



Newsletter of the
Ithaca Monthly Meeting
of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

June 2008

CONTENTS

Meeting Events: 3
Announcements: 3
 Quakers in Our Region: 4
 In Our Community: 5
IMM Minutes: 6
Calendar of Events: 6

IMM CONTACTS

Clerk:

Tom Brown
5 Rockwell Road, Newfield, NY 14867
272-5554 • tlb4@cornell.edu

Ministry and Oversight:

Marion daGrossa
109 Sears St., Ithaca, NY 14850
273-4020 • mdagrossa@twcny.rr.com

Treasurer:

Steve Mohlke
52 Gray Road, Ithaca, NY 14850
277-4183 • smohlke@lightlink.com

Childcare Requests:

Ginny Gartlein • 272-3471

Burt House:

Mary Balfour, Friend in Residence
227 N. Willard Way, Ithaca, NY 14850
273-5421

Listserv:

Send email to lyris@cornell.edu. Leave the subject line blank and include:
join IMMRSF-L "Your Name"
(include the quotes) in the first line of the body of the message.

Website: ithacamonthlymeeting.org

**NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS
Due July 3rd**

Materials for the July newsletter may be submitted by the method of your choice to:
Rini Clarkberg
150 Giles St., Ithaca, NY 14850
277-9364 • mec30@cornell.edu

"Out of the Nest" and into New Orleans

—*Tonia Saxon*

This spring break Ariel Mohler and I went to New Orleans for a week with Love Knows No Bounds (LKNB), a group of volunteers from upstate New York who have been working in the city for several years. Mike Ellis, a counselor who works in the Caroline schools, went to New Orleans for the first time not long after Hurricane Katrina. He led our trip. Meeting him was an inspiration. Sweet and unassuming, he worked on a kind of spirit high, sleeping only a few hours a night and eating meals standing up—when he got them at all.

Two years after Katrina, the city is still in tatters. Work continues on the levees, and controversy surrounds city, state, and federal efforts to house and serve those who are choosing to return. Individuals have worked against tremendous odds to rehabilitate their own properties. Four of the city's seven hospitals remain closed. Cities of tents remain under highway bridges.

Ariel has been part of the Ithaca Meeting's Out of the Nest Program, which guides teenagers as they move toward finding

Out of the Nest, continued on page 2



LKNB work crew, including Tonia Saxon (fourth from right) and Ariel Mohler (second from right).

What's up with camp

Camp is looking quite different this year. Actually, the first difference is the name: we're trying to call it our "summer retreat"—not "camp"—this year. The feeling is that "retreat" better summarizes the spirit of this special time. For years, we tossed around ideas about the scope and purpose of camp. Each year we've undertaken this discussion, the answer

was clear: "camp" was for us. First and foremost, it is a time of loving community with and for our Meeting. The word "retreat" better conveys that sense, we felt.

Perhaps a more significant change for camp—er, I mean "retreat"—this year is that it will not be held on our own land. This is an unforeseen consequence of Meeting's decision

What's up with camp, continued on page 2

Out of the Nest, continued from page 1

their own identities as Quakers. The program culminates with a week-long service project, preferably in a place far from Ithaca. Out-of-the-Nest kids from our Meeting have gone to places where they knew no one; we ended up going to New Orleans with sixty other folks from Ithaca and surrounding communities. Frances Vanek and Catherine Johnson, who have attended our meeting, were there with their children; so were several members of the Perry City meeting, including two other teens Ariel knew.

LKNB has forged a relationship with St. John No. 5 Faith Church in the Seventh Ward and with the church's pastor, Bruce Davenport. A big man with boundless energy, a huge heart, and an endless supply of corny jokes, Pastor Bruce has worked for years in the St. Bernard Housing Project where he grew up, providing kids with job training, families with food and assistance, pregnant teens with shelter, and those at risk for HIV and AIDS with condoms (a project that spelled the end of his relationship with the Baptist church).

LKNB started taking truckloads of used furniture and appliances down to New Orleans not long after Katrina; Pastor Bruce distributes what they bring to anyone in need from the basement of his church. So far, LKNB volunteer drivers have brought down a dozen or so eighteen-wheelers full of washing machines, bureaus, mattresses, and other still-functioning household goods that Ithacans have decided they don't need anymore. Refrigerators, Mike Ellis told me, are especially precious.

Our trip over spring break was the biggest group LKNB had ever brought to New Orleans; the volunteers ranged in age from nine to seventy. The houses we worked on had all been gutted already; the crews put up drywall, installed doors and windows, and painted. Ariel and I worked with a crew of eight or nine painting a

double shotgun-style house a beautiful shade of pink, with other equally lovely colors for the trim and ironwork. People in the neighborhood commented on our progress and asked us where we were from; they thanked us for coming to New Orleans. The little kids from next door rode back and forth on the sidewalk on their Big Wheels. If the state of that block was anything to go by, New Orleans is still a long way from restoration; yet people on our crew who had been down the year before said things looked a lot better than they had then.

All sixty of us were housed in a big suburban church in Metairie, a predominantly white suburb of New Orleans. The contrast between St. John's and the church in Metairie was instructive. The church in Metairie was the biggest I had ever seen, as well-equipped as an Ithaca school, with dozens of shiny classrooms, a computer lab, a working theater, a food-service kitchen with a ten-burner stove, and five showers for us to use. They consider housing New Orleans volunteers their ministry; someone told me they were booked solid with volunteer groups for the next five years. We were asked, however, not to congregate in the front of the church. We were to use the back entrance, and the back parking lot. We were pretty sure this was because there were a couple of dreadlocked heads and tattoos on our crews; we made the parents dropping their kids off at the church's daycare facilities a little uneasy.

St. John's church has one room upstairs and a basement downstairs; it has two toilets. If you have a good report card, Pastor Bruce has you stand up in church to receive the applause of the congregation. We celebrated the Passover together; Pastor Bruce talked about love, and we felt it there. Every one of us thought about coming back for more.

What's up with camp, continued from page 1

back in November to build a road onto the land... somewhat ironically, in an effort to facilitate camp. (I mean, "retreat.") In the course of pursuing a road, we learned from the Town of Ithaca that we needed an official site plan review in order to use our land for recreational purposes. Yes, we've unknowingly been in violation of Town code for the past five camps! I am very hopeful that our Site Plan will pass with flying colors on June 17th, but the timing was simply too close to our June 26th camp start date to be able to plan our retreat with any degree of certainty. I feel certain that having our retreat at another property will be interesting to us all in new ways. (In fact, just the search for a property that offers some of features and conveniences that our land offers has been quite enlightening.)

A third important change involves the schedule. For several years, camp has taken place on three or four "work week" days. This year, school lets out on Wednesday, leaving us at most two work week days before FGC and the Independence Day holiday week. After some consideration, we were led to have a shorter, more intense retreat and borrow some time from the weekend as well. Accordingly, camp this year runs from 10am Thursday morning all the way through until 10am Sunday morning.

Not everyone will want to stay that long. Some of us will want to go home to take naps. And that's fine. However, many of us will stay.

We'll hang out, go for adventures in the woods, visit the playground, make things for our secret friends, cook up some communal meals, listen to Emily Williams play guitar, and come up with new nomenclatures to best describe the various shades of roasted marshmallows. We will have use of all of Foundation of Light facilities, including the kitchen, for our whole time there. (In fact, if you need a midday nap, we invite you to consider the library.)

An added benefit of having camp run all day Saturday is that perhaps some people who might not have been able to join us in the past will get to do so on the weekend.

Our theme this year is "Good Friends Gathering." "Friend" means many things: buddy, Quaker, humanitarian. We hope to touch on those themes and more.

We invite everyone from Meeting to participate in Good Friends Gathering. One way you might do so is to join our "Open House" hours from 4 to 6 each Thursday, Friday and Saturday. The idea is that you can just stop by and maybe meet somebody new. You wouldn't be expected to lead an actual class or structured activity of any kind, but you might consider bringing something with you: your pet; your knitting; your ability to turn a piece of grass into a kazoo. Perhaps you'd like to share a book or a walk in the woods with one child. Just one person getting to know another... Good Friends Gathering...

— Rini Clarkberg

Meeting Events

Social Justice Comm. Meeting Thursday, June 12

We will be meeting at the Burt House at 6 pm.

Welcome Dhia Waheed and Family Sunday, June 15th, 11:45a

Please join the Refugee Working Group in welcoming Dhia Waheed, Aseel Naser, and their children Abdullah (3) and Fatima (2) at Hector Meeting House. Dhia Waheed will give a talk about life in Iraq at 11:45 am. Also, Dhia Waheed is available for work, please see below.

Peace Witness Committee Meeting Tuesday, June 10, 7:30p

Please join us at the Burt House as we continue our efforts to express Friends' Peace Testimony. Bring your thoughts and ideas.

Meeting for Healing Tuesday, June 24th, 7:15p

A Meeting for Healing is held at 7:15 on the fourth Tuesday of every month at Melody Johnson and Dick Crepeau's house (112 Mount Pleasant Road). If you have a concern but cannot attend, let Melody know and you will be held in the Light. For directions or more information, call Melody, 272-8755.



Good Friends Gathering Thursday, June 26 - Sunday, June 29

Please see "What's up with camp" on page 1. Our annual camp/retreat will be held at the Foundation of Light facility, just off Ellis Hollow Road on Turkey Hill Road. All Friends are invited to participate at any time, but we especially hope Friends will consider joining us for "open house" hours from 4-6pm. Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, and for the dish-to-pass supper Saturday at 6pm.

Floating Meeting... with Fireworks! Wednesday, July 2

Dish-to-pass dinner at Altucher-Podhaski household at 708 Mitchell Street (277-2854), followed by a low-key viewing of the fireworks at Ithaca College from behind the Belle Sherman School annex around 9:30. For fireworks viewing, consider bringing blankets or chairs to sit on and sparklers if so inclined.

Announcements

CALM Needs Volunteers at Hector

The committee on Children and the Life of the Meeting (CALM) is looking for adult volunteers to help with the children during Meeting for Worship on First Days at Hector Meetinghouse. We need two adult volunteers each First Day. One volunteer will be in charge of doing crafts with the children in the pavilion, and the other will help Elspeth with the older kids who will be engaging in service projects around the Hector Meetinghouse.

If you are willing to be one of these helping adults, please either sign the sign-up sheet after Meeting for Worship or contact a member of CALM with the date(s) and the area for which you are volunteering.

— Marilyn Ray (539-7778, mlr17@cornell.edu), Kathy Beissner (272-5306, beissner@ithaca.edu), Ellie Rosenberg (277-1024), Connie Thomas (273-7567, thomasc@ithaca.edu), and Sandra Steingrabber/Jeff deCastro (387-3013, artlabs@earthlink.net)

Dhia Waheed available for work

Several of us have had Dhia Waheed help us with small jobs at our homes. Dhia is a very careful worker, and is especially good at work such as painting. Call Margaret McCasland at 272-2544 if you would like more information about having Dhia help you with your projects.

Earthcare, Melissa Mueller, and Primitive Pursuits

On the Social Justice Committee, we've been discussing Earthcare and Eco-justice. Earthcare was also the topic of the recent Spring Gathering. So I thought the time was right to tell you a bit about my work at Primitive Pursuits and why it is an effective way to bring people into "right relationship" with the Earth.

Primitive Pursuits has been partnering with 4-H of Tompkins County for eight years to provide experiential environmental education programs to a diverse audience. Most of our participants are youth ages 6-14, but we also offer adult workshops, a nine month adult apprenticeship, and occasional teen programs. Some of our programs are free to the participants and some are tuition-based;

Primitive Pursuits, continued on page 4

Primitive Pursuits, continued from page 3

it is part of our mission to make our programs available to anyone who is interested. Sometimes we work with participants only one or two times, but we prefer to be in long-term relationships with people in an effort to develop a real community of people who are inspired by and connected to the Earth.

Through “primitive”, “survival”, “ancestral”, or “traditional” skills (they have many names) and an ancient educational model based on inquiry and student-directed learning, we aim to build meaningful relationships between people and their environment, their community, ancestors, and themselves. We believe it’s important for people of all ages to have *fun* and *love* their time in nature, and

that these experiences plant the seeds of future actions in support of Mother Earth.

What amazes me about the children who’ve been in Primitive Pursuits programs for a year or more is the depth of their knowledge. Seven year-olds can identify a hemlock tree because they know what an important kindling tree it is. They know the names of plants you can eat and ones that are poisonous—because they have gathered and eaten the edible ones. And many of them are in the habit of thanking the plants when they harvest them! They also have a great confidence, which comes from the knowledge that they can build a shelter in the woods if they need to and start a fire without matches. What also is evident is how much most kids *love* their time at Primitive Pursuits. We get a lot of return customers!

You can support the good work Primitive Pursuits does by spreading the word, directing questions to me, asking kids who’ve done our programs to tell their stories (an important part of the learning process), and of course making tax-deductible contributions to Primitive Pursuits (you can send checks to us care of Cornell Cooperative Extension). If you are interested in sponsoring a child for one of our four-day summer programs, please contact me (272-2292, mjm463@cornell.edu) as soon as possible.

Also please contact me if you know of City of Ithaca residents between the ages of 9 and 14 who would be interested in attending a free summer program, four afternoons plus a weekend camping trip, the week of July 7th. We are especially hoping to attract kids who might otherwise not have access to nature this summer. And we might need help transporting these kids, so please let me know if you’d be interested in doing some driving.

Primitive Pursuits shows kids that nature is a fun place to hang out. The skills and values they learn teach them in subtle ways to care for the Earth. After a few days with us, even “indoor kids” discover that building forts and making bows and arrows is a great way to spend time.

— Melissa Mueller, Primitive Pursuits Program Manager

Quakers in Our Region

AVP Parenting Program on June 7th

Suzanne Blackburn, the clerk of Alfred Meeting, is offering a mini Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) workshop on parenting on June 7. I will be going to the, and would be glad to give a ride to anyone who is interested in going.

Suzanne describes “The Alternatives to Violence Project has provided me with some amazing tools that help me address the conflicts that are part of family life. My hope is that these ideas become a natural way of life for my kids.” She not only wants to share these tools with other families but would love to be part of a support network of parents who are actively practicing nonviolence in the home.

Growing Places Creative Learning Center is hosting this workshop on Saturday, June 7, 2008 from 9:30 to noon at, 14 Battle Street, Dansville. The workshop is free and open to the public. Donations

Words to Consider

from Meeting for Healing

Forgiveness isn't about making life easier for people who hurt you, or letting offenders off the hook. It's about releasing the forgiver, replacing pain with peace. People just don't realize how much a grudge can sap their energy and joy. When people focus on hurtful memories or grudges, their blood pressure surges and brow muscles tense as negative feelings escalate. Thoughts of forgiveness, however, prompt a greater sense of control and comparatively lower stress responses. Harboring grudges threatens your overall well-being; letting them go can boost your state of mind. The challenge is not only to learn how to forgive in the short term, but to make forgiving a way of life. When we consistently practice the virtue of forgiving, we see the greatest mental and physical benefits.

Strategies for forgiveness include:

Admit it hurts—write it out, make it part of your past, not your present. You can forgive but not trust a person completely until you have evidence that they have changed.

Forgive sans strings—forgiveness isn't earned, it's given freely. We can't always count on our offenders to apologize. If we refuse to forgive until we get an apology, we give the key that can unlock the prison of our pain to the very person who betrayed us in the first place.

See the best—forgiveness has nothing to do with agreeing with what the other person did or changing who they are. It is the other side of gratitude, an overall positive response to the bad things that inevitably happen to us. We can see the hurt the person caused us as proof that they need compassion, just as we do. And we begin to see ourselves as agents who can show them that compassion.

Forgive yourself—If you can't see past your own mistakes enough to love and accept who you are, you're less able to do so with others. Turn the attention of forgiveness inward; start putting your own actions in perspective as well.

— Charlotte van Oyen Witvliet, Ph. D.

in support of Growing Places and AVP are welcomed. To register, please call Suzanne Blackburn (clerk of Alfred Meeting) at (585) 468-5274 or e-mail odonata@hughes.net with your name, contact phone and e-mail. A dish-to-pass lunch will follow the workshop for those who would like to stay. Parents, grandparents, and others who provide care for children are encouraged to attend this workshop; participants must be at least 13 years old.

— *Bronwyn Mohlke*

Meeting for Worship at Genesee Country Village

Friends, mark your calendars for a special Meeting for Worship at Genesee Country Village and Museum on July 13. This living history museum is located about 20 miles east of Rochester, NY.

Gather in the parking lot no later than 10:30. We will enter as a group. Worship is from 11 am to noon. A dish-to-pass lunch will follow worship at the picnic tables near the parking lot (bring your own table service and a few spares). We are offering a reduced-rate admission to those who sign up and pay in advance: \$8 for adults 18 yrs and up, \$5 for kids 12-17 yrs, and kids 11 and under free. Maximum rate for a family is \$25 (one or two adults and their dependent kids). This rate includes meeting for worship and the rest of the day at the living history museum. To register for this event or if you have questions, please contact Suzanne Blackburn, the clerk of Alfred Meeting, at (585)468-5274 or odonata@hughes.net. Make checks payable to Farmington-Scipio Region and include a list of names of all those attending the event and whether they are Adults, Children (12-17), or Free (11 and under). Send the check and list of attenders by July 1st to Suzanne Blackburn, 9609 Riley Lane, Nunda, NY 14517. For general information about the Genesee Country Village and Museum, visit www.gcv.org.

In Our Community

Quaker Kids "Running to Places"

Rosie Altucher and Laurel Wolfe will perform with the new theater troupe, Running to Places, in the Spring Showcase, June 13-15, at Trumansburg Elementary School Theatre. The performances are Friday & Saturday at 7pm, and Sunday at 2pm.

Greensprings Natural Cemetery Open House

Greensprings is celebrating its second anniversary on Saturday, June 7. Come to the Open House at noon for lunch and after for informal walks. Learn more about how Greensprings works. Greensprings Natural Cemetery Preserve is dedicated to simple, eco-friendly burials. For more information, contact Greensprings Natural Cemetery Association P.O. Box 415, 293 Irish Hill Road in Newfield, 564-7577, <www.naturalburial.org>.

Second Sunday Celebration Circle

Meeting at the Henry St. John building, 301 Geneva Street, every second Sunday at 7pm, this month the theme is "Right Speech: Compassionate Communication as a Spiritual Practice." Non-Violent Communication instructor Becca Harber will give us a basic introduction to NVC and how it can be used as a spiritual practice that is appropriate for people any faith. For more information, visit <www.commonheart.org>.

Powell House Happenings

Powell House is the retreat center of New York Yearly Meeting. There are many workshops available there from which Friends may benefit greatly. If you are interested in attending any of the following, please see <www.powellhouse.org> for more information. Most events take place over the weekend, and child care is available. If program costs are a concern to you, please ask Steve Mohlke, our treasurer, for details about scholarships available from out Meeting.

For Adults

- *Healing Ourselves, Healing the Earth* with Tom Sotiridy, June 6-8
- *Living from the Divine Center: A Contemplative Retreat* with Linda Chidsey, June 20-23
- *Exercising Spirit: A Multigenerational Gathering* with Chris DeRoller and Christopher Sammond, July 18-20,
- *Permaculture: A Toolbox for Sustainability and Beyond* with Ethan Roland, August 1-3,
- *Open 12 Step Recovery Weekend*, August 8-10
- *Handcraft: If You Make by Hand, This is for You!*, August 18-24

For Youth

- *Tent-tacular* (for 4th & 5th graders), June 13-15
- *Woods Workers* (for 8th & 9th graders), June 20-22
- *Unwinding* (for 10th-12th graders), July 10-13
- *Camping in the Maze... with a Parent* (for 4th & 5th graders), August 22-24

See also "Exercising Spirit: A Multigenerational Gathering," scheduled for July 18-20.

Meeting Friends



Melissa Travis Dunham and Chris Dunham began attending the Rahway-Plainfield Meeting in New Jersey in the spring of 2002. They were married in the manner of Friends in June 2006 and moved to Ithaca in August of that same year. Melissa has served valiantly on Program Committee for several years, and often helps with Kitchen Cupboard. Chris is serving on the Burt House committee, where he specializes in dead squirrel removal. They have both served on Hospitality. Chris and Melissa are both able to work from home in the software industry.

Minutes

May 2008 Monthly Meeting

Tom Brown, Clerk

Michael Simkin, Assistant Clerk

Marilyn Ray and Antonia Saxon, Co-Recording Clerks

Steve Mohlke, Treasurer

@ signifies that the minute has been read and approved

200805.1 **Gathering.** The Ithaca Monthly Meeting (IMM) of the Religious Society of Friends met on May 4, 2008, in the Cafe, Anabel Taylor Hall, Cornell University, for Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. At 12:45 p.m., eighteen F/friends settled into worship. Our Clerk read a selection from *Advices and Queries*. The minutes of the April meeting for business were read and today's agenda reviewed.@

200803.2 **Ministry and Oversight report.** Marian daGrossa reported for Ministry & Oversight. Alexa Yesukevich has requested the formation of a committee to consider her membership in Ithaca Monthly Meeting. M&O suggests Marion DaGrossa as the convenor with Bruce Berggren-Thomas and Joanne Sturgeon. The meeting approved the committee.

200803.3 **Report on activities related to Route 79 property.** The Route 79 property committee reported on their activities. The Ad Hoc Retreat Committee (formerly the Summer Camp committee) has decided that our retreat will not be held on the land this year, alleviating the sense of urgency regarding the site plan and the driveway plans.

The driveway plan will be submitted with the site plan. The site plan approval process is a one-time process that will approve the use of the land for general recreational purposes such as picnics. The committee is receptive to examining areas of concern such as the contractor the committee is presently working with. @

200803.4 **Discussion of suggested Farmington-Scipio Yearly Meeting.** Nadine Hoover has asked that Farmington-Scipio Regional Meeting consider the proposal that Farmington-Scipio form its own Yearly Meeting. Many of New York Yearly Meeting's committee meetings are held downstate or in the Albany area. Participation by our region requires substantial resources to participate, and it can be difficult to feel a part of it. Our region contains twelve monthly meetings. Marilyn Ray led our discussion of the proposal in anticipation of a discussion on the subject at Spring or Fall Gathering. A list of questions was gathered; Marilyn and Bronwyn will bring them to the next regional meeting.@

200803.5 Steve Mohlke reviewed the treasurer's report for March and April 2008. Friends received the report. @

At 1:50 p.m., seventeen F/friends continued in silent worship before adjourning. We will meet again for Worship with Attention to Business on June 8, 2008.

Respectfully submitted,

Antonia Saxon, Recording Clerk, May 2008

June 2008 Calendar

Every Sunday

- 10:00a Singing in the Hector Meeting House
- 10:30a **Meeting for Worship** for all ages
- 10:45a Children are welcome to enjoy the outside.

Other Weekly IMM Events

- Tues 9-9:20p **Worship** in your own home.
- Wed 7:30p **Midweek meeting** for worship at the Burtt House.
- Thurs 4:30-5:30 **Peace Vigil** at the bottom of East State Street near the Community School for Music and Arts.

Monthly Events of Ithaca Monthly Meeting

Second Sunday (June 14)

Rise of Mtg **Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business.** Bring a sandwich and a half, if you're so inclined, to share with those who may have forgotten. Child care provided on request (please see left sidebar on page 1).

Fourth Sunday (June 28)

Rise of Mtg A light **brunch** of shared snacks. Please bring finger foods to share.

June Events (*For more information about asterisked items, see inside.)

June 4, Wednesday

1:15-3:00p Volunteers needed at **Kitchen Cupboard**. Call Ginny Gartlein for information (272-2471). Kitchen Cupboard regularly needs brown paper bags.

June 10, Tuesday

7:30p **Peace Witness** Committee at the Burtt House.*

June 12, Thursday

6:00p **Social Justice** Committee at the Burtt House.*

June 15, Sunday

9:15ish **Children and the Life of the Meeting** (CALM) may meet. Confirm with Marilyn Ray.

Rise of Mtg **Dhia Waheed** will talk about life in Iraq.*

June 24, Tuesday

7:15p **Meeting for Healing**, 112 Mt. Pleasant Road.*

June 26-June 29, Thursday through Sunday

Annual Retreat focused on our young people. Please see page 1 "What's up with camp" and on-line registration information, </www.ithacamonthlymeeting.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2008-retreat-registration.pdf>*

July 2, Wednesday

6-10p **Floating Meeting** at the Altucher-Podhaski household, followed by fireworks viewing.*