

# Middlebury Friends Meeting

November  
2011



# NOVEMBER 2011

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9 <sup>o</sup>	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24 <sup>●</sup>	25	26
27	28	29	30			

## QUAKER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Every Saturday 10:30 AM Vigil for Peace on the Triangle Green, downtown Middlebury. Until 11 AM.
- Sat. Nov. 5 Mexican Consulate will be in Addison Co. to talk about immigration issues; contact Cheryl Mitchell, 545-2278
- Sun. Nov. 6 8:30 AM Friendly Forum on Eldering
- Wed. Nov. 9 7 PM Women's Group at Susannah McCandless' 545-2525
- Mon. Nov. 14 4 PM COSA meeting at Ted Colwell's, 388-3632
- Mon. Nov. 7 7:30 PM Men's Group at David Andrew's, 388-4894
- Sun. Nov. 13 8:30 AM Worship & Study Committee meeting at Havurah.
- Sun. Nov. 20 8:30 AM Monthly Meeting for Business (Note: No Monthly Meeting in December)
- Sun. Dec. 4 8:30 AM Friendly Forum on Restorative Justice
- Sun. Dec. 18 10 AM Holiday Meeting at the Colwell's in East Middlebury followed by potluck

“If you have knowledge,  
let others light their candles in it.”

— MARGARET FULLER

Middlebury Friends Meeting  
Monthly Meeting for Business

16 October, 2011

Clerks: Cheryl Mitchell

Recording Clerk: Priscilla Baker

Present were Laura Asermily, David Andrews, Ted Colwell, Win Colwell, Tom Dickinson, and Stewart Kirkaldy.

11.10.01 **Minutes from 18 September 2011:** Accepted as printed in the newsletter.

11.10.02 **Monthly Meeting time:** It was agreed to meet at 8:30am for November Monthly Meeting for Business on Nov. 20. After that, a questionnaire will be sent out via listserv to determine the timing of future monthly meetings.

11.10.02 **Treasurer’s Report** (David Andrews and Laura Asermily): During the month of September 2011 the Meeting had income of \$620, which included \$150 in special gifts in response to Hurricane Irene. The income for the comparable period last year was \$780. Expenditures during September totaled \$606, and included: New England Yearly Meeting, \$499, Children’s Program \$63, and postage \$44. In addition, \$100 was withdrawn from Olivia Grugan’s fund. The current bank balance is \$5,982.27, which includes Olivia’s remaining fund balance of \$1,129.76.

In addition to the \$150 received in September for hurricane relief, an additional \$200 has come in so far in October. The \$1200 voted for that purpose from the soundproofing fund has not yet been sent. The funds currently awaiting disbursement for hurricane relief are as follows:

	Hurricane Relief Fund	Farm & Wilderness
From the soundproofing fund	\$600.00	\$600.00
From special gifts	150.00	\$200.00
TOTAL available	\$750.00	\$800.00

FOLLOW UP: It was agreed that the \$12 collected in the community supper basket will be given to the community supper organizers.

*cont.*

**11.10.04 Fellowship Committee** (from Wendy Goodwin). It has been suggested that MFM have a potluck to hear from the Earth Care Witness program. This will probably happen after the new year.

Friends are asked to share their feedback about whether or not to do another round of Friendly 8's. Contact any member of the Fellowship Committee (Wendy Goodwin, Fran Putnam or Faith Lowell).

**11.10.05 Outreach and Social Action Committee (COSA)** (from Tom Dickenson, edited for these minutes by the recording clerk)

1. We served 192 meals at the Community Supper on September 30. The organization we had in place worked well, but minor changes were suggested to make things more efficient in the future.
2. We have been informed that New England Yearly Meeting Permanent Board meets at different locations during the year as a way to let Meetings around New England get to know what NEYM does. They are looking for meeting places for March 17 and May 12, 2012. The responsibilities of the host meeting are similar to hosting Quarterly meeting: provide space for a gathering of 25 to 45 people, overnight hospitality for folks who prefer to stay over on Friday, and provide simple breakfast and lunch for the attendees. We should let NEYM know if we are interested. Future meetings of the Permanent Board, besides the August meeting at NEYM annual sessions, are November 19, 2011, January 21, March 17 and May 14, 2012.

**FOLLOW UP:** It was reported that Burlington Monthly Meeting has offered to host on May 14, 2012. Tom Dickenson will check with NEYM to see if it is acceptable for us to offer to co-host with Burlington. If so, Cheryl will contact Burlington Friends to start planning.

3. A new draft minute on FUM policies has been written to submit for consideration at monthly meeting, and, if approved, sent directly to FUM to inform them of our position on their personnel policies which limit participation of gay and lesbian Friends in their organization.

**FOLLOW UP:** After a few minor edits, the minute was approved to be sent directly to FUM as well as to Northwest Quarterly Meeting and New England Yearly Meeting. A brief background description and the final minute are attached to these minutes.

**11.10.06 Flowers at Meeting for Worship:** For many years Mimi Love-Nicholson has provided flowers and other lovely centerpieces during meeting for worship. She would like to pass this activity along to someone else. Co-clerk Cheryl Mitchell will talk to Worship and Study about addressing the possibility of another Friend or a sub-committee assuming this. MFM minutes its gratitude to Mimi for her dedication to provide objects of beauty for us to behold and contemplate.

**11.10.07 Emergency Safety and Evacuation plans:** The subcommittee presented a

first draft of ideas. Other items were suggested to be added, such as a plumbing emergency, location of the fuse box, first aid supplies, the slippery porch in winter and icy/snowy walkways. Any other ideas or concerns should be conveyed to Cheryl Mitchell, Fran Putnam, Jean Rosenberg or Stewart Kirkaldy.

Monthly meeting closed after a period of silence.

## MINUTE REGARDING HIRING PRACTICES TO BE SENT DIRECTLY TO FRIENDS UNITED MEETING

### BACKGROUND:

Many of us in MFM are uncomfortable with policies of Friends United Meeting which exclude gay and lesbian Friends from employment or positions of leadership in their fellowship. Our Meeting is associated with FUM through New England Yearly Meeting, and there is a desire to communicate our feelings on this matter to FUM. There was a year-long process of discussion, drafting, and acceptance of a minute which ended at Quarterly Meeting in March 2011 when unity was not reached on transmitting this minute to NEYM to be forwarded to FUM. During this process we learned much about Quaker Process and also about the discussions and actions on this subject which have been going on over the last few years in other Meetings in our Quarter and at Yearly Meeting. With this experience, we plan to once again pick up the discussion and hope to initiate a dialog with FUM and influence a change in these policies.

### STATEMENT:

Members of Middlebury Friends Meeting (MFM) have treasured a long affiliation with Friends United Meeting (FUM) and appreciate much of the outreach of FUM around the world. We believe FUM is a key part of the Friends community. Yet, MFM members also struggle to understand and accept some FUM personnel and marriage policies as they relate to gay, lesbian and bisexual Friends.

In 1989 Middlebury Friends Meeting approved a minute supporting the civil rights of gays and lesbians. A further minute was later adopted whose wording included the sentence "We joyfully affirm our willingness as a meeting to sanctify celebrations of marriage for both same and opposite gender couples". Our understanding of Quaker principles calls on us to recognize all human beings as equal in the sight of God, regardless of race, national origin, gender or sexual orientation.

FUM policies currently exclude those who are gay, lesbian or bisexual from employment and volunteer positions and deny gays, lesbians and bisexuals the rite of marriage and prevent them from giving free expression to their sexual orientation. These policies seem inconsistent with our understanding of Quaker principles.

We wish FUM to know our feelings on this matter and to express our hope that in good time we can find a way to build unity on this issue.

## Becky Holmes

Becky is a birthright Quaker and has belonged off and on to Meetings on both coasts. Meeting for Worship was an oasis during chaotic periods in her life and especially during the Vietnam War and Civil Rights eras. These events influenced her spiritual journey, as did several key books she encountered as a reader, parent, and teacher.



Becky and her older brother were raised by a casual Quaker father and lapsed Christian Science mother in Ithaca, NY. She loved stories about her grandparents, especially her eccentric grandfather who was active in founding AFSC and the George School, which she attended. She also attended Pendle Hill camp, and Oberlin College. Her father died during her sophomore year, and her mother insisted she come home. She spent her time at Cornell majoring in English and working as a nanny: “I hated Cornell. It was huge and overwhelming. I didn’t know where I was going, but the Vietnam War crystallized where I didn’t want to go.” Arguments with her brother who had joined the army also clarified family and peace issues for her. After Cornell, she traveled through Europe with her mother: “She saw a lot of art and good food; I saw those, too, but also a lot of poverty.” She met her first husband in Italy and they settled in Davis, CA, had two daughters Kirsten and Sarah, and started attending Davis Quaker Meeting. “Davis Meeting was in turmoil over the war, but I was impressed by the way it took care of its draft resisters and their families, and with the way it welcomed us since Ed had been in the service.” She began working at a preschool (“I learned about parenting!”), completed a BS in physical anthropology (“A new way to see humanity!”) But she and her husband divorced in 1974 despite family opposition. “It was sad and confusing, but the right thing to do.”

She married the son of an old family friend and moved to the Cheyenne reservation in Montana, where she taught at an alternative school. For 4-5 months of the year, they blended their families – his 2 girls were the same age as hers: “I learned so much negotiating and laughing with them.” But the blend was a strain on the marriage: “I wanted cooperation, but he wanted obedience.” After three years, they moved to Oregon where she completed a Masters Degree in anthropology at the University, hoping to teach at the college level... “but continuing was out with everything unraveling at home.” She continued teaching English to refugees at the local community college: (“They were my teachers.”) Eventually, faced with another divorce, she expanded her ESL teaching. When the girls went to college, she switched to high school English, serving also as a part time counselor and drama coach.

She and Jake began spending happy time together in 1983 after working on a theater production of *Kismet*. They married just ahead of daughter Kirsten in 1997.

“Learning how to have loving relationships has been a big part of my spiritual journey. Children rub off your edges, and teach you so, so much about the ever present inner Light.” Becky and Jake moved East to be closer to daughters Sarah and Kirsten. They settled in Vermont when Jake took a job at Middlebury College and Becky found work teaching ESL for ACSU.

Natural beauty anchors her — birds, trees and weather changes. She has always had a sense of place and treasures her “perfect” Salisbury home. She loved Oregon, too: “I can still picture every individual tree around our house there. They were my friends.” She reveres Quaker values for their emphasis on simplicity, honest relationships, and natural balance.

“I find Middlebury Friends Meeting more spiritual than other Quaker Meetings I’ve attended...or maybe it’s just my age; perhaps I’m more receptive.” She likes the Meeting’s approach to spiritual questions and the diverse religious backgrounds of its members. But her greatest source for spiritual direction has always been books.

“Summerhill was the transformative experience of my young life. It laid out a way of approaching people and raising children that was frighteningly different from anything I had ever encountered — and eventually it informed the way I raised my daughters and taught children. Tolstoy was also a ‘weighty friend,’ among others.

“I see a person’s spiritual journey in the totality of his/her lifetime of responses and decisions. I don’t really know how to talk about that now.”

We are fortunate to have her tender care of our Meeting’s library and her friendly fabric of experience.

— LA with BH

## MIDDLEBURY FRIENDS MEETING

Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

Editor: Winslow Colwell

Newsletter Mailing: Ted Colwell & Ruth Barenbaum

### Co-Clerks

Cheryl Mitchell (545-2278)

Jean Rosenberg (388-6453)

### Recording Clerk

Priscilla Baker

### Treasurer

Laura Asermily

266 Washington St. Ext.

Middlebury, VT 05753

388-9478

### Co-Treasurer

Jill Stackhouse

12 Seminary St

Middlebury, VT 05753

388-9224

### Pastoral Care Committee

Caring for one another in a loving community is an important part of our life as a Meeting.

Call any member of Pastoral Care to share a concern or need.

Priscilla Baker (388-8024)

Ruth Barenbaum (388-2651)

Sas Carey (388-1301)

Brud Leedom (623-7533)

Grace McGrath (388-6576)

Carrie Reed (388-0436)

We welcome your submissions! — win@wcolwell.com

## MIDDLEBURY FRIENDS MEETING

PO Box 1026

Middlebury, VT 05753

Meeting for Worship 10 AM every First Day

Havarah House, 56 N. Pleasant St. (Rt.7), Middlebury

[www.middleburyquakers.org](http://www.middleburyquakers.org)

Please send newsletter submissions to the address above or to  
[win@wcolwell.com](mailto:win@wcolwell.com)