



Newsletter of the

Ithaca Monthly Meeting

of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

December 2015

IMM CONTACTS

ithacamonthlymeeting.org

Meetinghouse:

120 Third Street • Ithaca NY 14850
607-229-9500

Clerk:

Antonia Saxon • 607-387-5244
clerk@ithacamonthlymeeting.org
Box 167 • T-burg, NY 14886

Assistant Clerks:

Marilyn Ray • 607-539-7778
mlr17@cornell.edu
John Lewis • 607-227-6273
johnsherwood@yahoo.com

Treasurer:

Mike Simkin
607-387-5174 • mes13@cornell.edu
3137 Jacksonville Rd • T-burg, NY 14886

Ministry & Worship:

Chuck Mohler
607-539-6454 • clm11@cornell.edu

Pastoral Care:

Emily Williams • 703.297.9849
ewy310@gmail.com

Childcare Requests:

Ellie Rosenberg • 277-1024
ellierosenberg7@gmail.com

Burt House, 227 N Willard Way

Violet Goncarovs & Brian Parks •
BurtHouse@ithacamonthlymeeting.org
607-273-5421 • 607-379-2379 (cell)

Listserv:

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

IMMRSF-L-request@cornell.edu
with message body as simply: join

Marilyn's List:

To email Friends and others non-specifically Quaker messages that may be of interest to Friends, consider sending your message through Marilyn Ray. To join or contribute, email:
mlr17@cornell.edu

Confessions of a Racist

— Karen Friedeborn

Although I have gotten to know many of you in Ithaca Monthly Meeting personally, I would like to share a bit of my story and how I became a racist. Like most other white people, I grew up in pretty much a white bubble in a small New England college town in Massachusetts. I had a Black friend as a young child and crossed paths with some other Black folks, but my world was pretty white. Truth be told, I really did not think about race that much, except that I was raised to believe that every person should be judged on the basis of their actions, not the color of their skin. I did not see racism in my life.

In my early twenties I moved to Ithaca, attended Cornell University and began working at the Ithaca Youth Bureau with teenagers from a variety of backgrounds. Some of the Black teenagers started telling me stories about what was happening in their lives, getting stopped by police and accused of stealing the new bike they got for their birthday or being followed in stores for no reason. I came face to face with racism, the truth these kids were experiencing could not be denied. I read books and took workshops on racism and gradually began to see racism everywhere. Once I saw it, I could not unsee it. I was completely overwhelmed and felt guilty to be white. Gradually I decided that I could work on racism by helping the teens go to college and accomplish their dreams. I couldn't believe that I did not notice racism earlier in my life and made a decision that I was going to do something about it. I could be an anti-racist white person to make up for all the racists who were doing serious harm.

Gradually, I got to know some Black teens and adults pretty well, through my work. One day one of the teens mistook my behavior as being racist. I was shocked and made sure

Racist, cont page 2

Helping Friends attend the White Privilege Conference

New York Yearly Meeting is collecting funds to assist Friends to attend the White Privilege Conference in Philadelphia April 14-17 2016. Checks should be written to NYYM with "WPC" written in the memo line and sent to the NYYM Office, 15 Rutherford Place, New York, NY 10003.

Registration for the conference will open January 18th. The fee for on-time conference registration is \$375. Friends should register through FGC to receive a discount which reduces the cost of registration by about half. In addition to the registration fee, there will be hotel costs which run \$169 per night. Sharing a room will save money on the hotel cost, and the NYYM WPC Task Group is working on ways to connect people from the Yearly Meeting who want to share a room.

Powell House is planning to take a group of high school youth to this conference. If your teen is interested, please contact Chris or Mike: chrisandmike@powellhouse.org.

Funds are available through Ithaca Monthly Meeting and through the Yearly Meeting to assist with conference costs. Contact Susan Wolf for more information or to be added to the list of people receiving information updates: QuakerWolf@gmail.com.

he understood my intentions and the error in his thinking. I was not a racist! Of course, I played this incident over and over in my head, losing sleep. It tormented me enough that I finally told a Black colleague about it who gently explained that actually, I might have been acting from a position of superiority and that it was important to examine my assumptions about the teen and his mother. She said that actually, we are all racist because it is infused in our culture and I might as well accept that I too am a racist. This really blew my mind! I started to notice the messages that I learned throughout my life and recognized that I AM a racist after all! All of the horrible racist subconscious things that I learned over the years came bubbling to the surface. Now I was really worried about my sanity. What was happening to me? By now I had adopted kids of color and these thoughts were absolutely unacceptable and very threatening to my identity and my family.

I am to this day so happy that I continued to attend workshops and talk to experienced people who reassured me that this

was a normal phase of healing racism. It is necessary to erase the tape before learning new things. It was a relief to no longer worry about being called a racist! And the funny thing is that once I admitted that I was a racist, the nature of my relationships with people of color changed. I was more willing to take risks and put myself in uncomfortable positions, such as publicly disagreeing with a person of color about an issue. As time went on, I noticed that I no longer felt so uncomfortable being in social situations where I was one of only a few white people and I could laugh at myself when I made a mistake, like acting on a stereotype I had learned, confusing it with reality. I had authentic friendships with people from many backgrounds and I learned to trust that they would forgive me when I made a dumb white person mistake, which I still do to this day. I am actually grateful now to be corrected so I can continue learning and growing. I find it very useful when I remember to ask myself how I know something is true on a regular basis, so I don't have to rely on my Black friends to educate me.

I learned about white role models from throughout history who worked for racial justice. Once I could recognize things about white culture (which my Black friends could see so much more easily than I ever could) I could pick which things I wanted to keep as part of my identity. I could also recognize what I loved about other cultures.

I hope that sharing my story about how I became a racist will help you decide that this is a journey you are willing to take with me toward creating the beloved community here in Ithaca. Thank you for allowing me to share my story and reading until the end.

Discussion

On December 6th, at 9 am Angela Hopkins, Quaker minister and anti-racism trainer, will be returning to Ithaca Monthly Meeting to continue our discussion on racism and white privilege. We had over 30 people attend on November 15th for a lively discussion. Hope to see you on December 6th!

ARCH (Aging, Resources, Consultation and Help) Workshops

ARCH (Aging, Resources, Consultation and Help) members from IMM and Perry City MM will host another four part series of workshops in 2016. Whereas our presentations in 2015 focused on issues related to life's termination, those planned for 2016 center on "Living Well in the Golden Years."

One topic will provide the opportunity for elders to share insights gained through personal growth that demonstrate unique aspects of "being older." We might include Erick Erickson's Stage 8 of Psychosocial Development, which challenges the elder to choose between Ego Integrity and Despair. This is so important to well being in our later years. How do we accomplish Ego Integrity? Attendees will be invited to share ways that they have accomplished this, or are still on their journey toward reconciliation.

Another topic we hope to cover is what goes into choosing a retirement community. Elders facing the decision of where they

would like to spend their final years may choose not to age in place or stay in their homes. We will go over various choices and share criteria you can use to make the best choice for you. We also have information about local housing options to share.

Still another facet of living well relates to opportunities for volunteerism, recreation, exercise, and socializing. A workshop might explore how best to invest our time on resources that enhance our lives and also contribute to our community.

Ideas for the workshops are still in the formative stage and we will let you know details as the workshops take shape. We would love to hear from any members or attenders who have ideas or requests related to our theme of "Living Well in the Golden Years." ARCH members to contact are Molly Ames, Bronwyn Mohlke, Elizabeth Schneider, Betsy Root, or Susan Wolf. Watch for an announcement of our first workshop in January.

AVP Stories

Alternatives to Violence Program (AVP) facilitators for Elmira Correctional Facility in our meeting (Kathleen Gale, Gina Varrichio, and Susan Wolf) recently asked some of our "inside facilitators," or members of our facilitation team that are presently incarcerated, to write up what they wanted to say to the community about AVP.

Peace! Give AVP a Chance! by Calm Cory

AVP has literally been a life-line for me. Prison is a hostile environment and violence comes from all directions. However, AVP made me realize that most of the violence I encountered was self-imposed. Additionally, AVP helped me to get in tune with qualities I didn't know I had in me. Most importantly, AVP was the spark that allowed me to gain control of my thoughts and actions, rather than living through the eyes of others.

AVP worked for me, and I know it can help everyone. Just give it a chance.

December in IMM History

A look back at our history through the Minutes.

5 Years Ago (December 14, 2010)

Kai Truame was welcomed into membership of IMM.

10 Years Ago (December 11, 2005)

Violet Goncarovs was welcomed into membership of IMM.

20 Years Ago (November 13, 1995)

Cynthia Hill was welcomed into membership of IMM.

45 Years Ago (December 13, 1970)

Lee Fowler from Young Friends reported on a meeting with a member of the Cornell Safety Division. Campus patrolmen carry guns and mace. A discussion followed concerning police power. Larry Etzweiler and Janis Kelly volunteered to gather information in time to be sent out with next month's Meeting notices.

55 Years Ago (December 12, 1960)

The Peace and Social Concerns Committee is planning a wider meeting of IMM concerning expectations of IMM of applicants for membership with regard to the peace testimony. One member voiced that IMM should not become a club of pacifists but should remain a religious group. Another felt that spiritual belief should take precedence over interpretation of testimonies.

Ed Cranch reported on discussions of the high school group of about a dozen, many of whom are not Friends, about Civil Defense. Ned Burt reported that Young Friends listened to and discussed two tapes from Martin Luther King concerning segregation and sit-ins as a form of non-violent resistance.

65 Years Ago (December 11, 1950)

Freda Wilson, a visiting Friend from England who had lived and worked among refugees from Germany for 18 months, gave an interesting talk. She is in the US in attempt to persuade more people here to take in D.P. immigrants. There was also discussion about the Ukrainian family already in Ithaca and the need to find a home for the mother. Edith Edgerton will see if some radio publicity about this need can be aired.

It was decided that IMM should open discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of joining a yearly meeting. IMM, established in 1938 as a monthly meeting through the AFSC Fellowship Council, had not yet joined a yearly meeting.

70 Years Ago (December 10, 1945)

Letters from Clarence Pickett and the Secretary of NYYM were read concerning the acute financial status of the Civilian Public Service Program. Sarah Oliver reported that IMM had contributed \$1,397 to the program since 1941. The matter was left to individual members to contribute more on their own if they felt able to do so.

Food boxes sent to Europe over the past month included one to Norway, two to France, and two to Holland.

— Tom Brown, Meeting Historian

History of Hector Meeting from a 1965 Handout

Historian's Note: In the summer of 1965, an outing for IMM's First Day School was planned for the Hector Meeting House. Unnamed Ithaca Friends prepared a handout for children and parents that included the following history, which was included with the IMM microfilmed minutes:

The history of Hector friends begins in the early 1800s, shortly after this area had been taken over from the Iroquois Indians. In 1819, Amy Grace Mekeel's great great grandparents, Jessee and Amy Quinby Mekeel came here from Westchester County, NY. It was a long and risky journey from Westchester to the Finger Lakes area in those days. Jessee Mekeel bought one square mile of land four miles west of Perry City. The Mekeels were joined by other Friends who had left their homes to resettle here.

In 1826 the first Hector Meeting House was built near Seneca Lake. It still stands [as of 1965] as a barn. After some time, differences of opinion on religious matters arose. Those differences were affecting all Friends in the U.S. Some members of Hector wished to have a pastor or minister and to worship as members of other Christian groups did. Others, including Amy Grace Mekeel's forebears, wanted to be faithful to the traditions of George Fox and the early Quakers in their manner of worship and dress. Half of the members left Hector Meeting to form another meeting which they called the Perry City Meeting. It is good to know that in our times Friends who have different points of view are joining together again.

The first Hector meetinghouse was too big for the remaining members. Meetings began to be held in a schoolhouse built for his children by Amy Grace Mekeel's grandfather, Charles Owen. Amy Grace and Sarah Oliver went to school there. Friends have always cared greatly for the education of their children.

The little schoolhouse became too small. On land across the road from the schoolhouse, the present Hector Meeting House was built in 1902. Although not located in Hector, the original name was kept.

There was no First Day School for children attending meeting. Sarah Oliver sat with her mother on the facing bench. Amy Grace sat with her older sisters. Amy Grace's father was clerk of the meeting for many years as was Sarah Oliver's. Both Sarah Oliver's mother and Amy Grace's mother were ministers. This meant that they have been recognized by the elders as having a gift for expressing their thoughts in the meeting. Whenever a minister spoke, everyone, including the children, stood up.

The way of life of Hector Friends, of course, was different from ours. Are you surprised to know that Christmas and Easter were not celebrated as holidays? You would probably be interested in finding out why this was so and in learning of the good times the children of Hector Meeting had.

Reading the Bible was an important part of the religious life of Hector Friends. They believed that religious life declines when the Bible is not read.

Quarterly Meetings were held with Friends at Poplar Ridge near Aurora. Amy Grace and Sarah have happy memories of the ferry

Hector History, cont page 4

Hector History, cont page 4

ride across the lake from Sheldrake (near Taughannock Park) to King Ferry on the east shore. Passengers, horses and wagons were all carried on the boat. Poplar Ridge Friends were ready with a warm welcome.

The Hector Friends were part of the Quaker movement of their time. In learning about their Meeting we can perhaps better understand our own. Through Sarah Oliver's parents, Marianna and Edward Wood, our Meeting has a close connection with the Jacksonville one. After they had moved to Ithaca, the woods held meetings in their home on Linden Avenue. Later, Meetings were held on the Cornell campus and in 1938, Ithaca Monthly Meeting was formed.

Hector Monthly Meeting no longer meets regularly. It might be classified with others over the state as an Executive Meeting still holding property. A number of Ithaca Friends have helped in maintaining the Hector Meeting House. In past summers Ithaca friends have gathered there for Meetings. We hope to do so again this summer.



Gently unfasten doors of Being.

All is well.

Gifts of mercy are within all darkness.

Do not fear.

God is in your midst.

Do you not see?

Yes, God's blessings fill your heart!

Know that all is well.

Beside you, waiting,

Joy attends you.

Holiness surrounds you.

Yes!

Quietly return to Center.

Love is here.

— Sparrow

Alternative Gift Fair, Dec. 5

The 2015 Alternative Gift Fair will be held Saturday, December 5 from 11:00 AM to 6:00 PM in "The Space" @ Greenstar, located on the corner of Fulton Street and Buffalo Street in Ithaca.

This will be our 12th Annual Alternative Gift Fair, offering holiday shoppers a choice of holiday "gifts" to honor family and friends while supporting local charities and non-profit organizations in a festive atmosphere.

"Gifts", in the past, have ranged from \$5 to give a compact fluorescent light bulb to a local, rural household or \$10 for a week of school, clothing and two meals a day for an orphan in Zambia to \$100 for a "Golden Opportunity" scholarship fund to help students remain successful in area schools. For each donation, the giver receives a holiday card with a description of the organization and the "gift".

For more information go to: <http://www.ithacaaltgiftfair.org/>

— Bronwyn Mohlke

Be An Elf this Christmas

The Elves Program benefits needy children in our area. Thanks to hundreds of volunteers, the program has provided clothing, school supplies, and toys to thousands of students from dozens of area schools.

We will be coordinating funding and donations for IMM to the program. Participants have the option of sponsoring a child themselves by selecting a profile and purchasing all the items on the form (usually a \$100-150 endeavor), donating money towards the sponsorship of a child or children in the program, or helping with the procurement of items with funds collected.

Donations can be handed to me in person or can be dropped in the mail to Gina Varrichio, 166 Crescent Place, Ithaca, NY 14850. Checks can be made out to me personally, or to Ithaca Monthly Meeting with "Cornell Elves" in the memo line.

To email me about getting a profile sent to you, making a donation, or any other question, email zealth_1@yahoo.com. All donation are due by December 11, 2015..

— Gina Varrichio

Esther Darlington Memorial Meeting, Dec 30

A special Memorial Meeting for Worship to celebrate the life of Esther Darlington will be held December 30 at 3:00 p.m., at Third Street Meetinghouse (120 Third Street, Ithaca, NY 14850). All are invited to attend. A light reception will follow at the Rise of Meeting; F/friends are asked to bring some finger foods to share. Should the weather be inclement on Dec. 30, contact Ellie (ellierosenberg7@gmail.com) to see if the Meeting has been postponed.

The Memorial Meeting will be a traditional Quaker Meeting, conducted "in the manner of Friends", meaning that it is very much like any Meeting for Worship. NYYM Faith and Practice describes a Memorial Meeting for Worship in this way:

It has been noted that at a memorial meeting "attention was focused, not upon a lifeless form, but on a living spirit and a radiant faith." . . . If the preference is for a traditional Friends' meeting, this should be conducted in the same manner as a meeting for worship. The family will often express the desire that certain friends take part and may request the reading of appropriate selections. Others present are free to speak, but all messages should be brief. It is recommended that the messages be of such nature as befits a meeting for worship and that they not include any long eulogy. Neither should the meeting be impersonal. A loved one has left; rejoice that this Friend has been with you.

Esther was a lifelong Friend, who had great affinity for her Quaker heritage. She had been a member of Swarthmore and Media Meetings in PA and transferred her membership to Ithaca Monthly Meeting after she moved here. Esther moved to Ithaca in 2004 to make her home with her daughter Ellie Rosenberg, daughter-in-law Janis Kelly and granddaughter Irena. Esther served on IMM Program and Library committees. In recent years her health prevented her from being more active, but F/friends fondly remember her simple messages of love during Meeting.

*"And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."
1Corinthians, 13:13*

Ithaca Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
Monthly Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, October 11, 2015

Clerk: Antonia Saxon

Assistant Clerks: Marilyn Ray, John Lewis

Recording Clerks: Marin Clarkberg, Blair Jennings

(The @ signifies that the minute has been read and approved during Meeting. Copies of all written reports are on file with and available from the Clerk or Recording Clerk.)

2015 11.1 Gathering

Ithaca Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends met in Monthly Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business on November 8, 2015. At 12:25 pm, eleven Friends gathered and settled into worship with John Lewis, Assistant Clerk of Ithaca Monthly Meeting, serving as Clerk. Clerk recognized Steve Mohlke who was holding the Meeting in the Light. Clerk shared the following reading:

The person who knows God most truly is the person who can find the divine presence equally in all things. It is good that a person has a peaceful life; it is better that a person bear a trouble-filled life with patience. But best of all is that a person can be at peace even in the midst of trouble.

— Dan Seeger from a lecture, “*The Mystical Path: Pilgrimage to the One Who Is Always Here*,” delivered November 2002

2015 11.2 Earthcare Witness

Margaret McCasland from Earthcare Witness read a January 2015 statement titled, “Facing the Challenge of Climate Change” that was developed by Quaker Earthcare Witness, the Quaker United Nations Office, and the Friends Committee on National Legislation. She noted that the statement resonates with the Pope’s recent encyclical on climate change. The statement has been signed by several wider Quaker bodies including New York Yearly Meeting and many monthly meetings. Earthcare Witness asked Ithaca Monthly Meeting to unite with the statement. Friends approved endorsing the letter. @

2015 11.3 December Calendar Additions and Revisions

Chuck Mohler reported that the Ministry & Worship Committee has considered how the December calendar might accommodate our traditional Christmas pageant events. Given that many Friends

may be out of town Sunday, December 20th, Ministry & Worship proposed that the pageant and the potluck be held the 13th, and that Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business be moved to one week earlier. In addition, Chuck noted that Ministry & Worship will coordinate a December 24th Meeting for Worship at 7pm at the Burt House. A Friend noted that the proposed date for business meeting would conflict with the regularly scheduled co-meeting of the Social Justice and Peace Witness committees. Several Friends spoke on the challenges of truncating the timeline between now and the proposed date for our next business meeting, December 6th. After some discussion, Friends approved keeping Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business on the traditional second Sunday, December 13th and moving the pageant to December 20th.

The calendar for December is thus:

Dec. 13: Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business

Dec. 20: Christmas Celebration and potluck dinner

Dec. 24: Meeting for Worship, 7:00pm at the Burt House

The Clerk also noted that there will be a Thanksgiving vegetarian potluck at the Meetinghouse on November 26th at 4pm.

2015 11.4 Treasurer’s Report

Mike Simkin, Treasurer, reported that we have received close to \$30,000 in contributions thus far this year, or approximately half of the \$60,027 request included in the 2015 annual budget. Although there is less than two months remaining in 2015 to meet the \$60,000 request, we are in a good position to meet the request by the end of the year. Mike commented briefly on expenses, emphasizing that they look quite normal. Mike also noted that the Finance Committee will be distributing a letter to Friends soon. Friends received the report. @

2015 11.5 Other concerns

There were no other concerns mentioned.

Eleven Friends settled into worship at 1:15p before adjourning. The next Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business will be held December 13, 2015.

Respectfully submitted,

Marin Clarkberg, Recording Clerk

Olive Branch Film Series at Cinemapolis

Film and discussion, December 9

This fall Cinemapolis is holding an Olive Branch Film Series regarding the Palestine/Israel issue. The movie for December will be "The Inner Tour", where documentarian Ra'anana Alexandrowicz accompanies a Palestinian tour group on a three-day sight-seeing trip to Israel. The film will be shown on Wednesday, December 9th at 7:15. The trailer for the film can be viewed at <http://www.cinemapolis.org/?page=comingup&mID=1544>. Afterwards, folks are encouraged to meet up at Sarah's Patisserie for further discussion on the Palestine/Israel issue.

— Pat Sewell

Women's Chair Yoga Mondays and Thursdays

11a-noon

Gentle, cheerful, centered movement to restore ourselves. Questions to Nancy Gabriel 339-7123, call or text OK.

Holiday Sing December 20

Dick and I will be having our annual Holiday Sing on December 20 at 7pm, here, at 112 Mt Pleasant Rd. Suzanne Murphy will be playing the piano, bring your voices and instruments.

We'll be singing a wide range of traditional, contemporary and folk songs celebrating Solstice, Hanukkah and Christmas.

We'll have nibbles, not our usual dish to pass, so bring something yummy and seasonal to share. We'll provide hot cider and other goodies. Let's all bring back the Light!

— Melody Johnson

Voices Concert December 12

Several Friends (Wendy Wolfe, Betsy Keokosky, Kathleen Gale and Melody Johnson) will be singing in the Voices Concert titled, "Celebrating the World of American Music" held Saturday, December 12th at 9pm at the First Baptist Church, 309 Cayuga Street. Ticks at \$12 for adults (\$15 at the door), \$10 for Seniors, \$6 for students 13 and up, and free for children 12 and under. Tickets online: <http://voicesofamerica.brownpapertickets.com/>

December 2015 Calendar of Ithaca Monthly Meeting

Discussion of Racism

Sunday, December 6, 9a

Angela Hopkins returns, joining us in our continuing exploration of white racism. (For more context, see page 1 article.)

Social Justice & Peace Witness Committee

Sunday, December 6, Rise of Meeting

All are welcome to join upstairs.

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business

Sunday, December 13, Rise of Meeting

Join in the Quaker decision-making process. Agenda items should be sent to our clerk, Antonia Saxon, by the preceding Wednesday.

Christmas Pageant

Sunday, December 20, Meeting for Worship

The pageant will unfold during the latter part of our Meeting for Worship time. All children and young-at-heart are encouraged to meet upstairs at 10:20 to prepare to act out the Christmas story. Costumes are welcome, and the Meeting has some to share as well.

Dish-to-Pass Brunch

Sunday, December 27, Rise of Meeting

Bring something tasty to share if you can. All are welcome.

Esther Darlington Memorial

Wednesday, December 30, 3p

For more information, see page 4.

Newsletter submissions due

Thursday, December 31, 5p

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

New Year's Eve Games and Fellowship

Thursday, December 31, 6p

Join us for an evening of games and fellowship! All ages are encouraged. There will be a potluck at 6pm and game-playing until 9pm. Bring your own games or enjoy the Meeting's collection.

On Sundays

- 10:00a Meeting for Worship at Hector Meetinghouse
- 10:20a First Day School gathers upstairs at Third Street.
- 10:30a Meeting for Worship at the Third Street Meetinghouse
- 11:15a First Day School attenders enter the meetingroom for intergenerational Meeting for Worship.

Other Weekly IMM Events

- Wed 7:30p Meeting for worship at the Burtt House, 227 N. Willard Way