

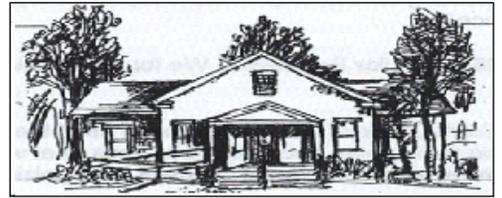
Portland Friends Meeting Newsletter

First Month, 2020

Meeting for Worship: 10:30a Sundays

Adult Religious Education: 8:45a 2nd and 4th Sundays

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



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“Spiritual Life- Do you live in thankful awareness of God’s constant presence in your life? Are you sensitive and obedient to leadings of the Holy Spirit? Do you seek to follow Jesus, who showed us the way? Do you nurture your spiritual life with prayer and silent waiting and with regular study of the Bible and other devotional literature?”

— 1985 New England Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice

Calendar

January 11: 5-8p Game night (with pizza)! at the Meetinghouse

January 12: 8:45a Adult Religious Education discussion on the NEYM Faith and Practice chapter on Marriage. (details inside)

12-1:30p Stefanie Fairchild slide show of El Camino pilgrimage in Spain. Soup and bread lunch provided.

January 19: 12-1:30p Racial Justice Interest Group Book Discussion “White Fragility,” please bring a bag lunch

January 26: Friends School of Portland families invited for worship and programs at Portland Friends Meeting

February 2: 9a Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business

Monthly

Every Sunday: 10:30a Meeting for Worship

First Sunday: 9a Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business

2nd & 4th Sundays: 8:45a Adult Religious Education
10:45a First Day School

Second Saturdays: 5-8p Youngish adults potluck
Bart Czyz, btczyz@gmail.com, 207 899 5937

How Do Quakers Do Marriage?

Peter Woodrow will facilitate two discussions on the proposed chapter for New England Yearly Meeting's Faith and Practice concerning Marriage. At 8:45 am on January 12 and 26 the Adult Religious Education class will have an opportunity examine and critique the proposed chapter. Our comments and questions will be conveyed to the Faith and Practice Revision Committee. All are welcome. Please read the chapter before you attend. <https://neym.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/Marriage%202019.10.28%20PDF.pdf>

Portland Friends Meeting
Meeting for Business
January 5, 2020

We began in silent worship at 9 a.m. with 15 members and attenders present, during which co-clerk Brad Bussiere-Nichols read the following Query No. 1 from the 1985 New England Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice:

“Spiritual Life- Do you live in thankful awareness of God’s constant presence in your life? Are you sensitive and obedient to leadings of the Holy Spirit? Do you seek to follow Jesus, who showed us the way? Do you nurture your spiritual life with prayer and silent waiting and with regular study of the Bible and other devotional literature?”

1. **Minutes** We accepted the December 2019 minutes.
2. **Treasurer’s Report.** Muriel Allen presented the last Treasurer’s report for 2019 . Thanks to our generous donors, increased rentals, and committee frugality our year-end balance is a very positive \$24,150. Here are the numbers for December and for the year.

December 2019:	Year-To-Date:
Income: \$6,702	Income: \$92,312
Expenses: 7,728	Expenses: \$68,162
Balance: \$(1,026)	Balance: \$ 24,150

After some questions, Friends accepted the Treasurer’s report with gratitude.

3. **Financial Oversight:** 2020 Operating Budget

Jo Linder presented the final 2020 operating budget. It is the budget published in the newsletter and sent out on the list-serve in early December, with the addition of the December 2019 updates.

Some meetinghouse expenses such as electricity and water are up due to increased use of the building. There was discussion of raising the water/sewage line but we stayed with the budget as proposed. Several points were raised and clarified concerning wages, expenses and contributions.

We approved the proposed 2020 operating budget.

4. **Ministry and Counsel.** Beth Bussiere-Nichols presented the following Committee report.

Intergenerational Meeting for Worship

On November 24th for the first time in many years, we experimented with our first meeting for worship that included the whole community. Silent waiting worship was held earlier during our usual Adult Religious education time. We created space for younger friends with semi-program worship and blankets in the center of the room. We shared songs, some thoughts about what we do in worship, and some silent waiting worship as well.

M&C has received many positive comments. Some Friends even asking that we plan for one such meeting for worship per month. Our committee recommends that we continue the experiment with two more gatherings this school year and then evaluate how best to move forward with next year.

Comments were asked for. It was requested that such meetings occur on a non-First Day School Sunday, and the next one is tentatively set for the 5th Sunday in March. We also recognized the importance of the ministry of Maggie Nelson, Melissa Brown, Jessica Eller and Nat Shedd in the success of the November worship.

2020 State of Society input at January Monthly Meeting

One Quaker distinctive is the belief that God (by their many names The Divine, Spirit, Light, Christ, Goddess...) is available to **guide** the community **-through** the community.

M&C leads the community in writing our State of Society report. This is our annual check-up on our spiritual condition.

(cont-)

(minutes continued from page 2)

4. **Ministry and Counsel.** (cont) Three areas where we hope to see the community **guided** by the spirit **through** the community:

- Meeting for Worship
- Meeting for Business
- Work of the Meeting as done through committees

Reflections were asked for on the state of society in our Meeting for Worship, our Meeting for Business, and the health of the community done through committees, individuals and religious education. The Committee appreciated Friends' thoughtful input.

If you feel led to share other experiences, you may speak to a member of M&C, or call, before Saturday 1/11/20 at noon. Beth at 207-939-8247 or email beth.bussiere@gmail.com or Christine christine.a.fletcher@gmail.com

5. **Family Promise** Judy Spross, volunteer coordinator of the Family Promise program, summarized the following report—

Greater Portland Family Promise: Report on PFM Hosting December 8 to 15, 2019

Summary: In December, we had 56 volunteers (59 volunteers when the children of parents who helped with set up or takedown are included!) sign up for 62 slots. In addition to our PFM volunteers, we had two volunteers from the GPF "bullpen"—volunteers from other faith communities who make themselves available to other faith communities. It was an unusual week in that we started hosting with a family of 4 as guests. On Thursday, we welcomed a family of 6 and on Saturday, we accepted a family of 5, the latter two families from Angola. On Saturday, our family of 4 were housed in their own apartment. As far as I know, this is the first time we had a "turnover" of one of our guest rooms before our host week ended.

New this time around was having Wayne Cobb manage the SignUp site—a huge help to me. What he and I did was to have him manage the site prior to our hosting week and then he returned the SignUp site to me (passing the baton) for our hosting week so I could use SignUp to communicate re new arrivals, requests etc. this seemed to work well.

I am very grateful for everyone who participated, whether by providing hospitality/food or holding us in the Light. Everything went well despite the novel experiences of having families arrive mid or end of week. I love how resilient we all seem to be.

Gratitude: Everyone knows how much the time devoted to welcoming and providing hospitality to our guests is valued. I appreciate Wayne's stepping up to manage SignUp and bring some order to the financial aspects of our hosting. Marcia J. Cleveland (Food Volunteer Coordinator) and Sue Nelson (Supply coordinator) have been indispensable to helping our host week run smoothly. I also appreciate the contributions and resilience of our community: we offered such wonderful hospitality amid uncertainty. Thank you!!!

As most of you know, Marcia Cleveland is laying down her responsibility for coordinating the food volunteers. I am grateful for her service. Sometime in February, I will schedule a Listening Session to hear what folks think about what needs to happen moving forward—for all aspects of our hosting.

Challenges:

Here are some things I am learning that I would welcome some assistance in thinking about:

Operations:

- we manage set up and take down. I do notice that the majority who volunteer for this activity are older and am aware of the physical demands. Would love to have more young adults and youth involved in this—especially take down.
- Quality control of equipment that is passed from one faith community to the other (e.g., beds, mattresses, mattress encasements, room divider). Mostly we do well—we want to make sure that all pieces are accounted for and that things like encasements are clean. I have included a segment in orientation for the families about what to do if there are accidents and soiling of linens and encasements

(minutes continued from page 2)

5. **Family Promise** (cont)

- Communications during hosting week—enough? Too much?
- Orientation of volunteers especially overnight hosts re safety, emergency management, location of resupplies
- Spot descriptions on SignUp—do you have enough information about your spots/roles?
- Use of nursery and supplies therein—I will be working with Susan Grannell on this. I have been concerned about this since September and our last hosting was particularly challenging regarding use of the nursery space.
- Meaningful acknowledgement/celebration of all volunteers who make this work.
- What's next?

As I announced in December, I am adding spots in SignUp for individuals in the community who want to hold our hosting in the Light. Our hospitality is a spiritual practice and I know that many attendees/members want to help but for many reasons cannot set up, cook, host, stay overnight, or take down.

Future Hosting Dates: 4/5/20 to 4/12/20; 6/7/20 to 6/14/20 to 6/21/20 (N.B. I know this date conflicts with the Poor Peoples Campaign March in Washington, DC on 6/20); 9/20 to 9/27/20 and 12/13 to 12/20/20

Budget—tracking actual and in-kind expenses; understanding impact of hosting on routine Meetinghouse expenses (I will be working with FOC and Wayne Cobb on this issue in the upcoming months)

Note: The April Host week is already posted on SignUp. It is never too early...

Postscript

Prior to the week of our December hosting, I was asked what made me come alive spiritually. After our December hosting, I added my participation in Family Promise to that list. I know from prior experience that big events like our hosting don't always go perfectly yet they happen with a certain degree of excellence. I was reminded of this quote from Dinah Maria Mulock Craik (of course, I want to capitalize friend as in Quaker Friends!):

"Oh, the comfort — the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person [or Friends, as with FP, the PFM community] — having neither to weigh thoughts nor measure words, but pouring them all right out, just as they are, chaff and grain together; certain that a faithful hand will take and sift them, keep what is worth keeping, and then with the breath of kindness blow the rest away."

THANK YOU.

Judy Spross, FP Volunteer Coordinator

Today Judy asked us to recognize the excellent job Marcia Cleveland has done as Food Coordinator and expressed her fervent hope a volunteer will step into that role. Friends thanked Marcia for her service.

We accepted Judy's report with gratitude for her work and her reflections on possible improvements.

6. **Other** Aaiyn Foster and Arthur Fink brought forward a proposed minute concerning the President's pardon of Edward Gallagher, the Navy Seal. Concerns were expressed about the issues raised and the shortness of time today to consider them in a non-emergency situation. We agreed with the Clerk's suggestion that further process take place before any decision can be arrived at.

We closed at 10:33 a.m., with 31 members and attenders present, purposing to meet again at 9:00 a.m. on February 2, 2020, God willing.

Respectfully submitted,

Lyn Ballou
Co-Recording Clerk

Hearty Snacks January and February 2020

Dear Friends,

We are endeavoring to offer hearty snacks after meeting every Sunday.

We can't do this without your help, though. Would you sign up to bring snacks, just twice a year?

We'll send you a reminder in advance, with snack ideas. And if you can't make a particular Sunday, we'll make it easy for you to swap with someone. And there's a budget for reimbursement if this poses a financial hardship.

Are you willing to chip in, and bring snacks a couple times a year?

Or, are you willing to be a last-minute sub once in a while?

If you say yes to either of those, please email me at marytracy126@gmail.com with your name, phone number, and what role you'd like to play.

Thank you so much! If people choose to chip in, we'll all be able to enjoy delicious, hearty snacks every week.

- Mary, Dorothy, Sarah, Lyn

January

- 5 Els Heij and Lee Cummings
- 12 Christine Fletcher, Rich Nagle and Bill Diffenderfer
- 19 Sydney McDowell and Theresa Oleksiw
- 26 Muriel Allen, Anneke and Patrick Hohl

February

- 2 Sue Nelson, Kate Silvers
- 9 Justin and Acacia Fenty
Nathan Broaddus
- 16 Liz and Jim Maier
- 23 Lyn Ballou, Jessica Eller and Chris Fitze



Racial Learning Circle (Year 3)

For the last few years Portland Friends have gathered to increase our awareness of, and knowledge about racism and to encourage anti-racist activity. (See summary below.*) The focus topic for the 2020 series of gatherings concerns the impact of white patterns of thinking and behaving on our Meetings and on the larger world. As always, our ears are oriented toward the words and experience of people of color and discussions ponder ways to take meaningful action that aligns with anti-racist beliefs. Sessions will include discussion of Robin DiAngelo's book, *White Fragility* (2018), viewing and discussing some of Lisa Graustein's Plenary Videos on the Doctrine of Discovery from Sessions 2019, and hearing/reading/responding to voices of color, including excerpts from Ibram X. Kendi's recent book, *How to be an Antiracist* (2019).

- The PFM Racial Learning Circle will meet on Sundays, 12:00-1:30 pm
- Save these dates! January 19 * February 16 * March 15 * April 19
- Please get a copy of "White Fragility" (some will be for sale at Meeting).
- For January 19, read Chapter 1: "The Challenges of Talking to White People About Racism."

Questions? Contact Julie de Sherbinin, jwdesher@colby.edu; 207-406-4790 or

Jessica Eller, ellerfitze@yahoo.com, 207-761-6508.

* Summary: In 2018, a six-week series introduced fundamental concepts about racial identity, culminating in a Privilege walk run by Young Friends. In 2019, a book group read Ta-Nehisi Coate's *Between the World and Me*, followed by Robin Wall Kimmerer's *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*. Wayne Cobb arranged for Mikhu Paul of the Maliseet people (native to territories in Maine) to lead book discussions, and, later, to offer a walk of commemoration on newly preserved Abenaki land.

Do you need a ride to meeting? Or can you take someone?

Pastoral Care is here to help! We now have a spreadsheet that anyone can access and fill in. It's simple, just fill in your information. If someone matches with you, we ask that you contact them to set up any further details.

You don't have to commit to coming to meeting every week, or taking someone all the time. It's a great way to get to know people, and reduce the number of cars on the road at the same time!

The spreadsheet will automatically save itself. Anyone with the link can then read it, and add their own information. You can find it here <https://tinyurl.com/ridestomeeting>

If you have more questions, contact Christina Davis (goblinshark@gmail.com)



Friends from Portland and Durham meetings, including whole families, came together just before Christmas, to pack gift bags for refugee families. So many donations of warm socks (4 to 8 pair to a gift bag), lotion, soap and snacks that 70 bags and back packs were filled. Families who spent Christmas at St Luke's Cathedral Warming Center and families living at the Portland family shelter all received gift bags. This was a project initiated by the Maine Immigrant Rights Coalition and organized by Wendy Schlotterbeck of Durham. A warm thank you to many, many people who donated and help pack.

- **Portland Friends Meeting Email Lists:** Our Meeting has two email lists, or, "google groups."
 - 1) *PFM Life of the Meeting*, for items directly related to Portland Friends Meeting business and/or directly Quaker items.
 - 2) *PFM Wider Community*, for **any** items of interest from the PFM community to share, not necessarily directly related to Quakers, including personal invitations or community events. To send an announcement to PFM Life of the Meeting, email: pfm-life-of-the-meeting@googlegroups.com.
 - To send an announcement to PFM Wider Community, email: pfm-wider-community@googlegroups.com.
 - For any questions related to the lists: pfm.email.list.owner@gmail.com.

A threshing session prior to consideration of the minute regarding Trump's pardon, and his honoring a Navy Seal

The minute accompanying this note was to be considered at the January Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business, but there was barely time to even read the minute aloud, and to see that it presents some interesting issues

With no time for process about this minute, there was interest in seeing it brought back to Business Meeting after one or several "Threshing" sessions where we could examine the facts and issues in appropriate detail. We expect it will be considered at our February Business Meeting.

We have arranged for a Threshing Session to take place after Meeting for Worship on January 26th, with Mary Tracy as facilitator. Details about the exact time, and what arrangements we might make for a light meal or snack before, will be released shortly. Please let us know if you might be interested in offering a soup or some such.

Note that a Quaker Threshing session is not a place to make decisions, or to seek agreement on minutes. Rather, it's a place to share concerns, to learn, and to explore, often in preparation for later Business Meeting discernment.

On another note, do you have suggestions about changes to the draft minute that would make it clearer, more vital, more resonant? We'd love to hear from you. And if you are concerned about the issues raised, and how our meeting might speak to them, please come to the threshing session!

— Aaiyn Foster af@WealthWomenAndSoul.com — Arthur Fink arthur@ArthurFink.com

Draft minute to be considered by Portland Friends Meeting

Quakers historically have a peace testimony, calling us in our principles and our practice to seek peace, the good, the welfare of all, and actively do that which tends the peace of all. This is our testimony to the whole world.

The war crimes for which Navy Chief Petty Officer Edward Gallagher was charged and convicted were worse than just warfare itself. His military colleagues struggled as they considered breaking the code of silence by which they would usually protect each other – but they did the right thing, reported him, and testified in detail about his crimes. The Navy did the right thing in convicting him based on this and other testimony.

Then, to the horror of his colleagues, his command, and many concerned about military conduct, President Trump gave Edward Gallagher a full pardon, without going through the usual pardon procedures, or offering any reasons for this strange action. Shortly before Christmas, Gallagher was an honored guest of President Trump at Trump's Mar-A-Lago resort.

This retired Navy SEAL, who was called "evil" and "toxic" by his former platoon members, who was accused of multiple war crimes, including shooting at civilians and killing by knife a sedated teen ISIS member who was being held captive and was receiving medical aid, was honored in a very public way.

We approve this minute of concern not because of a mere policy difference with President Trump. The President's actions in this case – both granting a pardon to somebody convicted of such behavior while a member of the United States military, and then honoring him with an invitation to a private club days before Christmas, should be deeply repugnant to all who want to encourage respect for the internationally established rules of conduct during warfare and who want to see our President respect this protocol.

We ask our U.S. Senators and Representatives to raise this issue in Congress, and we commend other Quaker Meetings, organizations and institutions in our Quarter, our State, and our Country, to consider issuing this or similar statements of deep concern. Even in the midst of warfare, some moral principles must be followed, and in particular respected by the President of the United States of America.



Crow Flight--Mihku Paul

INDIGENOUS MATTERS

In the nearly forty years since the signing of the Indian Claims Settlement Acts, the negative effects of these Federal-State-Tribal agreements on Maine's Indigenous nations has become glaringly evident. Last Spring the Maine Legislature established a Maine-Tribal Task Force to review the 1980 implementing act and report back with recommended revisions. In its accompanying resolution, lawmakers referenced many past disagreements over the language of this agreement that "have caused protracted and long-standing litigation" and "the diminishment of rights, privileges, powers and immunities of the Maine tribes resulting in "a loss of health, education and general welfare compared to the overall population." It concluded, "[T]he State does not prosper when a specific portion of its citizenry suffers."

Since May I have been a member of the Friends Committee on Maine Public Policy (FCMPP). As Quakers mindful of Queries set forth in *Faith and Practice of New England Yearly Meeting* we are motivated to focus on restorative justice and concern for relations between the Native peoples and those of us of European descent.

FCMPP and our partners, the Episcopal Committee on Indian Relations, have attended all six of the Task Force meetings. In addition, we have visited the leaders of each Maine tribal community at least once in the past year, hearing their concerns and offering support for specific actions they are seeking. The knowledge we've gained has prepared us well for being their effective advocates in the upcoming legislative session.

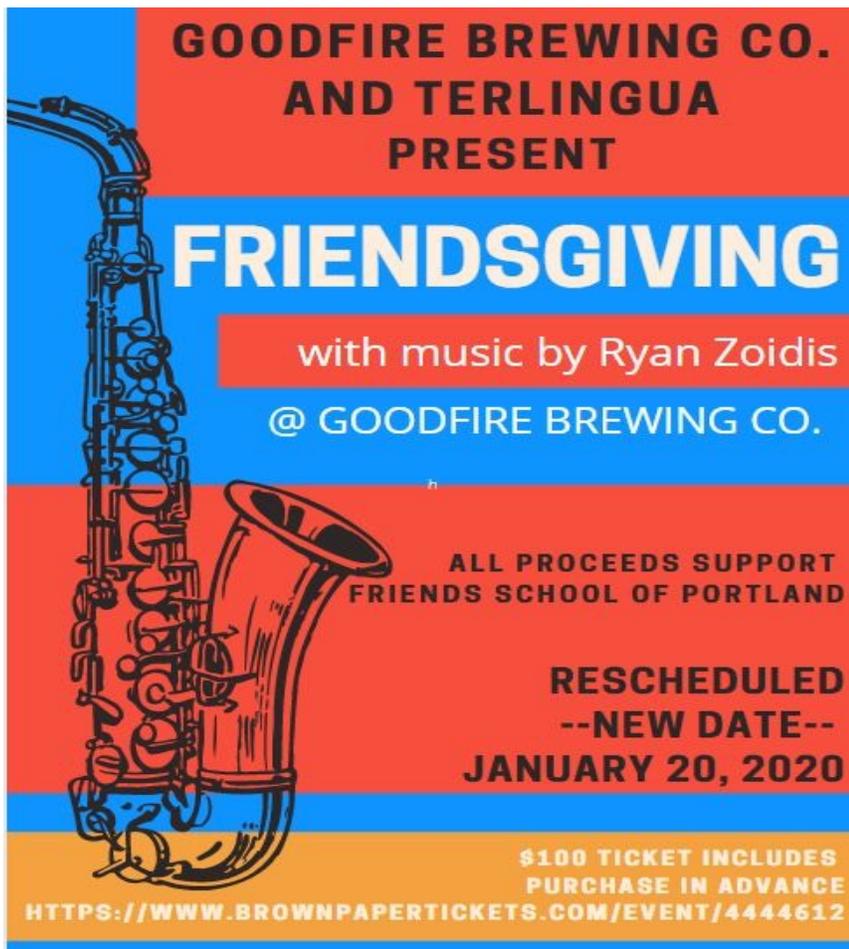
Of twenty-one tribal-related bills submitted in the Legislature last Spring, eight were enacted and signed into law. Twelve more were carried over to 2020. FCMPP members from around the state have been meeting with their individual lawmakers to encourage their support for this positive legislation. On January 6 Jessica Eller and I met with our Senator Ben Chipman at our meeting house. At the Senator's invitation, Rep. Ben Collings of Portland (not of our District) joined us. Rep. Collings is a long-time advocate for Indian causes, and has sponsored five of the carried-over bills, the most of any legislator.

Soon, our real work in Augusta will begin. When the report of the Task Force is presented on January 14, the Joint Committee on the Judiciary must find a way to draft those findings into proposed legislation. Complicating the matter is that eight existing bills carried over from last year's session have also been referred to that committee. One possible outcome is that most or all of these measures will be merged together in a way consistent with the Task Force's recommendations to produce a single bill. FCMPP members will be present at that meeting and, working with the guidance of Tribal leaders and sympathetic lawmakers, we will develop a plan to support a successful outcome.

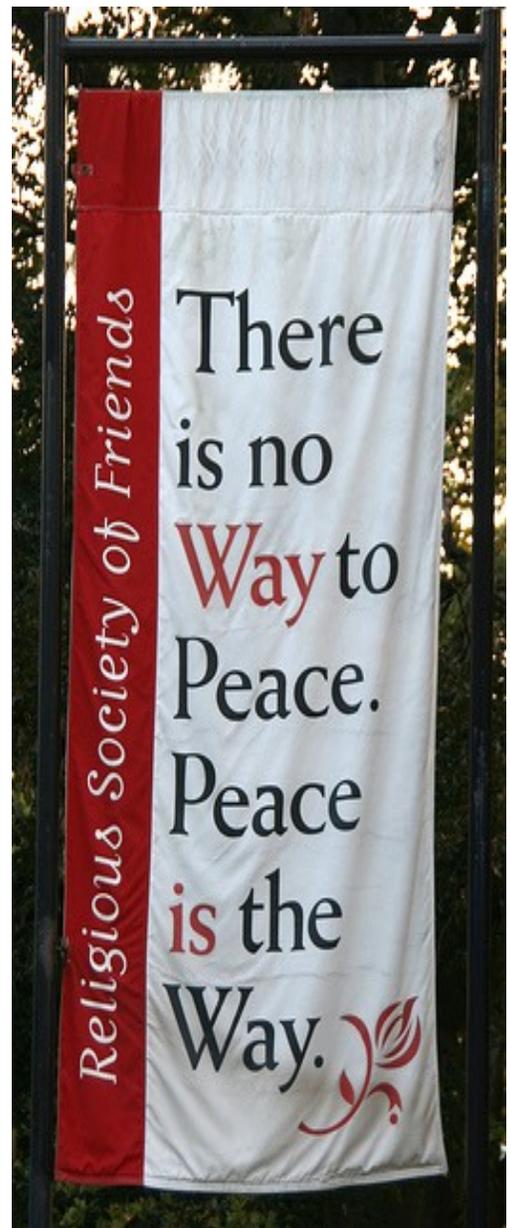
As Southern Maine's representative on the Friends Committee I'm here as a resource for you. If you want more information or want to be involved in any way, please let me know. If you wish to meet with your own legislators, I'm willing to join you as a member of FCMPP, to provide backup information on these important bills. Email me at wcobb2@gmail.com, or approach me after a Meeting for Worship.

I'll end this piece with a quote that speaks to my deep calling to work on issues affecting our Indigenous neighbors:

"It really boils down to this: that all life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one destiny, affects all indirectly." — Martin Luther King Jr



Parents at Friends School of Portland are pulling together their talents for a lovely fundraising evening to celebrate finishing our campaign to build four new classrooms! Join us at Goodfire Brewing Co. on January 20th from 6:30-9pm with food by Terlingua and music by Ryan Zoidis of Lettuce. You can purchase tickets online, in advance: <https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/4444612> All proceeds support the new middle school classroom building project.



Friends Camp and Friends School of Portland alumni gathered at Portland Friends Meeting to socialize, eat pizza, and bake cookies for Preble Street. We had a lovely group just the right size to take over the kitchen at PFM. Thank you to PFM for hosting us all!

"Mariette in Ecstasy"

by Ron Hanson

And Christ still sends me roses.

We try to be formed
and held and kept by him,
but instead he offers us freedom.

And now, when I try to know his will,
his kindness floods me,
his great love overwhelms me,
and I hear him whisper,
"Surprise me."

Submitted by Karyl Sylken

Portland Friends Meeting
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Address Service Requested

Next newsletter deadline:
Tuesday, February 4, 11:59pm

submissions: pfmnewsletter@grantwinners.net

