



Newsletter of the

Ithaca Monthly Meeting

of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

December 2010

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To join our email list for solely for meeting-related announcements, send an email message addressed to:

IMMRSF-L-request@cornell.edu

with body of the message as simply:

join

Events:

To set up or schedule a program or presentation for the meeting, please see the instructions on the website.

Website: ithacamonthlymeeting.org

Newsletter Submissions Due December 30th

Please provide your newsletter contributions to Marin Clarkberg:
150 Giles St., Ithaca, NY 14850
607-279-4722 • mec30@cornell.edu

Growing in Spirit Together

—Steve Mohlke and Tonia Saxon, on behalf of Ministry and Worship

How do we understand the idea of growth in the Spirit? Quakers talk about the “Inward Light,” “that of God in every one.” Learning to open ourselves to inward leading is at the heart of Quaker life; it has to do with how we respond to shortcomings of our own, and to the wrong we see in the world. Does talking about it make us uneasy? Or is it something that can be shared?

Ministry and Worship is interested in aiding Friends who are seeking ways to share their search with each other. We will all have the opportunity to gather together in pairs or groups of 3-5 people regularly over a few months. The purpose of these gatherings is to create a vessel in which we can explore and share our spiritual stories.

In the January newsletter we’ll set out the details of the formation of these groups; in this newsletter, we’ll share part of an article in the current Friends Journal by Lynn Fitz-Hugh entitled “The Divine Center and Communal Nurture” (see page 2). Her writing has sharpened our focus as we consider this step for our Meeting. (Some of us may pause at the Christ-centered phrase “Kingdom values,” but this is close to an idea more familiar to Friends; the sense that we are called to stand aside in some way or other from mainstream society’s preoccupation with things that are transient or only temporarily gratifying.)

Please see “The Divine Center” on page 2

Outreach and Friendship with Two of Ithaca’s Refugee Families

— Garry Thomas, on behalf of the Ad Hoc Working Group for Immigrant Support

Ithaca Monthly Meeting’s Ad Hoc Working Group for Immigrant Support is still at work! As it has been since the committee was formed in November 2007, under the auspices of Social Justice (SJ) and Peace Witness (PW), members of the Working Group remain in close contact with two refugee families, providing assistance in a variety of ways. In addition, the Meeting has been very generous contributing financially to two funds, the Refugee Fund and the Refugee Assistance Fund, by way of Third Sunday collections and annual donations, enabling the committee to assist the two families over the three year period.

There is good news to report about both families, since our last formal report to IMM in June. The Burmese family, Mu Mu, Eh Christ, and their children Delvin

and Tamara are all doing quite well. Mu Mu is healthy enough to work in food service at the Statler Hotel approximately 30 weeks a year, and Eh Christ continues to work the late shift in Ithaca College’s Physical Plant. Delvin’s in kindergarten, Tamara is enrolled in a pre-K program, and both are going to afternoon childcare. On November 6, there was a dinner party at the Burt House to celebrate Mu Mu’s obtaining US citizenship, which was well attended by Friends and other friends, both American and Burmese. Mu Mu was the one who initiated the request of the Burt House as a venue and was responsible for the food; Eh Christ did much of the inviting, and both were very pleased with the party.

“Refugees,” continued on page 2

The Divine Center

In the early days of Quakerism, friends would greet each other with “How goes the Spirit with thee? This was a serious question. It was not the “How are you?” with the obligatory answer of “Fine,” regardless of how you really are, but a sincere desire to know the spiritual state of the other, which was considered paramount. Friends expected to know each other spiritually. Early Friends worshipped together with their neighbors. They raised each other’s barns, they birthed each other’s babies, and they often knew each other from cradle to grave.

It is harder for modern Friends to really know each other. We usually see each other only on Sundays and we sit in silence, which does not breed familiarity. We must find new ways to know each other spiritually. So when we look around at our meetings for worship, we know each other’s spiritual conditions—and those speak to us also in the silence. It is good that in our adult education hours we learn about Quaker history, our testimonies, and about the social concerns of our day, but we need to enter into worship sharing together as well—to know who has a spiritual dry spell right now, who is

alive with the Spirit, who is in a spiritual crisis, and what the nature is of the spiritual dilemmas with which we each struggle. We need to know how our personal relationships with God are going!

When we know each other in this way, a work party becomes wholly fellowship; we have patience and forbearance for each other in our committee work; we hear the holy message clothed in the personality and speaking style of our friend who has risen to deliver the Author’s message. When we are known in this way, our community becomes the Parents’ Arms that hold us in our struggles.

There are more convinced Friends in the Religious Society of Friends than ever before since the first generation of Friends. Some convinced Friends have been Friends for many decades, others have attended only a few months. Small meetings struggle with how to teach and model Quakerism to new attenders. When we fail at this, we risk losing the Center as a Religious Society. Mennonites are much clearer than Quakers in speaking of God’s Kingdom and The World, which is made up of “powers and principalities.” They talk

about two ways of being in the world—one with the Divine at the center, and one where we are lost in the values, customs, and beliefs of popular culture. Among Mennonites, “non-conforming” means to not adhere to worldly values, to instead be true Kingdom values. When we as Friends fail to teach new Friends about the Divine Center, then democracy, a majority-rule mindset, starts to sift into our business meetings and committee meetings. The way of the world suggests we strike compromises rather than engage in the process of divine guidance that leads spiritual consensus. A polite social distance that is “not too nosy” drifts into our expectations of how well we know each other. Uninspired messages, or no messages at all, are given because we no longer know how to season or test messages. Ultimately, when we fail to teach and model Quakerism, the ways of the world start to sneak in, and we lose what is most precious to us as Friends: our Divine Center.

— Lynn Fitz-Hugh
Excerpted from “The Divine Center and Communal Nurture” in the December 2010 issue of *Friends Journal*

Refugees, continued from page 1

The good news about Dhia Waheed and Aseel Naser family from Iraq is that they have moved to a nice apartment near the hospital. Aseel is comfortable driving Fatima every day to her pre-K program, and Abdullah takes the school bus early in the morning to his kindergarten at Beverly J. Martin. Aseel now has time to take ESL classes through BOCES, and has become increasingly proficient. She is particularly happy with their new apartment and modern kitchen. As for Dhia, once it became apparent that neither teaching Arabic at Cornell nor enrolling in graduate studies were likely possibilities this fall, he found a job driving for a taxi company on the late shift well into the Ithaca night.

Members of the Working Group have spent a fair amount of time with both families over the past six months, whether at their apartments or meeting them in town, and we expect this to continue. Even as financial help has been much less of an issue, we have continued in the role of helping navigate the social service bureaucracies as well as offering friendship. We provided assistance to Aseel, for example, when she needed to meet with Social Services

and once joined her for a meeting with the ESL/BOCES administrator. Occasionally we are still asked to accompany Mu Mu to medical appointments. And one member of our Working Group has spent a considerable amount of time with Eh Christ thinking through childcare options. The result was their finding more suitable child care for Tamara.

The Working Group also continues to work closely with Catholic Charities’ Immigrant and Refugee Support Services Program. During the past six months, we have contributed financially to this program from the Refugee Fund we administer, and will do so again in 2011.

Finally, given that our two funds are relatively flush and our anticipated expenditures at this point are relatively small, we will be proposing to the December business meeting that the Third Sunday collection for the Refugee Fund and the Refugee Assistance Fund be suspended until further notice.



Left: Marin and Thea Clarkberg admire the second story skylight and the freshly sprayed-on foam insulation in the Third Street Meetinghouse.

Above: A brand new tankless water heater, shiny copper plumbing, fresh electrical wiring, and other enhancements spiffy up the basement.

Visits to the Third Street Meetinghouse

The Project Management Committee (PMC) remains available to walk Friends through the building on Sundays at the rise of Meeting (with the exception of second Sundays, which are our regular Monthly Meetings). Please do not hesitate to contact a member of the PMC if you want to do this, or if you have questions: Lynn Truame (thetruames@gmail.com), Marin Clarkberg (clarkberg@cornell.edu), Tonia Saxon (tonia@iecc.com), Tony Serviente (ts-glass314@gmail.com), and Mike Simkin (mes13@cornell.edu).

Friends are also asked not to visit the building at times other than these weekly walk-throughs, so that we avoid interfering with the contractor's work. Remember: when visiting this active construction site, wear "sensible shoes".

Burt House Vacancies in January

The Burt House Committee expects to have two or three vacancies in January. Residents at the House have private rooms and share in use of the kitchen and eating areas as well as in upkeep of shared spaces. We seek residents who desire cooperative living in a Quaker setting. Residents sign a rental agreement pertaining to the above. No lease is required. For further information, contact Mary Balfour, Burt House caretaker, at 273-5421; cell phone 342-6657; e-mail mbalfour123@gmail.com.

What Difference Does Membership Make? Jan 16, 2011

We hope you will join us on January 16 at the rise of Meeting to learn about membership as an important—perhaps critical—step in our journeys as Quakers. Hear about “the underlying spiritual movement by which individuals come to find their identity in the meeting community; how they come to a full sense of belonging; in short, how we come to be “members one of another.” In the Pendle Hill Pamphlet, *Members One of Another*, Thomas Gates suggests, “In our meetings, we need to move beyond the simple question of ‘Are you a member?’ to the more important questions: ‘How are you maturing into the fullness of membership in this spiritual community?’ And, ‘Is our meeting a community which nurtures the spiritual growth and transformation of its members?’”

— *Ministry and Worship*,
Program Committee, *Quaker Basics Series*

“Shall We Dance?” asks Perry City

Perry City Monthly Meeting is hoping to begin monthly family contra dances as a modest fundraising effort. Perry City has done this on occasion with good success in the past. However, Friends at Perry City don't feel that they are capable of organizing this every month. A regular event is the best approach to fundraising of this type. Perry City is looking for other groups to help by taking responsibility (and any ensuing fundraising success) for some of the months. Is there a Friend in Ithaca Monthly Meeting that is willing to look at this idea? If so, please contact Tom Joyce, Perry City Friends Meeting, 277-7426.

Gratitude at Peace Vigil

Peace Witness Committee wants to thank the Catholic Worker for joining the weekly Quaker peace vigil on November 11, Veterans' Day. It was good to share our hopes for peace in the world on that particular day.

Opportunity to Join the Community Dialog

The MLK Community Build kick-off last month celebrated the collaborative effort to engage our community in reading and dialog of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's last book "Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?". The MLK Community Build started in the spring of 2008 after a series of presentations at the Tompkins County History Center on the history of equity in the Ithaca City School District, and is a collaborative effort between many local educational and non-profit organizations. The MLK Community Build mission is "to engage all sectors of the community in realizing, as King said, that 'we are tied in a single garment of destiny.' We will come together through shared readings, discussions, and events based on the writings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr." MLK Community Build hopes to link diverse discussion groups, and hopefully, make 1,000's of new connections in our community.

Many groups of people from churches, to human service agencies to businesses are in conversation about the book and what we can do as individuals and collectively to build community in the midst of injustices. If you would like to join a Friends Book Group to read and discuss Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's book "Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?" please contact Karen Friedeborn at <karen.friedeborn@gmail.com> or call 272-4442. Once we have a group, we will decide when we want to meet. Free copies of the book will be available at meeting.

For more information about MLK Community Build visit <http://mlk-communitybuild.org/>

Fire Destroys Shirley Way's Home

Shirley Way—active with Poplar Ridge Meeting, an occasional attendee at Ithaca, and the coordinator of AVP/NY—watched fire destroy her home at the end of November. The good news is that Shirley is fine. The bad news is that Shirley lost everything: clothes, furniture and all the things we make our lives from. If you would like to send a donation for Shirley you can: write checks to the Poplar Ridge Friends Meeting and put "for Shirley Way" in the "memo" space. Mail to: Poplar Ridge Friends Meeting House, Poplar Ridge Road, Poplar Ridge, NY 13139.



Friend Ann Rhodin Invites us to the Annual Open Show at the Community School of Music and Art, December 3rd through January 28th.

Meeting Friends: Andre Spies

Andre Spies has been a long term sojourner at the Burt House and has been active in the work of the meeting whenever in town. Andre writes,

"Recently I've been working with a Clearess Committee on some personal issues that I've had a difficult time articulating. I might call it a gender transition if I had a clearer goal or outcome in mind. "Gender Questioning" is appropriately fluid and open-ended, but it doesn't explain much. Anyway, it feels like I'm finally able to respond to a long-standing, mostly unacknowledged need to modify my general appearance and clothes in a more feminine direction. I'm contemplating hormone therapy in February-March with a doctor in Memphis, where I would also have the support of my home Meeting. If I go through with it, the changes will be more dramatic when I return to Ithaca, inch'Allah, in April.

"I've also begun to feel more comfortable with the idea of actually talking about all this to friends who might be interested or concerned. I've discussed it at some length with members of my committee—Melissa Dunham, Nancy Gabriel, Carolyn Kenyon and Steve Mohlke—as well as with Mary Balfour, and they have graciously agreed to make themselves available to anyone who might have questions. Thank you all for welcoming me to your meeting these past few months, and for any support you might be able to provide on this very strange adventure."

Library Materials

On the library shelf in the Edwards Room are lots of new pamphlets and brochures. Some are Friends General Conference (FGC) materials with information about Quakerism and Quaker worship, and some have information about our Meeting. There are also copies of New York Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice. If you would like to keep any of the pamphlet materials, please leave a donation in the container provided on the shelf by the materials. This way we can replenish the pamphlets and keep new ones coming. Also, your donations will help provide new books as well.

The new books have pockets with sign-out cards. When you borrow a book, please fill out the card and leave it in the Sign-Out Box there.

Further, if you have one of our library books at home, please return it to the Edwards Room bookshelf so it can stay in circulation. If you have borrowed a book or a hymnal from the Burt House, please return it so that our materials can be used by all. Burt House books and hymnals (hymnals are not intended to circulate and should stay in the Edwards Room) can be returned to the Edwards Room shelf and we will see that they get to the right place.

— Wilma Brown, librarian

**Minutes of the November 14, 2010 Monthly Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
Ithaca Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends**

Steve Mohlke, Clerk

Tonia Saxon, Assistant Clerk

Marilyn Ray and Nancy Gabriel, Co-Recording Clerks

Mike Simkin, Treasurer

(The @ signifies that the minute has been read and approved during Meeting. Please note that copies of all reports provided during this Meeting are on file with and available from the Recording Clerk.)

201011.1 Gathering. Ithaca Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends met in Monthly Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business in the Café at Anabel Taylor Hall on November 14, 2010. At 12:35pm, 14 Friends gathered and settled into silence. Clerk extended our appreciation to Friends with the special concern for holding today's Meeting in the Light, Alexa Yesukevich and Barbara Barry. Clerk reviewed the agenda of the day's business. Clerk shared with those gathered three characteristics of the Sense of the Meeting process as described by Arthur Larrabee in a presentation to faculty at Guilford College. In brief, a) It is a listening process, b) It is a cooperative, non-adversarial process, c) It is a discovery process.

201011.2. Carolyn Kenyon presented the report from Ministry and Worship.

- 1) M&W reported out on the Clearness Committee for Rebekah Tanner, regarding clearness for ministry. The committee met with Rebekah, and experienced an extraordinary level of depth in the process. Although the next step in this journey is unclear, we anticipate that individuals and committees will emerge to support Rebekah's ministry. @
- 2) Clearness Committee met for Lynn Truame regarding membership in Ithaca Monthly Meeting. Lynn's letter requesting membership was read. The Clearness Committee—Carolyn Kenyon, Fell Cadwallader, and Rebekah Tanner—is delighted to recommend Lynn for membership. Approved. @
- 3) Clearness Committee met for Anneliese Truame regarding membership in Ithaca Monthly Meeting. Anneliese's letter requesting membership was read. The Clearness Committee—Marin Clarkberg, Barbara Ganzel, and Garry Thomas—whole heartedly recommends Anneliese for membership. Approved. @

201011.3. On behalf of Nominating Committee, Erica Weiss brought forward two names for the Third Street Meetinghouse Committee: Marion DaGrossa and Larry Clarkberg. Two positions remain to be filled and we expect those names to be brought forward next month. Approved. @

A question was raised as to whether the new meetinghouse has been officially dubbed the "Third Street Meetinghouse." Several Friends have reflected on the name and the process for choosing the name. Friends referred this question to the Third Street Meetinghouse Committee. Approved. @

201011.4. Tonia Saxon presented a report from the Project Management Committee. Tonia shared that the progress on the Meetinghouse is a joy to behold, and that we are on schedule for completion in February/March of 2011. It is now apparent that we can proceed with a kitchen that includes a Type II hood (rather than a more elaborate Type I hood) as long as we commit to preparing only foods that do not produce a lot of grease. Due to leaks, more sections of the roof have been redone than we originally planned. This was an added expense, but we still have money in the contingency budget. The PMC is not prepared, at this time, to propose construction activities that extend beyond our original construction contract. (To remain within our budget, our original construction contract did not include flooring beyond the sub-floor on the second floor, exterior painting, and other items that we might like to include at a later time.) After the Clerk described the difference between receiving a report and accepting a report, Friends accepted the report. @

201011.5. Mike Simkin reported on behalf of the Finance Committee.

- 1) Mike described progress on a preliminary form for use to facilitate short term loans from individuals to the meeting to meet our payment obligations to the contractor in a timely manner. A few details remain to be ironed out. We have cash on hand that should allow us to pay bills for December.
- 2) Mike distributed a proposed budget for 2011. The Finance Committee is not asking for a decision on the budget today, and expects to distribute the proposal on the listserv. The new budget includes estimates on the operating costs associated with the Third Street Meetinghouse. Friends with comments on the budget should contact a member of the Finance Committee: Mike Simkin, William White, Dick Crepeau, Peggy Walbridge and Martin Jolles.

Friends received the report. @

201011.6. Mike Simkin presented the Treasurers report. Friends received the report. @

201011.7. Other concerns.

- 1) Friends noted that there have been conflicts scheduling events for the Meeting. A better process for avoiding conflicts is needed. Friends referred the issue to the Clerk.
- 2) A Friend identified a need for a monthly social event for the children of the meeting, such as bowling. This will be referred to CALM.

Sixteen Friends settled into worship at 1:56pm before adjourning. Our next regular Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business will be held at the rise of Meeting in Anabel Taylor Hall on December 12, 2010.

Respectfully submitted,

Marin Clarkberg, Acting Recording Clerk

Powell House's Annual New Year Celebration

Beginning on Thursday, December 20th at 6:00p and ending Saturday, January 1st at 2:00p, this multigenerational conference is one of Powell House's most popular. There is lodging for only 90 people, so register early! Bring your instruments, a song, a story, and/or skit to share with everyone on New Year's Eve.

To register, go online to <http://www.powellhouse.org/> and find registration under the "Our Calendar" button. Or contact Sharon Koomler, Powell House Registrar, at sharon@powellhouse.org or 518-794-8811. Register by 12/15: Families \$400; Adults \$200.

Caroling by Candlelight

Ithaca Children's Choir will be in the Caroling by Candlelight concert on Sunday, December 12, including many kids from our Meeting (Britta Goncarovs, Elsa Mohlke, Emily Murphy, Sarah Saxon, Amelia Weatherby (Dick & Melody's granddaughter), and Laurel Wolfe). The concert will be at 5:00 pm, in St. Paul's Methodist Church. The concert will also include members of the Cayuga Chamber Orchestra and the Festival Chimes Bell Choir. Tickets are: Adults \$14 and students \$7.

December 2010 Calendar of Ithaca Monthly Meeting

Please also see the on-line calendar at <http://ithacamonthlymeeting.org/calendar/>

Faith and Practice Discussion Sunday, December 5, 9:30a

Claudia Stoscheck will be leading the reading and discussion of a section from Faith and Practice. Please join us!

Social Justice Committee Sunday, December 5, Rise of Meeting

Social Justice Committee will meet for a short time before Greta Mickey's presentation.

Greta Mickey from NYYM Peace Concerns Sunday, December 5, Rise of Meeting

Greta Mickey, New York Yearly Meeting Peace Concerns Coordinator, will be speaking in the Cafe. Refreshments provided.

Peace Witness Committee Saturday, December 11, 10:30a

All are welcome to gather at the Burt House for Peace Witness.

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business Sunday, December 12, Rise of Meeting

Agenda items should be provided to Steve Mohlke, clerk, by the preceding Wednesday. (Contact information is on page 1.)

Holiday Solstice Sing at Melody & Dick's Thursday, December 16, 7p

Join Melody Johnson and Dick Crepeau at their house, 112 Mt Pleasant for singing. Bring snacks to share if you like. Melody and Dick look forward to seeing you!

Women's Fellowship Friday, December 17, 7p

Please join us at 7pm at the Ithaca Bakery, 400 N. Meadow Street. All are welcome. Have dinner or tea or baked goods... or not.

Clarkberg Dish-to-Pass & Cookie Making Saturday, December 18, 6p

Friends are welcome to join in a holiday dish-to-pass at the Clarkbergs, 150 Giles Street, 279-4722. This is a child-friendly environment, and there will be cookie decorating supplies on hand. Please come!

Pageant and Christmas Dinner Sunday, December 19, Rise of Meeting

Following Meeting for Worship (with our own special version of a Christmas pageant), Friends are invited to bring a dish-to-pass to the cafe at Anabel Taylor Hall and join in fellowship with Friends.

Murdough/Marshall Open House Friday, December 24, 5:30p-11p

There is an abundance of Christmas Cheer at the Murdough/Marshall house this year! We would love to share the joy so please stop by our Christmas Eve open house at any time: 520 North Tioga Street, 607-273-9037 We are on the corner of Marshall and Tioga Streets, about 6 blocks from the Commons.

"Cafe Day" Sunday, December 26, 11:15a

On the Sunday following Thanksgiving, regular First Day School classes will not meet. Instead, children of all ages will meet in the cafe for a shared activity.

Every Sunday

- 11:00a Meeting for Worship for all ages
- 11:15a Children and adults participating in First Day School gather outside the Edwards Room

Other Weekly IMM Events

- Wed 7:30p Midweek meeting for worship at the Burt House
- Thurs 5-5:30p Peace Vigil at the bottom of East State Street near the Community School for Music and Arts