

# Portland Friends Meeting Newsletter

Fifth Month, 2015

**Meeting for Worship:** Sundays 10:30a  
Wednesdays 5:30p

**Adult Education:** 2nd and 4th Sundays 9a

**First Day School:** 2nd and 4th Sundays 10:45a



1837 Forest Ave Portland, ME 04103

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

207-200-6544

## Connections

### Co-Clerks

Andy Grannell 878-8698

Liz Maier 883-5420

### Treasurer, Contributions

Sue Nelson 391-6116

60 Shadagee Road, #2

Saco, ME 04072

### Treasurer, Operating Account

Kathy Beach 741-2940

14 Drew Road

South Portland 04106

### Treasurer, Special Funds

Sara Jane Elliot 749-9706

### Special Needs Funds

Chris Beach 741-2940

Elizabeth Szatkowski 772-1774

### Ministry and Counsel

Lyn Ballou 865-3888

Lea Sutton 642-2327

### Pastoral Care Coordinators

Christina Davis 518-0784

Al Norton 899-3001

### Religious Education

Adults: Sandra Jensen, 839-2372

Youth: Susan Lavigne, 775-0626

Youth Religious Education Coordinator:

Anne Payson 781-2501

### Use of the Meetinghouse

Dorothy Grannell 878-8698

[dorothygrannell@maine.rr.com](mailto:dorothygrannell@maine.rr.com)

### e-group Coordinator

Mary Beth Walsh 797-8414

[mbwalsh@mainelyaccess.com](mailto:mbwalsh@mainelyaccess.com)

### Newsletter

submissions

Heather Denkmire

[pfmnewsletter@grantwinners.net](mailto:pfmnewsletter@grantwinners.net)

address change details

Tony Scilipoti

[tscilipoti@maine.rr.com](mailto:tscilipoti@maine.rr.com)

*“Are meetings for business held in a spirit of worship and prayerful search for the way of Truth?”*

*Are all members encouraged to use their talents in the service of the meeting?*

*Do you undertake your proper share of the work and financial support of the meeting?”*

*New England Yearly Meeting Queries (1985, page 211)*

## Calendar

**Sunday, May 17:** 9-10a Climate Change Threshing Session

Rise of Meeting, Love your Meeting House Day

**Thursday, May 28:** 6-8p, Pot-luck with Julie Harlow and Friends House Moscow

**Sunday, June 14:** Rise of Meeting, First Day School celebration (following classes)

## Monthly Events

**Every Sunday:** 10:30a Meeting for worship (for all ages, childcare provided)

**Every Wednesday:** 5:30p Meeting for worship

**1st Thursday:** 4-7p Preble Street Soup Kitchen

Aaiyn Foster 766-9762

**2nd & 4th Sundays:** 9a Adult Education

10:30a children in Meeting for Worship

10:45a First Day School

**2nd, 3rd, 4th, & 5th Sundays:** 10:00a all ages singing before worship

**2nd Saturday:** 5-8p Youngish adults potluck

Bart Czyz, [btczyz@gmail.com](mailto:btczyz@gmail.com), 207 899 5937

**On May 31st at the rise of meeting, we will be celebrating our four high school seniors graduating this year—Ania Wright, Natalya McDonnell, Mamie Walsh, and Isabel Szatkowski.**



**We hope everyone can join us afterward for some celebratory snacks!**

**Minutes of Portland Friends Monthly Meeting  
May 3, 2015**

Portland Friends Meeting gathered in meeting for worship to conduct business on May 3, 2015 at 9 a.m., with 16 members and attenders present. We began in silent worship, during which Co-Clerk Andrew Grannell read from New England Yearly Meeting queries (1985, page 211) the query which begins, "Are meetings for business held in a spirit of worship and prayerful search for the Truth?"

1. **Minutes.** We affirmed our approval of the minutes for March and April.

2. **Treasurer's Report.** Kathy Beach reported that our expenses continue to outstrip our contributions at one third of the way through the year. Expenses for the month of April were \$5,599, and income was \$4,150, leaving a deficit of \$1,449. Year-to-date expenses were \$21,349, and income was \$13,432, leaving a year-to-date negative balance of \$7,917. A call for increased donation did result in an increase, but we are not giving at a rate sufficient to match our budgeted expenses.

**Quick Summary of Income and Expenses  
Four months — 33% of 2015**

Year-to-date Income	\$13,432
Percent of Budget	20%
Year-to-date Expenses	\$21,349
Percent of Budget	32%
Balance	(\$7,917)

Financial Oversight will be meeting later this month and will be reviewing our current situation in light of several budget year experiences. Once again, Friends are urged to contribute both funds, and information to the newsletter on how and why to contribute. We will continue to announce regularly the need and how to contribute.

3. **Ministry and Counsel.** Mary Tracy reported for the committee.

a. Membership. The committee has found Susan Nelson clear for membership and asks that the Meeting approve. We joyfully approved.

b. Unity on a single social issue. After several months of reflection and work with various members of our community, Ministry and Counsel did not find unity on a single social issue that the Meeting as a whole could pursue. At the same time, the Committee noticed the growing interest and productive work of Earth and Spirit and Peace and Social Concerns Committees on the issue of climate change. This path appeared to be the better way to proceed.

c. Remembering Ruth Bowman. Meg Nobel wrote a memorial minute for Ruth, and a final version was approved at the April Ministry and Counsel Meeting. The minute will be read [today](#) at the rise of Meeting for Worship, followed by a time of further worship and opportunity to reminisce about our dear Friend Ruth.

d. Scheduling of Adult Religious Education. A request to reconsider the timing of adult religious education in order to promote attendance by parents was referred by April Meeting for Business to Ministry and Counsel Committee. Aware that the present schedule is the product of fairly recent balancing of the many competing interests for time on [Sunday](#) morning, the Committee is not inclined to revisit this issue at this time.

Discussion followed on the timing of Adult Religious Education. It was pointed out that there can be child care available during the current adult education time with notice to Jessica Eller. However, the 9 a.m. start may be a problem for some parents. Adult and Youth Religious Education Committees are free to discuss these issues. Adult education could occur at lunchtime. Another interest is the singing which has been happening on Sundays at 10. Those who feel led to are welcome to meet and recommend changes through Adult Religious Education Committee.

4. **Falmouth Quarterly Meeting Report** Dorothy Grannell reported on the all-Maine gathering, which took place yesterday, May 2, at South China Community Church.

Fifty Maine Friends from 13 meetings gathered at the South China Community Church on Saturday, May 2 for worship, fellowship and a workshop entitled "Conflict Transformation". The workshop was presented by the

4. (cont-) New York Yearly Meeting Conflict Transformation Team and led by Heather Cook and Karen Reixach. A Leadings Grant from Portland Friends Meeting funded the presentation. Each meeting and many of the individual Friends in attendance were able to take home *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation* by John Lederach upon which the workshop is based. Participants learned and practiced looping and other skills that will help in conflict situations either personally or within their meetings. The Mosher Book and Tract fund of New England Yearly Meeting funded the purchase of these books. We were engaged for the full day which also included worship, a lunch, and many exciting announcements about the work going on by Friends throughout the state. It was Falmouth Quarter's turn to host this event which happens every two years to bring together Friends throughout the state. We are grateful for the many contributions of individual Friends as well the Leadings Fund and Mosher Book and Tract that made the event possible. Our hope is that the participating Friends will carry their skills back to their meetings and practices them.

Our library has a copy of *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*.

5. **Pastoral Care Committee** Shannon O'Connor reported for the Committee and read their 2014 annual report. A copy of the report will appear in the next newsletter.

The committee has worked hard to create systems which encourage many Friends to share the work of pastoral care of our members and attenders. In particular, they are starting a Circle of Friends to help us stay in contact with Friends with needs, and pursuing interviews with older Friends who have interesting stories to share with us.

Friends received the report with interest and complimented the committee on their dedication and openness to new solutions.

6. **Earth and Spirit and Peace and Social Concerns Committees.** Ed Robinson and Rob Levin reported for the committees, who presented as a joint vision their Climate Stewardship Initiative. The present initiative is the result of several months of careful work by the committees, and, in some individual cases, several years of effort and experience in the Meeting and in the world around us.

The report makes recommendations in six areas, (1) greening the Meetinghouse, (2) fossil fuel divestment, (3) carbon tax witness, (4) the organization Citizens Climate Lobby, (5) nonviolent civil disobedience and direct demonstrations, and (6) other meaningful individual actions.

The committees point out that this is an initiative only at the present time, and that these areas are being explored with a view to future recommendations. They are also sensitive to those who may not be called to act on these issues, and do not wish the initiative to be divisive or disruptive to the Meeting community. Today they seek our general approval and feedback as they continue this process, but do not seek approval and feedback on any particular detail of the initiative. Friends with specific ideas on the details of the initiative should contact members of either committee.

Initial responses included expression of gratitude for the manner in which two committee are working together, clarification of whether this is the one social issue in which the Meeting will engage (it is not), the care with which the report was written and its comprehensiveness. We will be looking forward to the future of single small steps which we may be asked to take. The division of the report into specific areas permits us to be less overwhelmed and believe that we can each contribute. It will involve consultation with other committees such as Buildings and Grounds and Financial Oversight. It was appreciated that the committees make clear this initiative is for those who are willing to engage, not necessarily all of us. It is an invitation, not a mandate.

We encouraged continuing work in the directions described in the Climate Stewardship Initiative, although not all members are agreed that this work is necessary. We will seek a forum for all to be heard at length.

We closed in silent worship at 10:30 a.m. with 30 members and attenders present, purposing to meet again at 9 a.m. on Sunday June 7, 2015

*Lyn Ballou, Co-Recording Clerk*

## Friends House Moscow:

Bring it to Life at Portland Friends Meeting

Thursday, May 28th, 6:00-8:00pm

Potluck! Please bring food to share...



Julie Harlow began working toward the fulfillment of the vision of a Quaker presence in Russia immediately after the collapse of the USSR in 1991. Active with the international governing board of Friends House Moscow since its inception, she can share the challenges, disappointments and successes from its beginnings up to the current program. She also speaks knowledgeably about current conditions in Russia based on research and personal experience traveling there since 1984. Julie is a former teacher, an experienced and entertaining speaker and has been well received at the Summer Gatherings of Friends General Conference and meetings throughout the US since 1992. She draws on previous experience as a leader of tours to the USSR from 1984 through 1991 and six years of presentations to public schools about life in the Soviet Union as well as her deep commitment to the spiritual practices of Friends.

Pacific Yearly Meeting has written a travel minute for Julie, supporting her work to inform Friends about the "unique contribution that Friends are making in the areas of the former Soviet Union."

### Adult Religious Education

The Adult Religious Ed class on April 26 focused on our daily spiritual practices. The following queries guided the conversation between about 10 people, all of whom actively participated and offered their personal experiences.

*Do you have a daily ritual or practice for your spiritual life?*

*If so how did you establish it and how do you maintain the discipline?*

*If not, and you want it, what is blocking you from creating this?*

*How does this practice enrich your life?*

*What do you do on a daily basis that connects you to Spirit or a sense of Oneness?*

There was a wide variety of responses and stories, some being regular, some irregular in their practice. A number of us find a connection with Spirit in being out in nature. Some get inspiration from books or magazines with a spiritual focus. Walking--to get the paper, in a labyrinth, in the woods and fields, walking the dog--was common to a few people. Other practices included prayer, with a prayer partner or alone, meditation, gratitude, silence before every meal, breathing consciously, listening to our inner voice. One person related looking for spaces in the day to do simple reminders like putting your hand on your heart while waiting at a red light, saying a prayer for an aggressive driver, or listening with full attention to others. Another useful suggestion for those who make lists was to put your spiritual practice at the top of the list--make it a top priority. After all these ideas were share, one person summed it up well by articulating one more query:

What if living our lives with attention, intention, creativity and gratitude is our spiritual practice? The Spirit is what we want to do that's right, how we go about our lives, especially our connection with people. Paying attention to our inner Voice, our Guide, will bring us there.

If anyone who was not able to attend would like to explore these queries and share your responses, you can send them to Sandi Jensen or Heather Denkmire to post them to the newsletter for an open discussion.

*Please note: Child care is available during Adult Religious Education gatherings on 2nd and 4th Sundays, BUT ONLY IF you call ahead to Jessica Eller at 761-6508 for a particular Sunday event so that she can arrange for someone to provide child care. Please telephone Jessica as soon as you are aware that you will need someone to look after your child.*

Last Day of First Day School  
Sunday, June 14 — Celebration for everyone!

Children, join us for First Day School classes, beginning at 10:45 (after the usual 15 minutes of worship for children).

Children are then asked to be present for the Rise of Meeting, and after we scamper outside for FUN games and social time!

Please bring finger food to share...we provide the ice cream and popsicles.

Whether you have participated in First Day School a little, not at all, or a lot, we would love to see you there!

### Cheap used car urgently needed.

Dear Friends,

*My 16-year-old car is rusting away, and likely will fail to pass inspection this summer. My past three cars have come from Quakers, and have proven very reliable. I am hoping that someone who has a second car which they do not need, can either give it to me, or sell it for a low price. I have \$1000 in the bank, and may be able to scrape together another \$1000. I need the car to commute to my job at Goodwill, which is moving to Westbrook. I am looking for a 4-door car. If you can help me, please call me at 774-4323 or email me at [ksylken@maine.rr.com](mailto:ksylken@maine.rr.com).*

*Thanks for considering this request.*

*Karul Sulken*

The new google **phone** for the Meeting House is up and running **207-200-6544** and published on our web site. Any message on that phone will be forwarded to the clerk's email. It will not ring in the meeting house. There is a new cell phone base in the meeting house that is connected to our old phone. It is good for outgoing calls and we pay \$20/month for unlimited service in the continental US. It has a number but we are not publishing it to avoid confusion.

Portland Friends Meeting is looking for volunteers to help supervise and play with our youngest Friends in the Nursery Program most Sundays from 9am until noon now until mid June. If you are interested in signing up, please contact Jessica Eller at [ellerfitze@yahoo.com](mailto:ellerfitze@yahoo.com) or 761-6508.

### Automatic Payment of Donations to PFM

Do you have a checking account? Then you can pay a monthly donation to Portland Friends Meeting automatically. For those not aware of this convenient possibility, here is how to do it:

1. Obtain an online account, associated with your checking account, from your bank. Such an account is a kind of portal into your checking account, and is free of charge. If registration requires you to pick a password, be sure to pick a long, random, impossible to memorize sequence of letters and numbers, so the bad guys can't guess it or find it by experimenting. Keep the password on your computer (maybe in LastPass for security) AND write it down in a secure place.
2. Your online account will have a "bill pay" feature. You can use this to pay any company or individual by adding them to your payee list. If they don't have an account with your bank, you will provide their address, and the bank will mail your payment by check to their address. For free, for most kinds of checking accounts. The address and phone number of PFM are:  
207-200-6544, 1837 Forest Ave, Portland, ME 04103
3. Your online account, bill pay section, will have an Auto Pay (or recurring payment) feature. When you set up your payee entry for PFM, or perhaps when you set up a payment, you will have the option to make a recurring payment. Simply specify Monthly Payment, and enter the amount you would like to donate to PFM each month. You can change the amount any time you like.

That's it. Three steps, and it's free; couldn't be easier.

David Spector  
Shannon O'Connor  
PFM Members



## **Lets be honest about race**

by Arthur Fink

Dare I say I'm a racist? No – I don't use racist language, really do value my friends of all colors (and sexual orientation), am polite and well mannered, and am well aware that a set words are just not part of my vocabulary.

That's the outside picture. But there's another story that is quite disturbing. Too often (and once is too often!) I'll see somebody of color and a voice in my asks, "What is he [or she] doing here?". Another inward voice quickly responds, "He [or she] belongs here. Get off it Arthur!".

That first voice is the voice of the racist society in which I grew up. Peter Cooper Village in Manhattan had no (zero) black residents. During the day I saw black maids, nannies, and workmen – but no black professionals. The lesson was pretty clear – blacks had no place in my middle class life. Even with parents, teachers, and friends offering another lesson, this is the one that I learned most clearly.

The second voice is that of civility, acceptance, community, and compassion. It speaks a lesson that I've adopted, and want to believe is deeply ingrained in me. All my work for social justice, against racism and homophobia, is an expression of this voice. I'd hope that this voice is so strongly grounded in me that the first (racist) voice is lost. Unfortunately, that is not so.

That the inward dialog I've described above persists is evidence of the strength of the racist context in which I grew up. I remember clearly my first business trip to Birmingham, Alabama, when I was in my late 20's. Although I should have known better, I was genuinely surprised to find myself working along side so many skilled black professionals. That's an uncomfortable confession for me to share, but it is true.

No – I'm not the kind of "racist" who acts out in crude and unacceptable ways. My racism may feel subtle and self-contained, but I do believe it's still visible to most people of color. And I also believe that the malady I'm describing here is very very common. It's a racism that is stubborn, persistent, and pernicious. And it's a racism that won't subside just because I'm appreciative of our high skilled black president, or because I've many black friends whose creativity and leadership are so inspiring.

Be honest with yourself. Have you ever seen a person of color when you're alone in an urban space, and felt afraid – more afraid that you might have felt had you encountered a white man or woman? If your answer is "yes" than we share a common bond – an unpleasant racist heritage that you learned and that probably gets in the way of your compassionate life.

But, "how important is this?", you might ask. "If I treat people of color with dignity and respect, is there still a problem?". Absolutely! Inward racism is like a sore, and it heals only very very slowly. It's an illusion to believe that we filter it out, and don't bring our racism into our daily lives.

Any denial of our racism will appear especially thin to those of color – those who may be the first to pick up the duality of our attitudes and actions. And such a denial, ("Of course I'm not racist") may well be received as an inflammatory insult.

In too many recent events (and, again, one is too many!), racist attitudes – perhaps even unconscious attitudes – have resulted in tragedy and death, and these actions need to be accountable in a court of law. I do believe that all of us – including our police – harbor some racist attitudes, and need to consciously recognize and compensate. Even though we may not be outwardly obnoxious, we must attend do any inward lack of total clarity about our testimony of equality.

*Arthur Fink lives on Peaks Island, Maine, and is both a well known photographer of dance and a consultant to non-profits on mission, focus, governance, conflict, and communication. He has worked with the American Friends Service Committee on nonviolence and peace, and is an active member of Portland Friends Meeting. Arthur has been offering workshops about his recent trip to the concentration camps at Auschwitz and Birkenau, and about the importance of asking great questions.*





Supporting the  
**Kakamega Orphan Project**  
in Kenya

## *Light up the Night for an Orphan* **\$10 for a Solar Lantern**

Few families in rural Kenya have electricity, especially orphan children in poverty. When possible, students use paraffin lanterns to study by at night. But paraffin lamps are problematic. Paraffin fuel is expensive, especially for children who don't even have enough money for food. Paraffin lamps also:

- create very poor air quality
- contribute to serious carbon emissions
- cause fires and burn injuries

### **Solar Lanterns are the perfect solution because**

- sunshine fuel is FREE
- they are safe and environment-friendly.

Thus, Luci Light Solar Lanterns will be the perfect gift.

**The Luci Light is a solar, blow-up lantern**, which is water-proof, sturdy and collapses for easy travel. Best of all, there is plenty of sunshine in Kenya to power it for free!



### **What else will \$10 buy for children in the Kakamega Orphan Project?**

Orphan children in Kenya need many things. Besides light, a new school book would help them learn, a new pair of shoes would replace the well worn old pair, and a new skirt or pair of pants makes them feel a whole lot better about themselves. **Please help us reach our goal of providing a lantern for every child in the program, and if you wish, please add another item.**

---

Please make checks payable to:

**Friends of Kakamega**

**51 Hunter Road**

**Freeport ME 04032**

***www.friendsofkakamega.org***

Here is a \$\_\_\_\_\_ donation to  
purchase Solar Lanterns.

I am adding an extra \$\_\_\_\_\_  
to be used for shoes, clothes and books  
for children in the Orphan Project.

## All Maine Gathering of Friends, May 2, 2015

Fifty Maine Friends from 13 meetings gathered at the South China Community Church on Saturday, May 2 for worship, fellowship and a workshop entitled "Conflict Transformation".



This was one of the best attended All Maine Gatherings that have been held. The workshop was presented by the New York Yearly Meeting Conflict Transformation Team and led by Heather Cook and Karen Reixach.

A Leadings Grant from Portland Friends Meeting funded the presentation. Each meeting and many of the individual Friends in attendance were able to take home *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation* by



Presenters Heather Cook and Karen Reixach of NYYM



Doug Gwyn, new pastor at Durham Friends

John Lederach upon which the workshop is based. Participants learned and practiced looping and other skills that will help in conflict situations either personally or within their meetings. The Mosher Book and Tract fund of New England Yearly Meeting funded the purchase of these books.

We were engaged for the full day which also included worship a lunch and many exciting announcements about the work going by Friends throughout the state. It was Falmouth Quarter's turn to host this event which happens every two years to bring together



Registration: John and Elizabeth Reute

Friends throughout the state. We are grateful for the many contributions of individual Friends (especially the tasty soups and salads) as well the Leadings Fund and Mosher Book and Tract that made the event possible. Our hope is that the participating Friends will carry their skills back to their meetings and practices them.



Falmouth and Vassalboro Friends mingle with morning coffee



## **Climate Stewardship Initiative 4-27-2015**

### **Prepared by Peace and Social Concerns and Earth and Spirit Committees**

#### *Introduction*

Over the past decade, many members of Portland Friends Meeting have felt a growing concern about global climate change. In recent months, the Earth and Spirit Committee (E&S) and the Peace and Social Concerns Committee (PSOC) have focused their attention on climate change, seeking to discern where and how we are led to respond to this potential crisis. We see climate change as relating to the Quaker testimonies of stewardship, peace, community, and equality.

We now offer this Climate Stewardship Initiative for the Meeting's consideration. We see this Initiative as further advancing and building on the leadings felt by individuals and various committees. We feel called to rise to our own greatest active resonance with these concerns, and hope to be of service to the Meeting community and the wider world.

We intentionally use the word "Initiative" because it is important to us that members (by which we also mean attenders) of the Meeting not feel pressure to engage in any of the below actions and ideas if they do not feel led to do so. We realize that there are members who may feel called in different directions, and who fear that climate change might become too central of a focus within the spiritual life at the Meeting. Thus, it is our hope that this Climate Stewardship Initiative not be divisive or disruptive to the very special community that is our Meeting.

The following are several selected avenues that E&S and PSOC will be exploring or possibly recommending to the PFM community over the next few months. We seek meeting-wide threshing of these actions and everyone's input and discernment. Furthermore, we do not anticipate that our commitment to reducing climate change will be a short-term endeavor, and thus see this Initiative as a living document that will evolve over time. Perhaps we will complete one goal and add another. Perhaps we will lay down a goal after realizing that way is not open. Above all, we hope that our efforts will be Spirit-led, and that continuing revelation will guide our work.

#### *Further Greening the Meetinghouse*

The Buildings and Grounds Committee has taken significant strides in greening the Meetinghouse and lightening our carbon footprint. An energy audit was conducted in 2011 and various recommendations were received. However, year-by-year, the market for renewables has become increasingly attractive, and E&S and PSOC would like to explore, along with Buildings and Grounds, whether the time has come to start weaning the Meetinghouse from fossil fuels.

First, we are excited about the possibility of establishing or joining a Community Solar Farm ("CSF"). A CSF is an off-site location where one can purchase or lease solar panels for her electricity needs. It is a way to tap into the solar market for individuals and institutions for whom direct on-site solar installation is not feasible or desirable, as is the case for the Meetinghouse due to our limited land space and lack of a south-facing aspect. The beauty of a Community Solar Farm project is that although the Meeting itself has relatively modest electricity uses, the farm would be open to other individuals and institutions, such as members of the Meeting and other churches. Thus, the Meeting would be acting as a catalyst for many others to get off fossil fuels and onto solar for their electricity needs. E&S and PSOC are still in the exploration phase of this project, and at this point we are looking for someone who has at least ¼ acre of flat or south-facing land with full sun who would consider donating or leasing it for a Community Solar Farm.

Second, we are exploring ways to replace the natural gas boiler that provides our heat and hot water. Ideally, we would love to get off fossil fuels entirely. One possibility is air-source heat pumps, a technology that within the last couple years has seen major improvements for cold climates such as Maine. We are exploring whether air-source heat pumps could make sense for the entire Meetinghouse or perhaps just for the Meeting Room. The air-source heat pump runs on electricity, which means that if we can hook up to a Community Solar Farm then our electricity, heat and hot water would both be fossil-free solar. A side benefit of air-source heat pumps is that they don't just provide heat, but in the summer can also cool a space.

(cont-)

### *Fossil Fuel Divestment*

Divestment is a strategy whereby an institution (or an individual) sells any investments it has in a particular kind of industry. Over the past couple years, many academic and religious institutions have chosen to divest from fossil fuels.

The good news is that PFM is already partially divested. Our investments are held primarily in Pax World Investments, and all of Pax's funds are divested from any company whose primary business is coal mining and production, or in most electric utilities whose reliance on coal is above the average of its home country. Pax World Investments is also in the process of divesting from oil sands (also known as tar sands) companies.

There is interest among E&S and PSOC for divesting completely from fossil fuels, and Pax World does offer two funds that are fully divested. However, we recognize the Finance's Committee's central role in this process and would like to explore the concern mutually with the Finance Committee to bring the leadings of PSOC and E&S before them for a thorough sharing and discussion. We anticipate that both the Finance Committee and the Meeting as a whole, after appropriate discernment, would have to come to a Meeting-level decision to fully divest from fossil fuels. We are appreciative of the careful thought that the Finance Committee gave to the Meeting's current investment vehicle (a fund that advances women-lead businesses and other socially responsible business practices around the world), and we will not undertake a recommendation to change or diversify these investment fund choices lightly.

At the same time, E&S and PSOC will encourage members to consider divesting themselves as individuals and families. We hope to offer resources and inspiration for such an important step. A few of us have already made this decision, and can share our experiences.

### *Voluntary Carbon Tax Witness*

A federal carbon tax is another version of CCL's (see below) Carbon Fee and Dividend program. We believe that although a federal carbon tax should exist, we as individuals do not have to wait around for Congress to impose one on us. Mount Toby Meeting in Massachusetts has led the way in establishing a Voluntary Carbon Tax Witness whereby members can choose to periodically measure their own carbon footprint and then make a charitable contribution to a climate-related organization. E&S and PSOC plans to borrow and tweak this idea for PFM. Mount Toby tracks and celebrates their collective progress in these actions (while maintaining anonymity for individuals) and we would like to do something similar.

As we plan to implement it, an important component of the Voluntary Carbon Tax Witness will be to channel our giving towards an organization that focuses on climate justice. In other words, we aim to support an organization that is seeking to address the inequity issues of climate change. For example, it is generally acknowledged that many of the world's poorest communities face the gravest threats from rising sea levels and stronger storms. In addition, the switch from carbon-intensive energy sources to carbon-free sources will be especially difficult for those struggling simply to put food on their plates. We are still in the process of researching a suitable organization to recommend for the funds collected by the Voluntary Carbon Tax Witness. Beginning in the fall of 2015, we will roll out this program through announcements, sample materials, and perhaps one or two adult religious education or after-Meeting sessions.

### *Citizens Climate Lobby*

The Citizens Climate Lobby (CCL, [www.citizensclimatelobby.org](http://www.citizensclimatelobby.org)) is a relatively new non-partisan, grassroots advocacy organization focused on national policies to address climate change. There are currently 257 chapters nationwide, including three in Maine, and a Portland Chapter is just getting underway.

E&S and PSOC believe that CCL is the most promising vehicle for effecting national legislative change. Because we have in Senator Collins one of the few Republican Senators who is open to considering meaningful debate and action on climate change, Mainers have both an opportunity and a challenge to change the political dynamic around climate change. We hope to tap into the resources of Friends Committee on National Legislation to aid our efforts with CCL.

(cont-)

Although we are not excluding supporting the actions of other organizations such as 350.org, for now we will focus our advocacy work on CCL's goal of creating a federal Carbon Fee and Dividend program that would internalize the costs of burning carbon-based fuels. It is a specific and achievable policy that many climate scientists and economists alike say is the best first-step to reduce the likelihood of catastrophic climate change.

### *Nonviolent Civil Disobedience*

Some of us have been moved by the civil disobedience (CD) actions of Jay O'Hara and others in the climate change movement. At this point, E&S and PSOC are not recommending any Meeting-wide CD actions, but we are open to following the Spirit as we are led. We may form a working group of interested members to consider engaging in such an action. We may also consider how we as committees or we as a Meeting could provide spiritual support for a CD action.

### *Other Meaningful Actions*

The two committees also want to stand in solidarity with all of our members and friends who are acting in their personal lives, within other committees of Meeting, or with outside organizations, in all the myriad ways that helpfully impact Earth stewardship issues. Examples include activism at the State level and local levels, pollution prevention, forest protection, wildlife conservation, and clean water programs, to name just a few. Because there are so many valid issues and such a diversity and richness within the Meeting, it has been a challenge to bring the Meeting together in the past around specific concrete actions. PSOC and E&S hope to rally themselves and others in the Meeting around the particular actions in this Climate Stewardship Initiative to end the paralysis and move forward, but the committees in no way seek to diminish or detract from any and all other efforts. In fact, we would like to find a way to recognize or share the information of those efforts within the Meeting, so at least like-minded individuals can find those with whom they may have an affinity to work together outside of these two committees (in whatever other context) without limiting the committees or each other, and allowing unity to be found in ways large and small. We are looking for good ways to acknowledge and recognize such other efforts without impairing the work of the committees and are very open to suggestions in this regard. We hope to offer at least one awareness session for each topic to share more information—these may be in conjunction with Adult Religious Ed or come from the two committees as is most fitting.

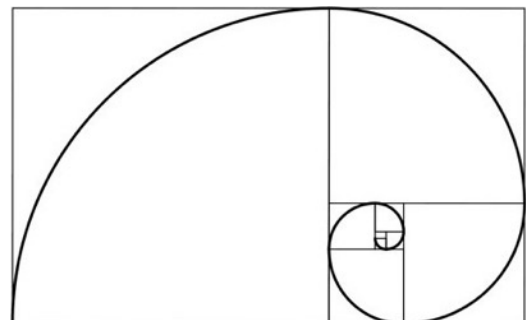
Insofar as we understand the breadth of the possibilities of Climate Stewardship concerns, we are humbly choosing to narrow our initial focus to a manageable range of issues and projects. We welcome your feedback on this Initiative, and we invite anyone who would like to become more involved in any particular issue or project as well as those who are carrying environmental concerns which they would like to recommend these committees to take up at some point - to come forward and contact the clerk of either committee: Aain Foster ([af@fosterwellnessnow.com](mailto:af@fosterwellnessnow.com)) or Rob Levin ([rob@roblevin.net](mailto:rob@roblevin.net)).

In conclusion, the committees are hopeful to launch this Climate Stewardship Initiative, to reach all who are willing within the Meeting community to engage, participate and move forward with these programs with every size and scale of commitment or tentativeness, and all the while, to recognize and encourage other parallel but different efforts, and to offer respect and space for those who do not feel any leadings in these areas.

#### **Newsletter notes:**

We're still seeking someone familiar with Pages to serve as an emergency layout/editor. This is a last-resort position and the volunteer will probably never need to step in.

Thank you! —Heather Denkmire  
[pfmnewsletter@grantwinner.net](mailto:pfmnewsletter@grantwinner.net)



Portland Friends Meeting  
1837 Forest Ave  
Portland, ME 04103

Address Service Requested

**Next newsletter deadline:**  
Wednesday, June 10th, 9pm

submissions: [pfmnewsletter@grantwinners.net](mailto:pfmnewsletter@grantwinners.net)

