



Newsletter of the

Ithaca Monthly Meeting

of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

May 2017

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ithacamonthlymeeting.org

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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

Newsletter

Submit contributions to clarkberg@cornell.edu. See the IMM Calendar, back page, for the next deadline.

Spiritual Accompaniment: Nurturing One Another in Community

The Friends Center for Racial Justice will be offering a workshop on Spiritual Accompaniment led by Anne Pomeroy and Lu Harper on Friday evening, June 2 and Saturday, June 3 at the FCRJ.

We are continuing our exploration of “The Beloved Community” by considering ways of spiritual accompaniment and how this applies to our work of antiracism and racial justice. As Jean Vanier has written, spiritual accompaniment is “being alongside people as a companion and friend in order to help them grow in freedom and in the spirit of community.” It is a practice that can take many forms, including spiritual friendships, care and/or accountability committees and clearness committees.

Fit for Freedom, Not for Friendship, written by Friends Donna Mc Daniel and Vanessa Julye, recounts the history of Quaker efforts from its beginnings in the New World into the Modern Era. We have learned or are beginning to learn of the spiritual and practical impacts of racial discrimination on the Religious Society of Friends, past and present, and of how “insidious, complex, and pervasive racism has been, and continues to be.” We hope to discern a path toward a future we can realize with one another, as an inclusive, non-racist community.

Through worship, queries and sharing stories from our experiences, we will listen to one another as we explore ways of offering and receiving spiritual support for our journeys.

— Nancy Riffer on behalf of the FCRJ

State of Ithaca Monthly Meeting 2016 Report

Note: This reflection on 2016 was prepared by Ministry and Worship and approved at the April Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business.

Central to Ithaca Monthly Meeting’s journey this year is the emergence of our leading for the Friends Center for Racial Justice (FCRJ) here in Ithaca. We were ripe for a conversation about our next steps in working for racial justice.

Eleven of us began the year with a day-long conversation facilitated by Angela Hopkins on what we were called to do next as individuals and as a Meeting to further the struggle for racial justice. Taking steps to end structural racism is part of our work to fulfill the commitment made in the New York Yearly Meeting’s Apology to Afro-descendants. Individuals in the group committed to continue work they were doing or to undertake new activities. We did not reach any clarity about how we might take action as a Meeting.

In the spring, eleven of us attended the White Privilege Conference. We participated in Showing Up For Racial Justice (SURJ), White Allies Against Structural Racism, demonstrations, City Council meetings, courageous conversations across racial differences, jail driving, AVP workshops, meetings with local re-entry programs and more. In a previous year, we opened our Meeting house for use by the community on a pay-as-you-can basis. It is now seen in the Ithaca community as a place where racial justice work is done.

State of the Meeting, continued on page 2

Through study, many of our members were learning more about systemic racism. As individuals we were engaged with groups working for racial justice. But we still hadn't discerned a way in which we as a Meeting were being led to take action.

Our Meeting owns a large home, the Burt House, on the edge of Cornell campus. In the past, it was used for a residence for Quaker community. In recent years, it had become less focused on Quaker communal living. Last year, an ad hoc committee was formed to explore what might be right use of this resource. Were we being called to sell it and use the money for just causes? Was there a way the building could be put to better use? What might that be?

Two possibilities arose in the spring. One was to use the Burt House as a residence to house citizens returning from the jail or prison. This idea grew out of the work of the Social Justice committee. Members of that committee drive family members to visits at the jail, help returning citizens enroll in our community college, and do AVP work in prisons. Members of this committee knew people who were returning to the community soon who would be appropriate residents.

The second possibility was to use the Burt House as a Friends Center for Racial Justice. Two Friends wrote up a proposal for how this building could be used as a place where Friends of Color could gather and where workshops and consultations on ending structural racism would take place. Part of the goal of the Center is to model an organization that de-centers whiteness. To interrupt patterns of white supremacy/power it would be crucial for the Center to be run by Friends of Color. Because we have almost no Friends of Color in our Meeting, the Center would be guided by a coordinating committee made up of Friends of Color representing each of the five racial justice committees in New York Yearly Meeting.

IMM held threshing sessions once a month for several months to explore these two proposals. In one of these sessions, the Friends who felt led to use the House for returning citizens shared that they were exploring ways that they could join with other groups in Ithaca that are working on housing for citizens. As the Meeting was being led toward using the Burt House as Center for Racial Justice, Friends withdrew their proposal for using the house for returning citizens. Still, the concern for returning citizen housing remains strong and urgent.

At our October Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, we considered whether to enter into having the Burt House used for the ministry of a Friends Center for Racial Justice. Friends embraced the use of the Burt House for racial justice work, yet were not clear as to what it would mean to support this initiative without also directing it and evaluating it. That is, to have the program in the building run by the Friends Center for Racial Justice Coordinating Committee and not overseen by the Meeting committees as had been the case in the past. Together, we explored what it would mean have those things under the control of the Coordinating Committee, rather than administered by our Meeting. Ithaca Friends threshed the opportunity of providing for the upkeep of the building while letting go of having a say in the programming—and we realized that this was part of the process of de-centering whiteness. After a long meeting, we approved that

the Burt House would be used for a ministry embodied in the Friends Center for Racial Justice. We have begun the journey of living into this ministry.

Looking back over the past year, we reflected on our Meetings for Worship. Several Friends described them as feeling Spirit-led. Friends described being able to feel Spirit as they entered the room. Appreciation was expressed for Friends who arrive early and sit to prepare the room for worship. We have meetings during which there are no messages; there is a rich silence. The quality of our vocal ministry varies. We frequently have new people in our meetings and do not have a good way to guide them in learning when to give messages. As the political situation has heated up, we find ourselves having some difficulty distinguishing between making political statements and giving messages from Spirit. In this atmosphere, not all Friends feel welcome.

We continue to have difficulty in orienting new attenders. We want to answer the question "What is a Quaker?" for them and to share some of our practices. We want to communicate how Friends understand when it is right to give vocal ministry. How do we help people reach a deeper awareness of Quaker process and decision-making?

We are still working to meet the needs of those in Meeting for Worship who have difficulty hearing. We have been using a system of individual receivers with headsets that partially meets the need. We also have a member who types so another can receive the messages. We continue to look for ways to make it possible for all our members to participate fully.

We have increased our involvement in wider Quaker activities. Many people went to Spring Gathering held by Farmington-Scipio regional meeting. Friends attended conferences and retreats at Powell House. We have members who have taken leadership roles in NYYM and FGC.

Many of our members are following a number of individual leadings. Others are dealing with health and family responsibilities. Most of us feel we are too busy. In these circumstances we have found we do not always do a good job of communicating. It appears that our larger size may require that we find new ways to be more connected and to communicate.

This year our Pastoral Care committee focused more on providing meals and rides and less on attending to the spiritual needs of individuals. There were Friends with spiritual needs that were not met this year. At the end of the year, we nominated one person to coordinate meals and rides and a small group to explore a charge for a new committee we would call "Spiritual Nurture," which would attend to the spiritual needs of individuals. One Friend observed that in the current political situation, some Friends might experience increased spiritual stress. We are not sure our pastoral care function is working. Do Friends hesitate to ask for help, not wanting to burden others? Is it an issue of trust? Do Friends know what kinds of help are available and whom to contact? We want to make all Friends aware of what a committee of care is and that they can ask for one.

State of the Meeting, continued from page 2

Nominating committee worked with our meeting to help Friends identify their gifts and where Spirit is moving in our Meeting. It has helped members identify where they felt they could contribute. They helped determine whether a leading was a short burst of energy or a long, sustained commitment, i.e., whether it will be sustained by a group of interested individuals or whether a committee should be established. They have taken on oversight of Meeting committees with a readiness to lay down or suspend committees that were no longer needed or where no one was led to do the work. This approach has meant that this year, some committees, including Children and the Life of the Meeting, did not have enough members to do all they wanted to do. We also dropped the committee for adult programs.

May in IMM History

Note: May is typically a light month for significant historical news. From the beginning of IMM through 1982, annual reports were given in May. In more recent years minutes often dealt with the end of First Day School for the spring, plans for summer worship at the Hector Meeting House, and other routine business.

5 Years Ago (May 20, 2012)

IMM approved a proposal from the Pastoral Care Committee that Meeting organize Committees of Care for Friends going through a life transition and that members and attenders consider if they are ready to serve on such a committee if asked. Guidelines for such Committees would be forthcoming.

10 Years Ago (May 20, 2007)

IMM approved a proposal from Trustees that the pathway from the Burt House upward to Stewart Avenue be closed following a request made by Alpha Sigma Phi fraternity because of a planned expansion of their building. Friends welcomed the change because it was expected to decrease the number of students cutting through the Burt House property.

— Tom Brown, IMM Historian

Memorial Minute for Elspeth Rhodin

Elspeth Rhodin, longtime member of Ithaca NY Monthly Meeting, passed away gently on August 20, 2015. She is survived by her four children, Robin, Ann, Lindsay, and Jeffrey Rhodin, who each maintain connection with Friends; and by her sister, brother, nieces and nephews living in Canada, where Elspeth was born. Elspeth was a magical mother and a mentor to many. She will be remembered by many for her letters of love and encouragement. She will be remembered by others for her wise words of counsel and whimsical humor. She will be remembered by others for her indomitable self-reliance, her skill with a chainsaw and her ready willingness to work at the top of a ladder in her 70's.

With her husband of 57 years, Thor Rhodin, who died in 2006, Elspeth raised her family in Ithaca and worshipped in the Ithaca Meeting. She served as Clerk from 1976 to 1978, was a member of the Pastoral Care committee, and was active in its First Day School in the 1960's through 1980's. At various times, she acted as Recording Clerk on numerous committees including Program, Ministry & Oversight, Trustees, Peace & Social Action and the Burt House Committee. In addition, she frequently served as the Young Friends' Advisor to college students and as Ithaca Meeting's representative at Regional Meeting and NYYM.

Elspeth actively supported the Society of Friends' mission of non-violent witness throughout her life. Thor's professional travel led the Rhodins to establish lasting relationships with Quakers in England, France, Japan, and Sweden. Aiding those who endured the seemingly endless wars; guiding students who searched their consciences; welcoming refugees in Ithaca: no service was beyond her generosity. In Elspeth, peace encompassed so much more than "renouncing outward weapons." Right after September 11, 2001,

Elspeth helped establish a vigil calling for nonviolent responses. For over thirteen years she stood with other Friends at the bottom of State Street in Ithaca at Thursday rush hour, in all weathers, with her peace signs inspiring many honks of support from passing drivers. At her Memorial Meeting, attenders could read a "litaney" composed of two dozen phrases Elspeth had lettered onto her posters, ranging from "Peace, never achieved by war" to "Peace, feel it to know it."

Elspeth's ministry embodied the seamless union of whole heart, soul, mind, strength. Having returned to school to become an RN in the 1980's, she became an ardent advocate for good nutrition and for Earthcare. Be it spoken messages, bread and soup, First Day School at the creek, driving a wife and child to visit at the jail, weeding a frail person's garden—Elspeth's unstinting love, warmth and appreciation for all living things set an example for all who survive her.

Daughter Ann Rhodin, active member of Ithaca MM, offers this reflection:

*A gleam of light flashing
From great to (simple) small
A short view of a long life
Sunlight at the end of the road
All up in the clouds
A window to the past
As a star blazes and falls
In the music of the spheres*

Role and History of the IMM Historian

Why does IMM have a historian? What kinds of things does the Meeting call upon the historian for?

It is not clear precisely why IMM created the position of historian. The position dates from 1985. Frank Pineo was our first historian and served for several years. Later, from 1989-1993, Edith Edgerton served as historian. The position has never had an official charge. I have served as historian since 1994. At that time, Edith handed off to me an album with some fairly re-

cent photos and a few newspaper accounts about Friends in our Meeting. I was on my own from there to discern how best to serve Meeting in this capacity.

I attended Business Meeting nearly every month and I noted that from time to time there was discussion that involved some previous action. Did we approve a minute on a certain topic or just discuss the topic? Or what exactly did the minute say? It occurred to me that it would be useful to have a record available of any minute that had

implications for future operations of the Meeting—a sort of policy handbook. At the time there were roughly five to seven years of IMM minutes being stored at the Burt House before being sent to NYYM (now to Swarthmore) for microfilming. I went through those minutes and developed the first such summary, computerized, and handed out copies at Business Meeting in January 1995. I have updated this summary every year or so. Last year, I believe, current copies were made available to all committee clerks. I'm happy to retrieve past minutes upon request for any Friend.

In 2006 I realized that it was possible to retrieve earlier IMM minutes from the Swarthmore Library via the lending library system. I obtained microfilm rolls at that time and had them digitized here by Challenge Industries. It has been a joy to learn about the beginnings and history of our Meeting, and about past clerks and Meeting's work. That has provided the material for the monthly history column over the past three years. Two years ago I also obtained digitized minutes of the Hector Monthly Meeting, hoping to learn more about that Meeting's role in the development of our Meeting.

I keep digital copies of memorial minutes. Sometimes a Friend wants a copy of a specific memorial minute. Sometimes those charged with writing a memorial minute ask to see a sample of others to get some sense of length, content, and style. I sometimes assist those writing such minutes with information about committees the person served on and other available information. In recent years I also have kept committee rosters from the Nominating Committee and annual reports. Sometimes these have not been included with the files our recording clerks have sent on to Swarthmore (this is a plea to current recording clerks to please include them along with annual State of the Meeting reports; they provide a rich addition to the minutes).

Historical information broadens our sense of the contributions of our Meeting to others as well as to our own spiritual development over more than eight decades. Like most Meetings, we have had some difficult periods. But IMM has had exemplary times also—active work

Historian, continued on page 5

Giving to IMM

To set up electronic donations, simply complete the authorization form on the below and return it to the Treasurer: Mike Simkin, 3137 Jacksonville Rd, Trumansburg, NY 14886. Donations can be debited automatically from either a checking or savings account.

AUTHORIZATION FORM	
Ithaca Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends Inc. ES14909	
Your name:	
Address:	
City, State, Zip:	
Email address:	
I would like to make the following contribution(s):	
<input type="checkbox"/> General Operating Fund \$ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Building Fund \$ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Kitchen Cupboard _____ \$ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ \$ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ \$ _____ Total	Date of first contribution: ___/___/___ Frequency of contribution (check one): <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly – Mondays <input type="checkbox"/> Bi-Weekly (every other week) <input type="checkbox"/> Semi-monthly – 1 st and 15 th <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly on the 1 st <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly on the 15 th
CHECKING / SAVINGS <i>Complete this section if using your checking or savings account</i>	
Please debit my (check one):	
<input type="checkbox"/> Checking account—attach voided check <input type="checkbox"/> Savings account—attach voided deposit slip	
Routing #:	Account #:
<i>Valid routing # must start with 0,1,2 or 3</i>	
I authorize the above organization to process debit entries to the above account. I understand that this authority will remain in effect until I provide reasonable notification to terminate the authorization.	
Authorized signature: _____	Date: / /

Historian, continued from page 4

for helping conscientious objectors, some massive clothing drives during times of war, housing and caring for refugees past and present, speaking out forcefully against war and oppression, and working with those who are incarcerated and with their families.

Note: This is the first of several articles Simon St. Laurent and I are planning over the coming months. Simon has played the major role in developing questions for these topics.

— Tom Brown, IMM Historian

Ithaca Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends Monthly Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, April 9, 2017

Clerk: John Lewis
Assistant Clerk: Bronwyn Mohlke
Recording Clerks: Marin Clarkberg, Blair Jennings

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

2017 04.01 Gathering

"May words of the Spirit be spoken, and words of the Spirit be heard."

Ithaca Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society Friends met in Monthly Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business on April 9, 2017. At 12:25pm, 15 Friends gathered and settled into silent worship.

Clerk read from Eva I Pinthus (1987) as quoted in the Faith and Practice of Quakers in Britain, 5th edition:

The duty of the Society of Friends is to be the voice of the oppressed but [also] to be conscious that we ourselves are part of that oppression. Uncomfortably we stand with one foot in the kingdom of this world and with the other in the Eternal Kingdom. Seldom can we keep the inward and outward working of love in balance, let alone the consciousness of living both in time and in eternity, in timelessness. Let us not be beguiled into thinking that political action is all that is asked of us, nor that our personal relationship with God excuses us from actively confronting the evil in this world. The political and social struggles must be waged, but a person is more and needs more than politics, else we are in danger of gaining the whole world but losing our souls.

Clerk recognized Gina Varrichio for holding meeting in the Light.

2017 04.02 Peace and Social Justice. Reducing the amount of factory-farmed meat served at Quaker gatherings.

Susan Wolf reported on a conversation relating to an article by Betsy Root that appeared in New York Yearly Meeting's newsletter, Spark. The article calls upon individual Friends to select the vegetarian option when available to avoid factory-farmed meat. The emerging conversation revolves around the use of factory-farmed

meats at Quaker events such as the upcoming Spring Gathering at Watson Homestead. Friends discussed the decision-making processes around Spring Gathering food, the difficulty of prescribing the eating practices of others, and the ways in which minutes in support of a leading come into being. Friends emphasized that the best forum for bringing forth a concern about Spring Gathering would be the preceding Winter Gathering. Friends appreciated the concern and its complexity and referred the issue of factory-farmed meet back to Peace and Social Justice for further seasoning. @

2017 04.03 Ministry and Worship: State of the Meeting Report.

Shirley Way read a draft of the 2016 State of the Meeting Report prepared for sharing with wider Quaker bodies, including New York Yearly Meeting. After some adjustments to the text, Friends approved the report. [See pages 1-3]

2017 04.04 Nominating Committee

Nancy Riffer reported that the Nominating Committee nominated Angela Hopkins to the Library Committee. Friends approved the nomination. @

2017 04.05 Ministry and Worship: Memorial Minute for Elspeth Rhodin

Nancy Gabriel read a Memorial Minute for Elspeth Rhodin, reminding those present of Elspeth's impact on our Meeting—and on individual Friends—over several decades. [See page 3] Clerk will forward the minute to the Farmington-Scipio Regional Meeting. @

Closing worship

Fifteen Friends settled into worship at 2:30 pm before adjourning. Our next regular Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business will be held at the rise of Meeting on May 14, 2017.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marin Clarkberg, Recording Clerk

Women's Chair Yoga, Mondays and Thursdays 11a-noon

Women of all ages are welcome to gather for gentle, yet powerful restoration of heart, mind, soul, strength. No experience or equipment needed. Just come, or if you have questions ask Nancy Gabriel (339-7123; ntg2@cornell.edu.) We offer a donation to the teacher.

Coming June 17, 9am-1pm Third Street Meetinghouse Work Day

Join us for our annual work day at the Third Street Meetinghouse! There are jobs for all abilities, ages, and time periods. Come help with some needed building and grounds maintenance, while visiting with F/friends of all ages. Lunch will be provided.

May 2017 Calendar of Ithaca Monthly Meeting

Men's Fellowship Lunch Thursday, May 4, noon

The \$10 lunch buffet provides a great opportunity to get together and socialize in an easy manner! For more info: Lynn Podhaski at lynnpodhaski@yahoo.com or Liam Murphy at liamgbmurphy@verizon.net.

Women's Fellowship Friday, May 5, 7p

Usually on first Fridays, but this month on the second Friday. Join for casual conversation, no agenda, with or without knitting. We are moving back to Ithaca Bakery (open to 9pm now), 400 N Meadow Street.

Springtime Tea at the Dunham's Saturday, May 6, 3-6p

Chris Dunham & Melissa Travis Dunham invite F/friends to their annual tea at their house, 105 Dunmore Place. Please don't bring anything; we'll be happy just to see you. Stop by for a cup of tea, a snack or just conversation. All are welcome!

Family Brunch Sunday, May 7, Rise of Meeting

We invite families to stay after Meeting for Worship to enjoy food, fellowship, and fun. After a dish to pass brunch, we'll settle into a time of worship sharing—facilitated worshipful discussion—while the children play. Our plan at this time is to discuss Quaker parenting/parenting as Quakers, but we are open to suggestions! Childcare will be provided. We'll expect to finish around 1:30pm.

On Sundays

- 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.

ARCH Presentation: Aging in Place Sunday, May 7, Rise of Meeting

Originally scheduled for April 30, this ARCH (Aging Resources, Consultation and Help) will cover ways to make our homes or apartments more accessible as we age. Also, we will explore how we can identify our own needs, and tap into the resources and accommodations that will support us as we age. All are welcome, and we hope you will bring your questions, and also your experiences and ideas.

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business Sunday, May 14, Rise of Meeting

Join the Quaker decision-making process. Proposed agenda items should be sent to our clerk, John Lewis, by the preceding Monday.

Newsletter submissions due Thursday, May 25, 5p

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

Dish-to-Pass Brunch Sunday, May 28, Rise of Meeting

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

FGC Registration Deadlines

You are invited to attend the Friends General Conference Gathering in Niagara Falls, NY from July 2-8. We're expecting over 1,000 Quakers at this annual event. Take note of these registration deadlines:

- Children - May 31
- High School - June 10
- Others - accepted through The Gathering though housing and workshop options could be limited.

Other Weekly IMM Events

Mid-week Meeting at the Burrth House Wednesdays at 7:30p

The Burrth House is at 227 North Willard Way, Ithaca.