



Newsletter of the

Ithaca Monthly Meeting

of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

January 2009

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Website: ithacamonthlymeeting.org

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS Due January 28th

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

Vocal Ministry: To Speak or Remain Silent?

— Tom Brown

The quality of Meeting for Worship, which is reviewed frequently by Ministry and Oversight, entails several dimensions. M&O asked me to prepare this in an effort to stimulate Ithaca Friends to think about the quality of spoken messages that are given in Meeting for Worship. The primary reference for this article is Michael Birkel's *Silence and Witness: the Quaker Tradition*.

Unlike personal meditation, Meeting for Worship is clearly a group experience. The focus of Meeting for Worship should be ministering to each other, as opposed to personal enlightenment. Silent worship should be not only part of the group experience, but also the basis or foundation from which vocal ministry occurs. Vocal ministry is an important part of Quaker worship, but vocal messages should be appropriate and a positive, contributing part of the larger Meeting for Worship.

One way to examine whether a possible vocal message will be meaningful is to examine the motivation for giving it. Birkel lists several reasons why Friends seemingly speak, which if examined in advance with careful discernment should result in a decision not to speak: the need for attention, the urge to please others, an attempt to seem brilliant, or a passion for a particular cause. The next layer of discernment asks for whom the message is intended. Is it intended primarily to feed others or is it primarily a revelation for the potential speaker? And finally, one should attempt to discern whether now seems to be the proper time for the message and if the message is best shared vocally or through continued silent worship.

The movement to speak needs to come from deep within, after worshippers have centered and feel themselves in communion with the Spirit and with each other. Rufus Jones indicated that messages need to reflect concrete reality and not something abstract. A message needs to "speak to the condition of souls." "It must come out of life, and if it is to have value, it must refresh life." Then, according to Birkel, messages should be given in straightforward, simple language and long discourses should be avoided.

"Vocal Ministry" continued on page 2

Notice of Annual Meeting / Sunday, January 11, 2009

Trustees announce that the annual meeting of IMMRSF Inc. will be held after the rise of Meeting for worship on Sunday, January 11, 2009 in the Café of Anabel Taylor Hall. The corporate portion of the meeting requires members and attenders to sign in, so please plan to attend at least this part of the meeting. The corporate portion will be followed by reports of all Meeting activities for the past year. It is moving to reflect on just how much our Friends do. Contact Ginny Gartlein (see left side bar) if you will need childcare. See you there!

“Vocal Ministry,” continued from page 1

Birkel notes that every freedom, including that made available to anyone present at a Friends Meeting for Worship to offer vocal ministry at any time, entails a proportionate risk, and that this freedom should not be abused. It is often said that cream rises to the top. Unfortunately, pond scum, mold, and other unpleasant substances sometimes rise to the top also. Our task when considering a vocal message is to discern and separate out the “cream” from these other substances.

Spoken words have always been an important part of meetings for worship, but Friends can also minister to each other in the silence. Some meetings for worship that have been entirely silent have seemed very gathered. Friends can sense the difference between a deep silence in which everyone is engaged in corporate worship and a group of Friends sitting quietly where little worship is occurring. Thus, we need to remember that beyond our presence, our active participation in Meeting for Worship, including the silent portions, affects the quality of the Meeting as a whole.

IMM Announcements

Queries for the “State of the Meeting Report”

A letter from New York Yearly Meeting reminds us,

“This is the time of year when we pause to reflect on our spiritual health – where we are as a meeting, our vision of where we’d like to be, and stating our intentions for growth in being faithful to the Divine. After reflection, each meeting submits a State of the Meeting Report which is then read. This is a crucial process not only for our growth as individual meetings but for realizing “what is” as a yearly meeting, recognizing our strengths and concerns, and asking for Divine assistance in effectively ministering to each other and the world.”

Ministry and Oversight invites Friends to consider the following two queries:

1. How does love manifest itself in our meeting, in our communities and in the world?
2. Does the spirit of worship extend into our committee work and into meeting for worship with a concern for business?

These queries will be available at Meeting for Worship on Sunday, January 18th.

If so led, Friends are invited provide feedback to any member of Ministry and Oversight. (Currently, Marion daGrossa serves as the clerk of M&O: 273-4020, mdagrossa@twcny.rr.com.)

Responses to these queries will aid M&O in drafting the annual State of the Meeting Report for Ithaca Monthly Meeting.



Words to Consider

from Meeting for Healing

One afternoon we heard a terrible thud against the patio door. A bird had flown into the glass. She was stunned and her right wing was a little lopsided, but it didn't look broken—bruised maybe. The bird sat perfectly still, her eyes tiny and afraid. She looked so fragile and alone that I sat down beside her. I reached out my little finger and brushed her wing. A voice came from behind me. “Why doesn't it fly off, Mama?” “She's hurt,” I said. “She just needs to be still.” The bird taught me anew that we're all in this together, that we need to sit in one another's stillness. How wonderful it is when we can be honest and free enough to say to one another, “I need you to wait with me,” or, “Would you like me to wait with you?” I studied the bird deeply impressed that she seemed to know instinctively that in stillness is healing. I had been learning that too, learning that stillness can be the prayer that transforms us. How much more concentrated our stillness becomes, though, when it's shared. Finally, fifty minutes later, she cocked her head, lifted her wings and flew. After that day, when I needed someone to pray with me I called on one of my friends and simply asked if she would come and wait with me. Sometimes we sat together without saying a word. Even then, however, our hearts were focused and attentive and beating with love. We were listening as best we could to the prayer the Spirit prays within us. We were trusting together, hoping in high shadows and the flight of wings. I have regrets in life, but waiting with that wounded bird isn't one of them. I learned her stillness and her flight. She taught me prayer.

— Sue Monk Kidd

Meeting Events

Social Justice Committee Meeting Sunday, January 4th, Rise of Meeting

Please join us in the cafe in Anabel Taylor.

Earthcare Working Group Wednesday, January 7th, 5:15p

The Earthcare Working Group will meet at the Burt House to finalize a draft charge for an Earthcare Committee. All are welcome to join us. Contact Janet Frieswyk, Margaret McCasland or Carol Mohler for more information.

Peace Witness Committee Tuesday, January 13, 7:30p

Meeting at the Burt House, Peace Witness is an open committee that welcomes the participation of everyone. Our main goals are to provide a focus in our Meeting for peace witness and to encourage and support the leadings of Meeting members and attenders working for peace.

Film Screening: Brother Outsider: the Story of Bayard Rustin Sunday, January 18th, 6p

The Lasers have been learning about Bayard Rustin, a black, gay, Quaker civil rights activist who was one of the key organizers of the 1963 March on Washington. All are invited to learn more about Rustin through the movie, *Brother Outsider*, to be shown at the Clarkberg's (150 Giles Street, 277-9364). Dish-passing will commence at 6pm, and the movie will start around 6:30. The movie, part of the P.O.V. series on PBS in 2003, is 83 minutes. A brief discussion period will follow the movie. We hope to see you there!

Leading a Quaker Life: Money Friday, January 23rd, 6p

Money involves both mundane and spiritual concerns. How do Quakers face money issues, in our own lives, when we support others, and when we try to fit into the world-at-large? Let's discuss fiscal responsibility in personal and worldly terms over salad, soup, pizza and anything you care to bring at the Burt House. Child care available. Call Christianne White, 273-1567, 227-6638, with questions.

Lasers Host Guest Speaker on LGBT Issues Sunday, January 25th, during MfW

Joyful Freeman of the AFSC office in Seattle will be joining the Lasers' First Day School class in the Anabel Taylor cafe at 11:15. Joyful will talk about the work of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Peace and Social Justice Program of the AFSC in Seattle. Others are welcome to attend.

Meeting for Healing Tuesday, January 27th, 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.

Quakers in Our Region

Third Meeting for Discernment

In 2008, the first meeting for discernment was held in March at Rochester Friends Meeting, and the second at Silver Bay during Summer Sessions. The next meeting is scheduled for March 14, 2009, at Poughkeepsie Friends Meeting from 9:00 to 4:30.

All Friends are welcome. Saturday lunch and childcare will be provided, covered by a \$10 registration fee per person. For those who wish, the Steering Committee will help arrange hospitality for Friday night so Friends can arrive rested on Saturday morning, and for Saturday night for those who would like to stay for Sunday Meeting for Worship at Poughkeepsie.

Please look for the registration form in the January 2009 issue of Spark. For more information, contact Nancy Gabriel from our meeting, or Heather M. Cook, Steering Committee for Meetings for Discernment, burritolass@comcast.net; 908-377-9665.

New York Yearly Meeting Task Group on Friends United Meeting (FUM)

At the October 2008 meeting of the FUM General Board attended by representatives from NYYM, Friends were unable to unite with a 1988 "sexual ethics" policy in the FUM personnel manual.

A committee of NYYM has "labored in worship and prayer over its charge to find ways for all of us in the New York Yearly Meeting to walk with one another so that we might become open to what truths we have to teach one another."

They write that "we need to become more conversant with different spiritual languages and worldviews, including the Biblical basis for points of disagreement. What are our understandings of where Authority resides (Biblical authority, institutional authority, the "Richmond Declaration," individual authority, etc.)?"

If Friends are interested in the work of this committee, please contact John P. Menzel, Clerk of the FUM Task Group, 908-239-7850, jpmenzel@optonline.net.

In Our Community

Zen Meditation Practice

Zen meditation practice is held every Monday and Wednesday from 5:30 to 6:30, at Anabel Taylor Hall's Founders Room. Prior sitting experience or attendance at an orientation session are required to participate. For information or to schedule an orientation, contact Tony @ 277-1158 or Marissa @ 272-1419.

Arabic Teacher Available

One of the Iraqi men who has settled in Ithaca and is qualified to teach is available to teach or tutor Arabic. He has been teaching at Cornell, but in the spring semester will only have one class there; he needs income and work. Please get in touch with Maura Stephens (maura@iraqirac.org, 274-3829) if anyone is interested in an Arabic teacher or tutor who comes with fine recommendations.

Host Family Needed

The local Aspect Foundation Student Exchange Program urgently needs a host home for a young woman from Yemen. Lamis attends Ithaca High School, and has been here since August. She has not yet found a permanent host home, and has been passed from place to place. If you could host Lamis for the remainder of the school year, or if you have questions, please contact Susan Wolf (QuakerWolf@gmail.com) or Megan Begert, the area coordinator for Aspect Foundation (MSBegert@aol.com).

Meeting Friends



The inn keeper supervises the crowd gathering around the manger during the December 14th Christmas Pageant.

Letter to the Editor

Joanne Sturgeon writes:

I really like the mix of thought provoking articles and Friends' news in the newsletter. Would there be room to include children's recitals, service projects, plays or sporting events etc. that the public is invited to attend? I was thinking that some of us non-family members might want to cheer these young Friends on.

Joanne is the second person to suggest this addition! Friends, please remember that the newsletter is a great way to share your news with our community! Send in your personal joys, concerns, and special events.

In The Light

Bonnie Tyler

Bonnie Tyler, one of Ithaca Monthly Meetings' most active members for over 25 years, passed away suddenly on Tuesday, November 25, 2008. Bonnie first attended IMM in 1981, and served on the Peace and Social Action and First Day School Committees in 1982. In the ensuing years she served often on those committees as well as the Burt House Committee, and at one time she also served on Trustees. Bonnie was an active participant in the Sanctuary movement in Ithaca in the late 1980s, in which Salvadoran refugees "Esperanza" and Juan came to live at the Burt House. Bonnie was currently on the Burt House Committee, she attended the open Peace Witness Committee, she served on the Refugee Working Group, and she was part of the Burt House Working Group.

Bonnie's passion was Quaker outreach and living the Quaker peace testimony. She was an active participant in the Thursday peace vigils and was active in the efforts that brought the AFSC's Eyes Wide

Open exhibit to Ithaca in 2005. She worked with the Refugee Working Group members to help the Iraqi family of Dhia, Aseel, and children, and more recently devoted her attention primarily to the Burmese refugee family, Eh Christ and Mumu, whom IMM sponsored. When she collapsed unexpectedly on Tuesday, Bonnie was at the home of Eh Christ and Mumu, working with them and a Department of Social Services staff member. Bonnie worked tirelessly with Eh Christ and Mumu for many months since Mumu's fall and injury, and often drove Mumu to Syracuse for medical treatment. Eh Christ asked that our Meeting be told of their profound gratitude for all of the care and assistance Bonnie has provided them.

Many Friends were in attendance at Bonnie's December 14th memorial service at the Hector Meeting House and the dish-to-pass which followed at the Burt House.

Minutes of the December 2008
Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business of the
Ithaca Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

Tom Brown, Clerk
Mike Simkin, Assistant Clerk
Marilyn Ray, Recording Clerk
Steve Mohlke, Treasurer

@ Indicates the reading of the minute was approved.

200812.1 Gathering

The Ithaca Monthly Meeting (IMM) of the Religious Society of Friends met on December 7, 2008 in the Café at Anabel Taylor Hall, Cornell University, for Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. At 12:55pm, nine F/friends settled into worship. Clerk read Query #15 and Advices #15 from NYYM's Faith and Practice. The minutes of the November 2008 Monthly Meeting were read. @

200812.2 Peace Witness Committee

Mac Larsen reported that the Committee had spent \$144 out of the \$1,000 budgeted for Peace Witness activities in 2008.

The Committee proposed the following allocations:

(a) \$156 to Conscience Alternatives to Militarism for their phone line and for costs associated with the production and distribution of Farmington-Scipio Regional Meeting's flyers for the new Peace Witness Tax Escrow Account;

(b) \$125 to Friends Disaster Service – Texas Area for aid in clean-up and reconstruction of those harmed by Hurricane Ike, especially those who are disabled or elderly;

(c) \$100 to the William Penn House in Washington, DC, to provide visitors with low cost accommodations and for other on-going work;

(d) \$125 to American Friends of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam for support of programs in the Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam village, a community in Israel made up of equal numbers of Jewish and Arab families who have chosen to live together and educate their children together;

(e) \$150 to the Parents Circle/Families Forum, a bereavement support group of Israeli and Palestinian families who have lost a family member in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and for on-going educational work.

(f) \$100 to the National Campaign Against Torture, a membership organization committed to ending US-sponsored torture, and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment; and

(g) \$100 to the IMM Refugee Fund

Minute Approved. @

200812.3 Nominating Committee Report (The Interim Report is available from the Recording Clerk)

Mike Simkin presented the Committee's interim report. He noted that the Committee is still working to find a treasurer for next year and to fill vacancies on several other committees as were noted on the Committee's handout. Elspeth Rhodin volunteered to continue on the Hector Meetinghouse Committee. Friends Received the Report. @

200812.4 Nancy Gabriel reported that she is continuing to collect charges from all the Committees in IMM. Friends received the Report. @

200812.5 Financial Committee (The proposed budget for 2009 is available from the Recording Clerk)

Mike Simkin present the proposed budget for 2009 and noted that the Finance Committee had received a request from IMM members familiar with the needs of Powell House for an increase in this gift line from \$350 in 2008 to \$500 for 2009. The 2009 Budget was modified to reflect the increase to Powell House and Approved. @

200812.6 Treasurer's report (The Financial Statement for November 2008 is available from Recording Clerk)

Steve Mohlke presented the Treasurer's report for November 2008. He noted that he had completed sending all the gifts for 2008 in November. Friends received the report. @

At 2:20 p.m., nine F/friends continued in silent worship before adjourning. We will meet again for Worship with Attention to Business at the Café in Anabel Taylor Hall on the Cornell University campus January 11, 2009 for the Annual Meeting of the Corporation.

Respectfully submitted,

*Marilyn Ray, Recording Clerk
December 2008*



Ann Rhodin

Advices & Queries

For your contemplation from *NYYM Faith & Practice*:

Advices 1. From the beginnings of our Society, we have considered it necessary to assemble frequently for the purpose of public worship held in expectant waiting for divine guidance, thereby manifesting our belief in and dependence upon our creator. Meeting for worship is fundamental for us, and we should be diligent and punctual in our attendance. We seek,

through communion with God, the strengthening influence of the Holy Spirit to enable us to discharge with fidelity the services we owe to God, to each other, and to all people.

Query 1. Are meetings for worship and business held in expectant waiting for divine guidance? Are we regular and punctual in attendance? Are we willing and faithful in the service of our meeting and in financial support of its activities?

January 2009 Calendar

Every Sunday

- 10:30a **Singing** in the Edwards Room
- 11:00a **Meeting for Worship** for all ages
- 11:15a Children leave Edwards Room for **First Day School**.

Other Weekly IMM Events

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

Monthly Events of Ithaca Monthly Meeting

January 11th

Rise of Mtg **Annual meeting of IMMRSF Inc.** (see the notice on page 1) and **Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business**. Agenda items should be provided to Tom Brown, Clerk, by January 7th.

January 25th

Rise of Mtg **Dish-to-pass brunch** in the cafe at Anabel Taylor Hall. Please bring finger foods to share.

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

January 4, Thursday

Rise of Mtg **Social Justice** Committee in the cafe.*
11:15-12n **Power Quakers** gather. outside Edwards Room

January 7, Wednesday

1:15-3p Volunteers needed at **Kitchen Cupboard**. Call Ginny Gartlein for information (272-2471). Kitchen Cupboard regularly needs brown paper bags.
5:15- **Earthcare Working Group** at the Burrth House.*

January 8, Thursday

5:30-8p **Program Committee** at the Burrth House.

January 13, Tuesday

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

January 18, Sunday

6-8:30p **Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin**. Movie and dish-to-pass at the Clarkberg's, 150 Giles Street.*
11:15-12n **Power Quakers** gather outside Edwards Room.

January 25, Sunday

11:15-12n Lasers host AFSC staffer working on **LGBT issues**.*

January 27, Tuesday

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