

Portland Friends Newsletter

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TWELFTH MONTH 2012

First Day schedule

Meeting for Worship

Sundays 10:30am

Religious Education

2nd & 4th Sundays:

Adults 9am, singing 10am,
youth 10:45am

Visit our website

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



"Sometimes the most important thing in a whole day is the rest we take between two deep breaths, or the turning inwards in prayer for five short minutes."

—Etty Hillesum

Advices & Queries

- Love boldly. Share deeply.
- Do you maintain an appropriate balance among work, service, worship, family, and recreation? Are you ready to rest if God asks it of you?

(From revised Ch. 11, New England Yearly Meeting Faith & Practice, preliminarily accepted)

Upcoming Events

- Dec 24** Candlelight silent and programmed worship, 5-6pm
Dec 27-30 NEYM Young Friends midwinter retreat, Harvard, MA
Dec 29 Memorial service for Margaret Raymond
Jan 3-6 NEYM Young Adult Friends midwinter retreat, Leverett, MA

Monthly Events:

1st Fri/Sat: Art Walk Friday, art play Saturday 10am-noon. Kathy Beach, 233-2065

1st Sunday: Meeting for Business, 9am

2nd Saturday: Youngish Adults Potluck, 5-8pm Marnie Grumbach, 856-5008

2nd & 4th Sun: Singing & Religious Ed: Adults 9am, singing 10am, youth 10:45am

4th Friday: Preble Street Soup Kitchen, 3:30-7pm. Aaiyn Foster, 766-9762

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
Phone: 523-0314

**Send address change
details to Tony Scillipoti**
tscillipoti@maine.rr.com

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

Minutes of Portland Friends Monthly Meeting December 2, 2012

Portland Friends Meeting gathered in meeting for worship to conduct business on December 2, 2012 at 9 a.m., with 15 members and attenders present. We began in silent worship, during which co-clerk Muriel Allen read from the new Advices and Queries of New England Yearly Meeting. From the Young Adults Friends she read a passage which begins "Love boldly. Share deeply," then, "Do you maintain an appropriate balance among work, service, worship, family, and recreation? Are you ready to rest if God asks it of you?"

1. **Clerk's Comments.** Co-Clerk Muriel Allen thanked everyone for the confidence and help given her during her two years as co-Clerk. Friends warmly praised Muriel for her joyful work supporting this Meeting.

2. **We found the minutes of our November meeting to be in good order.**

3. **Treasurer's Report.** Treasurer Kathy Beach reported that we are eleven months, or 92% into the budget year. Income for November was \$7,536, including donations of \$5080, so that year-to-date income stands at \$54,615. November expenses were \$2,397 so that year-to-date expenses are \$56,288. Income and expenses are continuing to hold even, with 76% of the budget having been collected on the Income side, and 78% of the budget having been spent on the expense side. Thus, we continue to narrow the budget deficit and it now stands at \$1675. Friends accepted the report.

4. **Financial Oversight and the proposed 2013 budget.** Rita Clifford presented a two-part report from the Committee on Financial Oversight. First, the Committee has considered the question of what to do with any end-of-year surpluses, this year and in the future. Rita reviewed the history of the use of income from Barbie Potter's bequest to the Meeting, the current situation of our Capital Improvement Fund (it will be approximately \$8500 in January 2013), and the upcoming needs itemized by Buildings and Grounds for such large-ticket items as a new roof, paving of the driveway, new floors in the basement dining area and kitchen, and a new furnace. It is anticipated that Buildings and Grounds will make a report to Meeting for Business in January concerning these projects, and further discussion of how to fund these projects and other projects in the future will take place at that time. Financial Oversight therefore recommends that we approve the placement of any year-end surpluses in the Capital Improvement Fund for the next several years. Friends approved the allocation of any surplus for 2012 to the Capital Improvement Fund.

Treasurer's Report at a glance:

11 months = 92% of the year

Total income: \$54,615 (76% of budget)

Total expenses: \$56,288 (78% of budget)

Second, Rita presented the proposed 2013 budget and noted two major changes. First, she thanked the community for giving more regularly over the year, which enabled the Committee to plan with more confidence. Second, she noted expenses are less, thanks in part to Committees' having reduced their budget requests. Rita went over in detail the income and expense sides, and considerable discussion was had.

In particular, the Committee asked for Friends' input in regard to the contribution to New England Yearly Meeting proposed at \$12,500 (which is in excess of the amount required based on resident members). Several Friends spoke in favor of the importance of Yearly Meeting services and events to this Meeting and many others.

The Committee presented the budget today with a view toward considering whether to accept it next month. Questions in the interim should be referred to members of Financial Oversight, who are Rita Clifford, Sara Jane Elliot, Kathy Beach, Terry Garrett Tom Tracy, Sue Nelson, and Dorothy Grannell. Friends thanked the Committee for their careful work, and the clarity with which they presented considerable detail.

5. **Ministry and Counsel** Kate Potter reported for Ministry and Counsel. The Clerks received a letter from Tom Ewell requesting transfer of his membership to the new Friends Meeting of Whidbey Island, Washington. Co-clerk Muriel Allen read this moving letter aloud. It will be published in the newsletter. We approved the transfer.

We have also received the request for transfer of memberships into this Meeting of Pamela and James Grumbach from Newtown Meeting in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. Friends warmly approved.

Joanna Hoyt is now clear that she is laying down her membership in Portland Friends Meeting. The Hoyts have lived far away, northeast of Syracuse, New York, for more than ten years. Friends accepted her request.

There are two ongoing clearness committees for marriage and a new clearness committee for membership about to begin.

The Committee has been discussing how we could make it feasible for someone who is not in accord with the rest of attenders regarding an issue to "stand aside". This did happen at the time of Portland Friends' support of the Marriage Equality campaign. We simply want to make clear that this community welcomes diverse opinions and we perhaps need to broaden our listening and discernment.

Ministry and Counsel is looking forward to welcoming our new Co-Clerk Sarah Cushman, and the three new members of the Committee, to a joint meeting on December 20th.

Minutes, December 2, 2012, continued

6. Nominating Committee. Chris Beach presented a written report which puts forward those nominated new this Fall to serve in 2013, as well as all those who will be continuing in their current positions from this year. There are about 130 positions, and approximately 25 new volunteers. Chris noted that we have been blessed with the earliest and most complete sign-up by December that anyone can remember -- a wonderful omen for the coming year. Nominating will be working to fill the few remaining positions in December.

Nominating Committee asked that everyone be approved for serving next year. Friends approved the list of nominations.

7. Peace and Social Concerns. Jennifer Frick for the Committee asked if the Meeting could commit this month to a Ramallah scholarship. Falmouth and Vassalboro Quarters have been asked for \$2800/year. The Committee recommends \$500/year for the next 12 years from Portland Friends Meeting. Our answer is needed in December. We agreed to the contribution, whether it comes at the time of approval as a line item of the 2013 budget next month, or through other means such as fundraising.

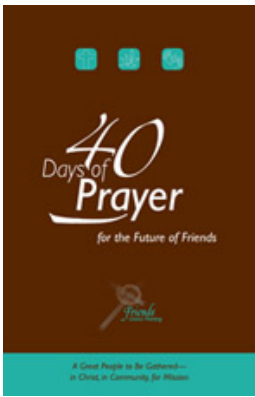
8. Repudiating the Doctrine of Christian Discovery. Margie Schoeller reported from a presentation at New England Yearly Meeting about this colonial doctrine of 1450, which permits Christians to kill or enslave non-Christians who reject conversion to Christianity, and to appropriate their land. NEYM is asking monthly meetings whether Quakers should repudiate the doctrine. It was suggested that we take this up at Adult Education sessions and publicize the issue in the newsletter. Friends approved this approach.

We closed in silent worship at 10:28 a.m. with 30 members and attenders present, purposing to meet again at 9 a.m. on January 6, 2013, God willing.

Lyn Ballou, Co-Recording Clerk



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: **“If you think about it, there are no boundaries** between one organism and another; between ‘life’ :
: and ‘non-life.’ We are constantly flowing from one to another: One moment a skin cell is a portion of a human :
: being, the next moment it is part of a dust pile; then it is transformed into a house plant or a rhododendron :
: bush; then it becomes oxygen to be breathed in by a possum, whose wastes feed bacteria that bring nutrients :
: to an oak tree, which feeds a gypsy moth. All through the food web and non-living world we travel, zillions of :
: fragments are forever being put together and taken apart to make yet more unique creations. Physically we :
: possess no true boundaries; we are forever re-molded and recast into new forms.” Francis Hole, a soil scientist :
: and poet (and Friend) has said, “Our bodies are disposable, biodegradable containers for spirit. We are worms :
: and granite, oak trees and robins, sea spume and mica; we are stardust. . . we are each as old as the :
: universe.” :
: From: *Caring For Creation: Reflections on the Biblical Basis of Earthcare* by Lisa Lofland Gould, published 1999 by Friends :
: Committee on Unity With Nature, as quoted in “Plain Living: A Quaker Path to Simplicity” by Catherine Whitmire, 2001 :
:



Those interested in exploring the FUM 40 Days of Prayer materials will meet Sunday, December 16th at rise of Meeting in the classroom on the first floor of the Meeting House. Please bring a lunch. At business meeting earlier this fall it was decided that a group of interested people should look at the materials with the eye to possibly forming a response to FUM about the *40 Days of Prayer – a great people to be gathered in Christ, in Community, for Mission*. To find the materials on line please go to www.fum.org and enter 40 days of prayer into the search box. A limited number of the materials are still available on line. For more information see Marlee Turner or Dorothy Grannell.



Fossil fuel divestment movement

Friends concerned about climate change may be interested in the growing grassroots campaign to get colleges and other institutions to stop investing in fossil fuel companies. Brad Bussiere-Nichols has information about the campaign, which is being supported by the organization 350.org. Students, alumni and faculty can get involved with their universities and colleges, and you may also have a voice about other investments such as your company's pension fund. Portland Friends Meeting and New England Yearly Meeting already have no investments in the fossil fuel industry. More info: <http://gofossilfree.org>, or contact Brad Bussiere-Nichols (756-5586).

Notices

Holiday decorations for sale

90 feet of lovely balsam roping (garland), gently used at the Advent Garden Walk. Pay what you can. Contact Anne Payson, 781-2501, annepayson10@gmail.com

Job opening: FUM Global Ministries Director

Friends United Meeting (FUM) is seeking qualified applicants for the Global Ministries Director position. This full-time, Richmond, Indiana-based staff person will receive a competitive salary, including benefits.

A complete job description is available on the FUM website at www.fum.org or by contacting the FUM office at info@fum.org or (765) 962-7573.

Applications will be received through January 31, 2013. Contacts with finalists and interviews will be scheduled after the close date, with an anticipated start date in Spring 2013.

Quaker Builders

If you need home repairs, want to remodel your kitchen, bath or need cabinet work, please think of Quaker Builders, LLC. Call Brad Nichols at [207-756-5586](tel:207-756-5586). Thanks! --Brad

Does your committee use the Meetinghouse?

Jane Mullen asks that those committees that meet at the meeting house regularly contact her and let her know the day/time they meet and the room they prefer to use. She asks that committees and other groups not assume that a space is available without reserving in advance with our meeting house coordinator. Many committees/groups have not reserved specific spaces/dates for their meetings, and conflicts are occurring. Contact jmmaine@aol.com; 761-5856

A few committee slots still open

As reported in business meeting, Friends have been so generous with your commitment to helping the meeting run. Most of the open positions have been filled for 2013, for which all of us are deeply grateful. There remain a few positions looking for volunteers: Help is needed on the Committees for Hospitality, Earth and Spirit, the Cemetery, and Recording Announcements on 4th Sundays. A fine mix of opportunities!



Christmas Eve worship

There will be a traditional Christmas Eve service on Monday December 24th beginning at 4:30 PM with silent worship, followed by a family service with readings of the Christmas story and songs from 5-6PM. For the first time this year there will be instrumental accompaniment by Rita Clifford on saxophone and Sarah Jane Eliot on clarinet. This is an opportunity to center and experience the peace and joy of the season. Please come - and bring a hand-held candle or small flashlight for lighting

along the rows before we sing "Silent Night".

Donations are welcome for the simple refreshments to follow. For further questions, you may contact Kate Potter.

What Else?

by Chris Beach

What does it take to make you whole?

What does it take to find your soul?

How do you play like a delighted child?

How are you tricked and left beguiled?

What if each question seeks a different thing,
and implies a different song you need to sing,
for each of these ends to start to begin,
for each felt good and delicious sin?

Many more questions I could ask,
each one seeking a separate task
that you might find you need to perform
just so that you might burst your norm.

But these four queries are enough to suggest
what you might ask and how you might test
the limits to living your life so fully
that mountain arises from lowly gully.

These four questions I've asked myself
and others whose lives were on the shelf,
wondering in despair, "What else, what else?
Please, tell me there's something else."

Maine Solstice

Wintry winds

nights grown long,

frozen ground

garden tools set down.

Tree leaves shed

life contracts to its roots.

The sleeping earth is nourished

filled with the seasons' treasures.

A time of outward quiet . . .

inner sinking down,

contemplation.

In this season of contrasts

between the dark and the bright

the busy and the quiet,

we wish you time to hear

that which would speak to you.

We wish you simplicity

and peace.

--Earth and Spirit



Friendly Q&A: Sarah Cushman



We are welcoming Sarah as our new Co-Clerk for 2013. Here she shares about her Quaker path.

How I got here

I always say that I can't remember a time when I wasn't seeking as a kid, sensing the Divine in the world around me and, at times, conscious that Spirit was also within me. I found my home with Quakers after an incredibly mixed upbringing of agnosticism (my primary family – mom and step-dad), Methodism & Episcopalianism (attending services on alternating weekends with my ordained Dad), and evangelical Christianity (a neighborhood church and camp down the road that I actively attended from elementary through high school). I always felt a little bit alien – walking that tender line between being a seeker in a

mostly modern world that didn't seem to have much use for anything religious – but also feeling great discomfort with the confining Jesus-is-the-only-way and heavy-on-the-need-to-evangelize aspects of my evangelical community.

So did Friends' worship ever speak to my condition when I found it! I started attending Meeting while at Bryn Mawr College 20 years ago. I know Quakerism isn't for everyone, but living out the practice that there is that of God in everyone and that Spirit is continuing to be revealed are some of what makes this practice the best and most dear fit for me personally. Not to mention the actual wild experience (and crazy and fabulous social contract) of a group of seekers sitting in silent worship and listening for the Divine together.

Two years after I graduated I fell in love with Rob Levin, a college friend who was living in New York and attending Morningside Meeting at the time. Since I moved back to Maine with Rob after we were married in the manner of Friends ten years ago, we have been incredibly blessed to be a part of this lively & very intergenerational meeting. Because Rob is Jewish we also enjoy services sometimes at Etz Chaim synagogue and are lucky to participate in the best Passover Seder group ever.

I sometimes feel a bit like a Quaker evangelist now – not in terms of theology, but in terms of outing myself as a practicing Friend, knowing there are many out there who are seeking a spiritual community and might find a home within Quakerism. And how often have I heard someone in the larger world say, "Quakers? I thought they were extinct..." I want everyone to know we are HERE. A precious, rewarding, and living practice!

My practice: rewards and challenges

Some of the challenges I have are: experiencing worry and/or empathy for others' concerns that keeps me up at night; finding the appropriate way to navigate and call on others for assistance with occasional conflict that arises within the meeting; "spiritual lulls" where I seem to be less able to be present in Meeting; and balancing attendance at worship (and its associated social time) after a busy week with my needs for contemplative and restorative solitude.

The practice of living as a Friend day-to-day and participating in various forms of worship is a lovely challenge. Attending Meeting for Worship, gliding on my bicycle and really seeing and being a part of the world around me, humming Friends songs and hymns, attempting to listen and respond during daily interactions through the lenses of Light and the testimonies, sharing tough stuff and warm hugs with family, co-workers, and friends/Friends, reading bits of Scripture and spiritual texts (generally piecemeal rather than cover to cover), pausing to take breaths during the day and offering snippets of prayer that come in the moment. Practice is the right word - for all of it. It's always evolving and never something that will be completely finished, which is both humbling and quite liberating at the same time.

Parenting as a Quaker

My daughter Cedar, age 6, has been embraced by PFM since she was in utero (seriously, the laughter and wisdom and support people of the Meeting have offered the whole way through have been incredibly meaningful). We had a simple and lovely Welcoming Ceremony for her at the Meeting at age 3 weeks and she's been on the active side ever since.

When we have a moment of silence before meals we've learned to give Cedar the job of counting and deciding when to squeeze hands – we also often follow our moment of silence with a "moment of loud", full of whoops and hollers. Bedtime is often when Cedar seems most spiritually interested, asking questions and commenting on things she's been thinking about. We also often hold different Friends and family in the light then.

While it can be frustrating sometimes in the moment as a parent, she generally knows her own mind and has a real clarity about how she feels led. (also known as having strong will :) I shared with Cedar a couple of times that she could become a Junior Member of the Meeting now or make a decision about whether she would like to join the Meeting when she's older, and she was clear that she wanted to wait. It's a joy to watch her ascertain her own values and express her own spirituality as time moves forward. I wonder often about 2nd generation kids of faith – what the likelihood is that my daughter will decide Quakerism is her home, whether she will be able to connect with the Spirit and have powerful experiences of the Divine that are all her own here (or anywhere else). I take heart from adults in the Meeting who are birthright Friends and have clearly found their own way within Friends Worship. Plus it's great to hear from older kids in the Meeting that, "whatever you do, Cedar has to go to the New England Yearly Meeting youth retreats!"

DOING IT IN THE LIGHT

EXPLORING WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT SEXUALITY

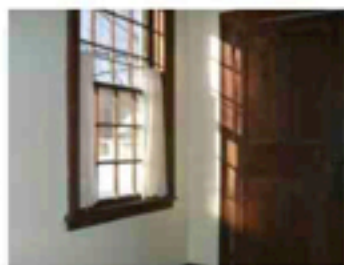
Peter Blood and Jessica Hipp
March 15-17, 2013

Co-sponsored
by New England
Yearly Meeting's
Working Party on
Spirituality and
Sexual Ethics

Program cost
of \$190 includes
program, housing
and meals, Friday
dinner through
Sunday lunch.
Scholarships are
available - please ask!

WOOLMAN HILL
Quaker Retreat Center

www.woolmanhill.org
info@woolmanhill.org
[www.Facebook.com/
WoolmanHill](http://www.Facebook.com/WoolmanHill)
107 Keets Road
Deerfield MA 01342
413-774-3431



Fifty years after the publication of *Towards a Quaker View of Sex*, most Friends still find it hard to talk to each other about sex. Through worship-sharing, journaling and readings, we'll dive into topics such as joy and celebration, how we can live faithfully through stages of personal development, the role our meetings can play in nurturing and sustaining relationships, and ways we can help each other experience healing and forgiveness from shame and self-doubt.

We hope to offer an open and safe opportunity to share together, as well as space for personal reflection. Friends (and fellow travelers) from age 15 to 95 welcome!

NOTE: This program is limited to 15 participants, and will run concurrently with a program on writing and yoga.

Jessica Hipp serves as assistant clerk of NEYM's Working Party on Spirituality and Sexual Ethics. She has a concern for opening dialogue around sexuality and spirituality within meetings and faith communities. She is a member of Fresh Pond Monthly Meeting and worships at Amesbury Monthly Meeting. *Peter Blood-Patterson* has been encouraging Friends to explore their values around sexuality for half a century. He is a certified Clinical Nurse Specialist and clinical member of the American Association of Marriage & Family Therapy. A member of Mount Toby Monthly Meeting, he has taught Quakerism classes and led retreats extensively among Friends.



Portland Friends Meeting
1837 Forest Avenue
Portland, Maine 04103

Address Service Requested



Please recycle this newsletter.

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Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow
love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is
despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sorrow, joy...

--Prayer of St. Francis

