Jim Matlack]

Contemplating Our Contributions to the Future of the Meeting

If you were not able to come to the October 28 Pizza Party and Activity, the Gifts & Leading Committee would like you to consider quietly spending 10 to 15 minutes on the following exercise:

"Imagine that you have just arrived at Midcoast Friends meetinghouse to attend its 20th anniversary celebration. You are excited to share in this special occasion. In your mind, imagine who is there with you, what the meetinghouse and grounds look like, what sounds you hear, what aromas float from the kitchen. Write down two or three things about the Meeting that you have been most grateful for over this last couple of years leading up to the anniversary. Write down at least two ways you have contributed to make the meeting what it is now, in 2015."

Once you have sat quietly with your imaginings of the future of the Meeting and your contribution in making it what it will be in 2015, we would like you to consider what you would like to contribute to our Meeting in 2008. There is a Contribution Board in the meeting room where you can write down what you'd like to offer, or you can speak to: Deb Haviland, Carmen Lavertu, Claire Darrow, Linda Cote-Small, or Sally Tukey.

What About Quakerism Is Important to the Way We Lead Our Lives Now and in the Future?

Midcoast Friends Meeting in Damariscotta, Maine, requests brief proposals for participation in an evening series of panel discussions (dates TBD) to begin in January and run through the winter.

These public discussions intend to explore both the spiritual and behavioral relevance of Quakerism now and in the future, in the context of individual and community life. We expect lively dialogue and new inspiration.

Interested parties are invited to send a brief paragraph describing the experiences and perspectives they would like to share. In addition, we request a brief bio, a brief description of the experience the applicant has in effectively communicating his or her ideas in previous public fora, and contact information for two or three references. Should modest financial assistance be required for participation, please share those details with us, as some limited assistance may be available.

Please distribute this request among Friends. Submissions will be considered on a rolling basis through the end of December. Please contact Linda Cote-Small by phone 207-563-6712 or email chezcote@roadrunner.com, or contact Willow Rowntree at willowrowntree@sbcglobal.net.

Nancy Booth's mother found and photographed this sign many years ago:

