

# Portland Friends Newsletter

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SIXTH MONTH 2012

## **First Day schedule**

### **Meeting for Worship**

10:30am through  
June 17; 5pm from June 24,  
followed by potluck 6:30pm

### **Religious Education**

2nd & 4th Sundays:  
adults 9am, singing 10am,  
youth 10:45am

### **Visit our website**

[PortlandFriendsMeeting.org](http://PortlandFriendsMeeting.org)

### **Friends to contact**

#### **Co-Clerks**

Muriel Allen 874-9523  
Anne Harwood 666-8179

#### **Treasurer, Contributions**

Sue Nelson 780-0349  
58 Hillis Street  
Portland 04103

#### **Treasurer, Operating Account**

Kathy Beach 741-2940  
14 Drew Road  
South Portland 04106

#### **Treasurer, Special Funds**

Sara Jane Elliot 883-0573

#### **Special Needs Funds**

Chris Beach 741-2940  
Elizabeth Szatkowski 772-1774

#### **Ministry and Counsel**

Kate Potter 761-1648

#### **Pastoral Care Coordinators**

Shannon O'Connor &  
David Spector 774-2578

#### **Religious Education**

Adults: Brad Bussiere-Nichols  
772-1774  
Youth: Shuli Bonham 619-4787

#### **Youth RE Coordinator**

Anne Payson 781-2501

#### **Use of the Meetinghouse**

Jane Mullen 761-5856

#### **E-group Coordinator**

Mary Beth Walsh 797-8414  
[mbwalsh@mainelyaccess.com](mailto:mbwalsh@mainelyaccess.com)



*Untie my hands and deliver my heart from sloth. Set me free from the laziness that goes about disguised as activity when activity is not required of me, and from the cowardice that does what is not demanded, in order to escape sacrifice. But give me the strength that waits upon You in silence and peace. Give me humility in which alone is rest, and deliver me from pride which is the heaviest of burdens. And possess my whole heart and soul with the simplicity of love.*

—Thomas Merton

## **Query Six—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?

## **Upcoming Events**

- June 16** **Pride Parade**, Monument Square, 12:30pm
- June 22** Preble Street Soup Kitchen, 3:30-7pm; Aaiyn Foster, 766-9762
- June 24** SUMMER SCHEDULE BEGINS; Solstice Celebration Potluck, 6:30pm
- July 1-7** Friends General Conference Gathering, Kingston, RI
- July 14** Youngish Adults Potluck, 5-8pm
- July 29** Summer Meeting for Business, 7pm
- Aug 1-22** Trip to Kenya and Kakamega orphanage; Sukie Rice, 865-3768
- Aug 3-4** Bike trip from Boston to NEYM Sessions; [www.biketosessions.org](http://www.biketosessions.org)
- Aug 4-8** New England Yearly Meeting Sessions: "Choose Integrity", Smithfield, RI
- Sep 29-30** PFM Retreat, Friends Camp, China, ME

*There are members and attenders who need rides to Meeting and other support during times of difficulty. If you need or can provide rides, food, or your silent presence at home meetings for worship, please leave a message for Shannon O'Connor, 774-2578.*

## **Newsletter Contributions**

**Please mail items to:**  
Anna Barnett  
835 Congress St., Apt. 2  
Portland, ME 04102

**OR email items  
to Anna Barnett**  
[abarnett@gmail.com](mailto:abarnett@gmail.com)  
Phone: 523-0314

**Send address change  
details to Tony Scillipoti**  
[tscillipoti@maine.rr.com](mailto:tscillipoti@maine.rr.com)

**Deadline for receiving newsletter items: Friday after business meeting or sooner!**

## Minutes of Portland Friends Monthly Meeting June 3, 2012

1. Portland Friends Meeting for Business began in silent worship with 31 members and attenders present, during which co-clerk Anne Harwood read the Fifth Query from NEYM Faith and Practice, concerning Outreach, which begins: Do you welcome inquirers and visitors to your meeting?

2. **Clerk's Comments.** The last part of the query seems a tall order, but the phrase about welcoming visitors reminds us that we were each new to the meeting once. Anne asked us to remember what it was that told us we were welcome here and asked us to share it with the rest of us. Several people shared experiences of both warm welcome and respectful distance, warmth of children, messages delivered that meant something special, mutual support and sharing of testimonies.

3. **Acceptance of Minutes May 6th Meeting for Business.** The minutes were accepted without changes.

4. **Treasurer's Report.** Sue Nelson reported that there is no current Treasurer's report as Kathy Beach is travelling.

5. **Ministry and Counsel.** Dee Kelsey read Kate Potter's report, which said that we are supporting the initiative of the Co-Clerks in planning, with Financial Oversight, discussions for the whole community on the topic of personal and corporate handling of money. Possible Threshing sessions in the fall are under discussion, with Adult Religious Education.

We continue to pray for guidance in the current difficult transition time for the Friends School. Jessica Eller's job has been changed and she will not be working in the school administration after June. A clearness committee has already met with her, at her request. We are ready to organize clearness committees for others involved in the School's transition, with the goals of easing the ensuing tenderness and affirming Portland Friends' supportive welcome.

The Retreat committee's plans are evolving for the September 29-30th overnight at Friends Camp. Themes of slowing down, deepening joy and connection are being considered.

A registration form is in the works. Equalization funds are not available from Financial Oversight, but we are discussing other ways to help families who cannot afford to attend. Our aim is to welcome all generations and families. Based on how this Retreat goes, the committee will discuss planning for future retreats, looking at other venues for the years ahead. The issue of reducing cost by doing our own catering was raised, though the Retreat Committee felt that freeing members from other commitment was important. The meeting was urged to find other ways of supporting the retreat financially. Ways of doing this remain under consideration.

Work continues on the wording of guidelines for the Meeting when disquieting strangers join us. We are aware that more discussion is needed for how we care for them.

6. **Recorder's report.** Lise Wagner reported that we had 105 members last year, and this year 108 members: 1 addition by request and 3 by transfer, with a loss of 1 by transfer. There are 78 female members and 30 men, 77 resident members and 31 non-resident members. The number of members under 25 is 15. Average attendance at Meeting for Worship at Mahoosuc Mountains Worship Group is 5 and at Portland Friends' Meeting is 64. Average attendance at Children's classes is 30, and Adult Religious Education classes 15. Average attendance at Meeting for Business is 27.

7. **Financial Oversight.** Rita Clifford reported on the committee's discussions on practices for raising money, as requested by March Meeting for Business. Questions considered included whether we can change the process of budgeting and raising money. Historically we run at a deficit through most of the year and get our money in at the end of the year, which can cause consternation. Financial Oversight suggest that as usual committee clerks request their budget in the fall and bring it to Meeting for Business in January, when pledges are asked for from members and attenders. Financial Oversight ask for those forms to be returned in the new process by January 27th so that they can inform Meeting for Business in February of their expectations for income in the coming year. If this is not large enough to meet the proposed budget, they would like to bring recommendations to Meeting for Business as to how to reduce the budget and match income to expenses. Financial Oversight will also estimate the percentage of contributions received over and above pledges and income from other sources in framing the budget.

Financial Oversight were thanked for their work and clarity of thinking on this issue. There is an inherent long-term dilemma regarding the end of the tax year, which creates problems for people handling their individual finances with charitable giving. Financial Oversight were asked how they can resolve this dilemma. They are approaching it with faith, hope and charity! Another resolution would be to change their fiscal year, as NEYM does (October to September). There was welcome for the concept that we should budget throughout the year for regular giving. Financial Oversight hope that this will enable us to achieve greater discipline with our budget over the year.

Making a pledge and following through is a desired outcome, but supporting people through achieving their follow-through has been more problematic. It was suggested that we help people by reminders and encouragement. However, we need to be clear that this addresses our original concern about the number of reminders and the emotional issues around contributing. Financial Oversight were asked to consider that we come from a place of abundance in both spiritual and physical terms, and that around Thanksgiving would be a better time to do this than well into the new financial year. They agreed to consider these ideas.

## Minutes of Portland Friends Monthly Meeting, June 3, 2012, *continued*

### 7. **Financial oversight (*continued*)**

Financial Oversight has tried to achieve a realistic budget close to what we actually spend. Their difficulty arises when expenditures are changed during the budgeting year; they cannot change their income without asking the meeting for more money when they are struggling to fund their existing budget. Once a budget is finalized they will report at each Meeting for Business in a factual manner. Announcements regarding budget deficits or surpluses will be given in a way that is not designed to arouse guilt. Financial Oversight will work with Adult Religious Education on offering a workshop on money and stewardship. Pledges given into the box are still welcome though there was concern that the physical structure of the box could be improved.

A contingency line item tied to certain other line items of the budget, that could be rolled over if not used, was also suggested. Another suggestion was that visitors should be given the opportunity to contribute into the box. We were asked to consider the gift we give to the world with the young people this meeting raises and helps, and that this is something that our giving to the meeting supports. We were reminded that it had taken many meetings on sexuality to discuss our issues around that, and that it may take a length of time to clarify issues around money.

**8. Truth and Reconciliation Commission update.** Sandi Jensen reported that Arla Patch has received funding from the Leadings Committee to take part in the Truth And Reconciliation Commission that has been set up to heal divisions between the Native American community in Maine and other Maine residents. She had the idea of establishing a public forum for discussion of this issue, and to this end she has established contact with USM, which is supporting this with a venue, and a liaison officer to involve USM and other students. The program has grown a long way beyond her initial vision. She suggested that we consider providing a dinner for speakers and Native American students before the program in November, Native American Awareness Month. They would like us to be involved in promotion and to figure out how we can be involved in getting donations as they receive no funding from the State. Sandi Jensen asked interested parties to let her have email addresses to add to the list.

**9. Approve official participation in Gay Pride Parade June 16th.** This was approved. Shannon O'Connor will let interested parties know where to meet.

### 10. **Representatives for NEYM**

a) Nominating Committee: no representative was found. Anna Barnett will put this in the newsletter. We have not had a representative on Nominating Committee for some time.

b) Ministry and Counsel: Tom Antonik offered to continue doing this alongside Brad Bussiere-Nichols as co-member.

c) Yearly Meeting Annual Sessions: Anna Barnett, Elizabeth Szatkowski, Andy and Dorothy Grannell and Lise Wagner.

These were all approved by Meeting for Business.

**11. Appoint representative to July Quarterly Meeting July 28.** Andy Grannell will be our representative.

**12. Request from Vassalboro Meeting for support of Ramallah student.** The Ramallah school was founded with help from Maine Quakers, and support for it would be part of support for the Palestinians. It was suggested that this request be sent to Peace and Social Concerns for their consideration.

**13. Request from Adelphi Meeting if there are those who would like to join with other Quakers who are affirming of LGBT.** Please contact Anne Harwood if interested, and she will give contact information. The issue was referred to Ministry and Counsel for further discussion.

**14. Request from Julie Harlow of Friends House Moscow to give a presentation on any night during the week of June 25-29.** This was referred to Adult Religious Education.

**15. Request by Tom Nielson to give a concert.** Tom Nielson has given many concerts for Quakers. This would be popular but costs \$400. Friends felt this was too much alongside all the other events at the time and we passed on it.

**16. Reminder - Summer Meeting for Business will be on Sunday, July 29th at 7:00p.m.**

*Jenny Doughty, Co-Recording Clerk*

## Summer solstice potluck June 24 -- bring your picnic blanket

The first summer evening potluck is June 24, at 6:30pm (following Meeting for Worship at 5pm, our summer schedule). Earth & Spirit Committee plans to celebrate the summer solstice at this first potluck.

If you have an outdoor game your family enjoys or a song or poem you would like to share - please let us know. You can contact Aaiyn Foster (766-9762, [af@fosterwellnessnow.com](mailto:af@fosterwellnessnow.com)) or Holly Travers (854-4683, [dhtravers@myfairpoint.net](mailto:dhtravers@myfairpoint.net)).

If you are in the mood for outdoor dining, bring your picnic blanket!

## Meditation on the Summer Solstice

*In the spirit of reflection, Earth and Spirit Committee has asked to republish this meditation, which originally appeared here in June 2011. --AB.*

The summer solstice has a special impact on the earth, especially on biological life. Because the light is bright, the day is warm and the sun's stay is longest, this day can stimulate plants, animals and human hearts more strongly than usual. As the Earth and Spirit Committee reflected together on the coming solstice, one person put it this way: *The summer sun energizes life and draws everything up to itself.*

Like Francis of Assisi, some people are blessed with a strong connection to the earth on which they walk. Think of all the gardeners in our Meeting. The range of the sun in summer subtly induces humans in both hemispheres to earnest concern for the earth's environment and atmosphere. All beings, and even quarks of matter, work toward the preservation of Mother Earth. One of the members of Earth and Spirit and some others in our Meeting believe the earth is a living, breathing being, sustaining and nurturing us. Many in our Meeting work diligently to preserve biological life and diversity.

People feel sometimes there are too many issues to care about. Concerning this quandary, Mother Teresa of Calcutta suggests: Do a few things with great love.

The scientist of the Earth and Spirit Committee points out: *With all its importance, our sun is only a speck in the universe.* Another person shudders and says, *I feel I could be shaken off the earth like a flea.* How awesome the Cosmos. Space observatories like the satellite Kepler have found indications of some 500 planets in the forms of shadows traveling across their suns, or slight wobbles in suns themselves. But these planets are light-years away from us. There is no evidence of a planet like the earth, though science continues to search.

So, for now, infinitesimal as we are in the universe, we humans must be of some importance to have drawn to ourselves such a beautiful planet, rich with life. This is why we strive to care for the preservation of other species as well as our own, to constantly clean and conserve our water, and to continue to do a few things with great love. Of all the photographs ever taken, it is difficult to imagine one more beautiful than that of our blue planet taken from space.

In a concave area of fields and ponds formed by four rounded summits of the ancient Laguna Mountains in San Diego County was a commune named Madre Grande. Out of respect for the land, the back-to-the-landers who lived there had no permanent shelters, just mobile tents, campers or huts easily dismantled. The stick-fenced vegetable garden could easily dissolve back into the fields to feed rattlesnakes in this ancient meeting place for the indigenous people that once lived here. In the 1980s, the residents and visitors gathered one summer solstice just before high noon to honor the sun. One of the Earth and Spirit members was there.

Dressed in gaudy feathers and a long golden cape, and imbued with traditions from an ancient time and place, an Aztec shaman presided.

The Aztec priest said, *You moderns were told that we Aztecs worship the Sun. Consider this. Can you breathe without the oxygen that comes from trees which cannot exist without the sun? Can you drink water without the evaporation of rain from the warmth of the sun? Can you eat without the sun's photosynthesis in trees and plants that provides you and other animals the food that sustains you? However, I say the sun is more than that. We Aztecs believe the sun is the Light of spirituality, goodness and compassion. Could the Sun also be your God, the Source of everything?*

This lively earth, this beautiful planet, and this Aztec man have much to tell us about the summer solstice. Solstice reminds us to do a few things with great love for Mother Earth.



Aztec calendar stone



### **Wanted: Representative for NEYM Nom Com**

This month's Business Meeting didn't find a representative for New England Yearly Meeting's Nominating Committee, but we think there might be someone out there who would like to take this important position. Nominating Committee's work feeds the life and vitality of the yearly meeting, and PFM hasn't had someone on this committee for many years.

Nom Com members help find people from their own and other monthly meetings to fill roles in NEYM. The committee meets mainly from February through July, as well as at the annual Sessions in August. You'd be invited to about 4-6 meetings either in person or on the telephone, plus meetings during Sessions.

Contact Muriel Allen (874-9523, [murielpfm@gmail.com](mailto:murielpfm@gmail.com)) or Anne Harwood (666-8179, [aharwood47@gmail.com](mailto:aharwood47@gmail.com)) if you are interested.

*"Vestment,"* photograph by Arla Patch. Six of Arla's photographs appear in the show "Strangers and Others" at Pace Gallery, Fryeburg Academy, Fryeburg, Maine. **Opening June 16, 1-3pm**; showing through August 18.

This August, Young Adult Friends with a concern for climate change -- including PFM's Anna Barnett -- are leading a group of Quakers from across New England to bike to NEYM Sessions in Smithfield, RI.



We are...

- Choosing **SIMPLICITY**. Exploring a different mode of travel, and finding out how to make this possible.
- Nurturing **COMMUNITY**. Bonding through shared experience and sense of purpose.
- Spending time in **NATURE** to refresh our spirits.
- Connecting with **BODY**, and rediscovering the body as a temple.
- Retracing the paths of Friends from **HISTORY**, who followed their leadings across New England without the internal combustion engine.
- Acting on our **SPIRITUAL CONCERN** about climate change.

We invite you...

- to **join us on an all-ages ride from Boston to Smithfield, August 3-4**. Take your bike on the train and meet us in Boston - you only need to add one extra day to your Sessions agenda!
- to take a bigger step and **ride from Portland to Boston with Anna Barnett**, or start a local ride from your area
- to **get involved** by supporting riders - carry some luggage to Smithfield or cheer at the Arrival Party

**Find out all about it and sign up at [www.biketosessions.org](http://www.biketosessions.org)**

Or contact Anna Barnett, 523-0314, [abarnett@gmail.com](mailto:abarnett@gmail.com)

Portland Friends Meeting  
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Portland, Maine 04103

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### Register for NEYM Sessions

Registration is now open online for New England Yearly Meeting Sessions, August 4-8 at Bryant University, Smithfield, RI. The theme is "Choose Integrity".

Go to <http://sessions.neym.org> for more info and registration. Registering early is encouraged, especially for those requesting equalization funds.



### Summer Schedule starts June 24

Meeting for Worship 5pm  
Potluck 6:30pm



**Save the date:**  
**All-Meeting Retreat,**  
**Sep 29-30**  
PFM's All-Meeting Retreat will be Sep 29-30 (overnight stay) at Friends Camp in China, ME.

Photo: Easter 2012; Brad Bussiere-Nichols