

Newsletter of the

Ithaca Monthly Meeting

of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

January 2015

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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 about events in the Ithaca community, broader social causes or other nonspecifically Quaker messages that may be of interest to Friends, consider sending your message through Marilyn Ray. To join or contribute, email: mlr17@cornell.edu

Spoken Ministry in Meeting for Worship

What is Me and What is Spirit?

— Patricia Barber, Goose Creek Meeting in Lincoln, Virginia

My husband once asked me why, if Quakers are so concerned about the environment, we don't forswear our fossil-fuelled cars and all stay home and sit quietly in worship by ourselves. What is so important about Meeting for Worship?

As we gather, we become the receptacles and channels of the Spirit of God. God's Spirit flows over and among us, picking up what is in our hearts and opening new channels of Divine revelation. Each person present is an irreplaceable expression of God's Word in the world. George Fox said, "Christ has come to teach His people Himself." Christ's teaching comes through many forms - in silence, in vocal ministry, in eldering - and each person needs to find how he or she is led.

When I first began to attend Meeting for Worship, I often felt compelled to stand and share what I was carrying in my heart. I did not realize that I was experiencing the beginnings of a calling from God. The simple feeling that it was important to share what I was thinking bore the hallmarks of an immature seeker and often what I shared was more me and less God. It took me a while to realize the true nature of vocal ministry. I understood that if I felt compelled to speak, I needed to understand that I was engaging in something sacred, that I was being called to articulate the Divine Spirit that was flowing through the meeting. I had to sort out what was me and what was Spirit. Ego has a loud, insistent voice and wants to speak. It gives the vocal minister the courage to stand and speak but, paradoxically, the words that are spoken must be emptied of ego.

Over time I received a lot of positive feedback from my meeting, but, as so often happens in liberal unprogrammed meetings, there was no one to take on the tender task of eldering me and helping me to nurture my calling to vocal ministry. I remember a number of mistakes I made in speaking from what was important to me rather than from the immediate promptings of God's Spirit. On one occasion, I stood up and shared about the difficulties I was experiencing in preparing my income tax return. Too late I realized that God had not given me those words to speak. I was merely dressing up an all-too-human vent in spiritual language. Later I began to memorize poetry and Meeting for Worship provided me with an excellent venue to air it before a captive audience. Although some people enjoyed the poetry that I recited in meeting, I came to realize that the motivation for reciting those poems was coming from me, not from God.

God led me to see that what God would have me share were the fruits of faithfulness, watchfulness, loving conduct towards other people, and listening to the Christ Within. I was becoming more mature in ministry. I came to realize this after someone in my meeting suggested that I be recorded as a minister, something that had not happened in our meeting for a very long time. I was appalled, but for all the wrong reasons. I feared it would place too much pressure on me to speak at a time when I was still struggling to discern

Spoken Ministry, continued on page 2

which ministry was Spirit-led and which was not. I realize now that that fear itself was ego-driven. I was not prepared to take on the responsibility of the gift, and there was no one to elder me, no one to remind me that the gifts we have for vocal ministry and for eldering are for the service of the meeting and are not our own to use or withhold as we please. God uses the tools that we have, but we are to sharpen them and keep them ready for His service.

The suggestion that I be made a recorded minister helped me understand that I had a serious God-given calling to vocal ministry and that I needed to nurture the gift and live into it. I have learned that I need to lead a life of intentionality and deep seriousness, knowing that I am imperfect and will still make mistakes. Nowadays I spend more time during Meeting for Worship trying to step into that stream of the Divine Spirit as it flows around me and all of us. If something washes up on the banks near me, I sit with it and ask God, "Is this for me alone or is it for me to share aloud with everyone here?" If I speak out of turn, I may prevent someone else from speaking a true message. If I don't speak when I am called to, the opportunity for God to minister to those gathered on that occasion is lost forever. The space between those two poles is where faithful living and true discernment takes place.

State of the Meeting Report

Every year, Ithaca Monthly Meeting writes a State of the Meeting report to send to New York Yearly Meeting. Every Monthly Meeting submits such a report, and these are all compiled into the State of the Society report, which is brought to Summer Sessions. New York Yearly Meeting calls the process of writing the report "a searching self-examination by the meeting and its members of their spiritual strengths and weaknesses and of the efforts made to foster growth." They ask us to look at the following topics:

- · quality of worship and spiritual ministry
- · efforts to foster spiritual growth
- stands taken on Friends' principles
- · personal and family relations
- relations with community and other religious groups
- participation in general activities of Friends
- · significant activities or concerns of the local meeting

We plan to gather after the rise of Meeting on January 25 to consider the past year together. This is always a searching, fruitful time as we take time to reflect on all that has taken place in the Meeting over the past year. This is brunch Sunday as well; we'll allow people time to eat and then gather again. We hope you can join us.

— Antonia Saxon, Clerk

First Day School to do Astronomy with Wallace

Wallace Watson will be leading five or six monthly programs on astronomy during the child/adult First Day School, in the hope of deepening our understanding and appreciation of nature. As usual, all interested in participating will gather for worship from 9:15 to 9:30 on the second floor of the Third Street Meeting House. Then we will have our program, including hands-on projects for the children, until 10:15. Please join us!

New GRIST Groups Forming, Register in January

GRIST (Growing in the Spirit Together) Groups provide an opportunity for us to share our spiritual search and struggles with each other. In January we will open online registration for another round of GRIST groups of 4-5 people. We will be asking people to sign up for a group based on a specified day and time that group will meet. Please register by the third week in January.

The groups will begin meeting in February and will continue to meet for eight sessions. The expectation is that participants will be able to attend all eight sessions. Childcare will be provided if requested.

The underlying questions for each meeting are "What are the spiritual qualities of the everyday events in your life?" and "How has the Spirit been at work in your life since the last time we met?" Since these questions can be difficult to answer, material has been prepared to help make it easier. This year's materials/suggestions have been revised; they will pose questions that will be new to people who have participated in the past. A new option will be a group that will focus exclusively on daily practice.

Groups generally start with opening silence and brief check-ins followed by reading the material prepared for that week. Then each person is given up to 10-15 minutes to share their responses to the material. Most groups then share more informally before closing.

The groups can use the prepared material and agenda or adjust to their liking – with one caveat. If left unchecked, groups tend to drift toward ordinary conversation, which is often more comfortable than the kind of spiritual sharing we hope these groups will nurture. To help with this, each group will be assigned a facilitator who will take primary responsibility for helping the group decide on a direction and to stay true to its intent. Care will be taken to avoid the common pitfalls of group dynamics: domination of a group by a single individual, the offering of advice, over-thinking, and so on.

Questions? Contact Carolyn Kenyon (clkenyon09@gmail.com) or Nancy Riffer nancyriffer00@gmail.com from the Program Committee.

Annual Meeting of the Corporation

Trustees are asking all members and attenders to please plan to attend the Annual Meeting on January 11, 2015. The Annual Meeting will start with the Annual Meeting of the Corporation. This part of the meeting will include (1) a report from the President of the Corporation and Clerk of Trustees, pro tem (standing in for William White during his illness), on Trustees work during 2014; (2) the President pro tem will also report for Nancy Hillegas, Secretary of the Corporation and Recording Clerk of Trustees; and (3) Mike Simkin's, Treasurer of the Corporation and of Meeting, will provide the Treasurer's report. Everyone who attends will be asked to sign in as the sign-in sheets become a permanent record to show the Meeting's support for the IMM Corporation as a non-profit religious corporation. We hope as many of our members and attenders will attend as possible.

— Marilyn L. Ray, President pro tem

Protests at the Seneca Lake Gas Storage Facility

In the past few months, Friends may have heard about recent acts of civil disobedience in regards to natural gas storage on Seneca Lake. Although our Meeting has not taken a formal stand on the issue of gas storage at Seneca Lake, Friends affiliated with Ithaca Monthly Meeting as well as Quakers across the region have been active in the Seneca Lake gas actions.

The gas storage plan is clearly something important to our community, but not all of us have had the chance to follow the issue. This is being written to hopefully provide a little background, although it is by no means exhaustive.

The Project

In 2009, the Houston based energy company Crestwood Midstream Partners began seeking permission to store more than a billion cubic feet of natural gas in salt caverns directly adjacent to Seneca Lake. This storage would be used to hold gas coming from hydrofracking operations in Pennsylvania.

The Concerns

Since Crestwood first brought forward its proposal, a number of concerns have been raised by various groups in the area. These include:

- Salt Cavern Storage Concerns: Salt caverns have failed in the past; since 1972, there have been 11 instances of catastrophic failure of underground gas storage facilities and each one has been a salt cavern facility.
 - More importantly, the salt caverns Crestwood is proposing for storage were deemed "unsuitable for storage" by a consulting engineer, mainly because one of the well sites had been drilled through a major rock fault. Further study found evidence of a large roof collapse in part of the well site, increasing concern of storage stability.

- Pollution Concerns: The safety of highly pressurized natural gas stored in a salt cavern beneath the bank of a large lake that serves as a drinking water source has never been evaluated. It is possible that repressurizing the cavern with compressed gas may force brine or methane through cracks and fissures, which could contaminate Seneca Lake.
- Economic Concerns: The Finger Lakes reputation as a wine/ tourist destination may be compromised by the construction and potential risks of natural gas storage. Over 50 local winemakers have spoken out against the project.

The Protests/Arrests

On September 30th, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) approved expansion of an already existing gas storage site; it is this project that is being heavily protested.

Protesters began blocking the Crestwood gas storage facility gates since October 23rd. On October 29th, Crestwood called the police and the first ten protesters were arrested. Since that time, protests have been ongoing and over 140 individuals have been arrested for blocking the gates (trespassing), including six individuals affiliated with Ithaca Monthly Meeting. Some protestors have served jail time in lieu of paying fines, although jailing protesters is becoming increasingly expensive and cumbersome for the municipality.

More Information

There is plenty more to learn about this issue, including why people feel so strongly on this matter. Personal stories, as well as letter from jail, news reports, and voluminous background info can be found at the We Are Seneca Lake Website - www.WeAreSenecaLake.com

Additionally, you can get in touch with Margaret McCasland (mmccasla@twcny.rr.com) who has been involved with the project for some time.

— Pat Sewell

Prayer for Earth and for Defenders of All Who Live on Earth

With a special focus on people committing peaceful civil disobedience to slow the expansion of natural gas infrastructure in New York State..

We are grateful that New York State will be protected from high volume hydraulic fracturing to extract natural gas (methane) or natural gas liquids (propane and butane) from within its borders.

We mourn the ongoing damage being done to our neighbors in Pennsylvania and Ohio whose land, water and air, and thus whose health, safety and livelihoods, are damaged during the extraction of gas for cooking our food, heating our water and our homes, and generating our electricity.

We are grateful for people who are getting arrested on the shores of Seneca Lake to prevent a seven-fold expansion of the Crestwood facilities for storing compressed methane (natural gas) and liquefied propane and butane (LPG) near the Village of Watkins Glen and adjacent to the drinking water of 100,000 people

We mourn the damage to global climate systems when methane is extracted, processed, transported and then burned, since it is a significant heat-trapping gas both before and after combustion.

We are grateful that no one has been seriously hurt or killed while

being arrested by the Sheriffs of Schuyler County or other area law enforcement officers assisting the Sheriffs.

We mourn that so many people in this country, especially people of color, cannot safely break minor laws, and indeed face serious dangers from police even if they have broken no laws.

We hold in the Light all people working to reduce our need for fossil fuels.

We hold in the Light all people working to prevent the extreme extraction of fossil fuels.

We hold in the Light all people working to develop safe, ecological sources of energy.

We hold in the Light all those working to block the expansions of infrastructure related to fossil fuels, including gas and oil from fracking, oil from tar sands, deep sea drilling for oil and gas, and coal from mountaintop removal mining.

Prayer for Earth, continued on page 4

Prayer for Earth, continued from page 3

We hold in the Light our elders (late 70s to 90s) who have been arrested.

We hold in the Light those who have been arrested in spite of significant health challenges.

We hold in the Light those who are provide support from near and far for those being arrested.

We hold in the Light those who will or have served time in jail (rather than pay the fine for trespass), in order to strengthen their personal commitment and to make their voices heard well beyond the confines of their cell.

As of December 17, 2014, Judge Berry of the Town of Reading Court is no longer sentencing people who refuse to pay the fine to jail; he is instead imposing collection liens. The next court date is Jan. 7. For updates on arrests related to Crestwood, visit the "press kit" links at: http://www.WeAreSenecaLake.com/currently-jail/

— Margaret McCasland

Electronic Waste Disposal Ban in New York

Beginning January 1st, 2015 it is illegal in New York State to throw any electronic waste, or e-waste, into the garbage or place at the curb for trash collection. This disposal prohibition includes computers, monitors, keyboards, printers, speakers, cell phones, televisions, and other small electronic equipment such as portable digital music players and DVD players.

Under the Electronic Equipment Recycling and Reuse Act of 2010, electronic equipment manufacturers who sell in New York State are required to accept for recycling or reuse their brand of equipment, as well as one piece of the same type of electronic waste of any manufacturer's brand.

In Tompkins County, residents can bring their old or non-functioning electronics to the Recycling and Solid Waste Center (160 Commercial Avenue in Ithaca) free of charge for recycling. Items that are still in working order can be accepted at organizations like Finger Lakes ReUse, at the Triphammer Marketplace, to be refurbished or reused. For more information on electronics recycling, visit www.recycletompkins.org.

- Susan Wolfe

Clerking Workshop at Powell House

Several Friends in our Meeting have participated in prior Art Larrabee clerking workshops at Powell House. This is an opportunity for new, experienced, and potential clerks of Friends' meetings and committees to meet and think together about the role of presiding clerk. Many Friends have found the experience to be valuable. For more information, see: http://www.powellhouse.org/index.php/our-calendar/monthview?task=view_event&event_id=254

Melanie-Claire Mallison will be attending, and would be happy to share her car for the ride to Powell House. Contact her: MsMellie@gmail.com, 607-379-1774.

December in IMM History

A look back at our history through the minutes of our monthly Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business.

Note: IMM has used a calendar fiscal year since Jan. 1982. Thus January business meetings since 1983 have been annual meetings when little if any business was conducted. Prior to 1982, annual meetings were usually held in May; thus, January was a month for normal business.

15 Years Ago (January 9, 2000)

The annual report of the Trustees noted satisfaction with the recently completed final agreement with the City for transfer of "The Point" from the Burtt House property to the City of Ithaca for use as part of a linear park system.

Meeting encouraged a leading of the Peace and Social Action Committee in making active opposition to the death penalty a significant focus for the committee and for the Meeting in the coming year.

75 Years Ago (January 13, 1940)

The Business Meeting occurred on the day following the funeral of Marianne Wood, wife of Edward Wood, predeceased, and mother of Sarah Oliver. The minutes include a tribute to Marianne, who with Edward started the Ithaca Meeting in 1912, acknowledging her work in the building up of the Meeting, the value of her vocal ministry, and her kindly concern for each individual in the Meeting. At this Meeting, George and Jean Klune applied for membership, and a clearness committee was appointed. It was noted that this was the largest monthly business meeting since the organization of IMM. At the conclusion of the Meeting, those present listed to a stimulating talk by President Mendenhall of Whittier College on "Challenge of the Quakers."

85 Years Ago (January 25, 1930)

"Meeting met at the home of Joshua and Edith Cope and had as our special guest Augustus T. Murray of Washington DC, who was the Sage Chapel preacher the next day. He spoke to us very encouragingly." [Historical note: When Herbert Hoover, who had a Quaker background, became President in 1929, he persuaded Augustus Murray, head of the Classical Literature Department at Stanford University and a leading Quaker, to become resident minister at the Orthodox Friends Congregation in Washington, DC, where Hoover would worship. Murray was active in the promotion of educational opportunities for Black Americans, and in 1930, at the request of the trustees of Fisk University, gave the principal address at the laying of the cornerstone for their new library. President Hoover asked Murray to convey in his address congratulations to Fisk University for its rapid rise "to such high rank among institutions of learning." Source: Donald J. Lisio, Hoover, Blacks, and Lily-Whites: A Study of Southern Strategies. 1985, Univ. of North Carolina Press.]

— Tom Brown, IMM historian

Clerk: Antonia Saxon Assistant Clerk: Marilyn Ray Recording Clerk: Marin Clarkberg

(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.)

2014 12.1 Gathering. Ithaca Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends met in Monthly Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business on December 14, 2014. At 12:25 pm, 28 Friends gathered and settled into worship. The clerk acknowledged Nancy Gabriel and Dreia Spies who were holding the Meeting in the Light.

Clerk read Psalm 46.

2014 12.2 New York Yearly Meeting's (NYYM) Statement of Conscience. Steve Mohlke, our representative to NYYM, introduced and read a Statement of Conscience prepared by NYYM in response to the recent grand jury decisions not to indict police officers who had killed unarmed black men in Ferguson, Missouri, and in New York City. The statement asks all of us "to understand how we may be complicit in a system" in which "black and brown lives matter less than white lives," and calls upon "civil authorities to take leadership in bringing about this recognition and remedy." Friends were asked if this Statement of Conscience was something that might be shared with the Ithaca Journal.

Friends lamented violence and the complex and difficult processes that bring it about, as well as the inadequacies of the justice system. Friends reflected on the Statement of Conscience, the specifics of what it does and does not contain, and its word count given the guidelines of the Ithaca Journal and possibly other media outlets. Friends agreed that another meeting should be held to gather input and to refine the statement to express our own Truth. Our feelings are of love and not self-righteousness. An ad hoc group will work on a statement and schedule an additional meeting for discussion. Friends are invited to reach out to this ad hoc group (Karen Friedeborn, Betsy Keokosky, Tom Ruscitti, Janet Frieswyk, Marilyn Ray, Shirley Way and Barbara Barry) with their comments. Further information will be shared on the Meeting listserv.

2014 12.3 Finance Committee. Mike Simkin, Treasurer, reporting on behalf of Finance Committee, reviewed the budget proposal for 2015, noting some of the increases and decreases relative to last year. The 2015 budget includes a \$60,000 request for donations, a request comparable in magnitude to the 2014 request.

Finance Committee also proposed some changes to our budget lines. There are currently several program funds that are inactive. Finance Committee proposes consolidating these lines into a single "Emerging Ministries" fund that would handle those ministries that arise outside the normal budget cycle. A Friend further suggested that the budget item called to "Anabel Taylor Hall" be changed to "Cornell United Religious Work" since we no longer convene in Anabel Taylor Hall.

Friends approved the budget and the consolidation of targeted funds into a single Emerging Ministries fund. @

2014 12.4 Social Justice. Following the recommendations and budget guidelines of the Social Justice committee, Meeting approved donating \$500 as follows: \$200 to Women for Afghan Women, \$100 to the Campaign for Alternatives to Isolated Confinement, \$100 to the National Religious Coalition Against Torture, and \$100 to the Community Faith Partners that is, in turn, funding the Second Wind Cottages for the homeless.

2014 12.5 Peace Witness. Following the recommendations and budget guidelines of the Peace Witness committee, Meeting approved donating \$600 as follows: \$300 to support an affordable water filters project sponsored in part through the Alfred Friends Meeting, \$100 to the Peter De Mott Catholic Worker House on South Plain Street, and \$200 to the Rescue Mission in Ithaca.

2014 12.6 Earthcare. Following the recommendations and budget guidelines of the Earthcare committee, Meeting approved sending \$100 to each of the following five organizations: Energy Savings for Renters, People for Healthy Environment in Chemung County, Citizens Climate Lobby, Earth Justice, and the STEVEN Foundation that provides solar ovens in Nicaragua. @

2014 12.7 Ministry &A Worship. Chuck Mohler, representing M&W, asked Friends to re-create a Clearness Committee for membership for Christopher Church. Friends approved appointing a Clearness Committee with the members Chuck Mohler, Melody Johnson, Sue Baker-Carr and John Lewis. @

2014 12.8 Burtt House Committee. Tom Brown reported on behalf of the Burtt House Committee. He began by noting that next month the Meeting will have had ownership of this property for 25 years. Tom shared that there has been concerns about the wiring of the house for some time, especially in the upstairs which still has entirely original wiring. The committee will be engaging electricians to evaluate the second floor wiring in light of contemporary electrical demands. Friends received the report. @

2014 12.9 Nominating Committee. Ellie Rosenberg presented on behalf of Nominating Committee. She noted that at some point in the future, we may want to make a careful evaluation of the structures of committees and their charges, but this is not a process we are currently undertaking. Ellie shared a list of nominations for 2015. It was noted that a non-member was being asked to serve on Finance Committee. Friends recalled a previous instance of a non-member serving on Finance Committee, and Friends were easy moving forward in this instance as well. Friends approved the nominations. @

2014 12.10 Naming Committee. Marilyn Ray reported on behalf of the Naming Committee. Naming Committee is comprised of the Clerk, the Assistant Clerk, the Treasurer, a representative of Trustees, and a representative from Ministry & Worship, and identifies Friends to serve on the Nominating Committee. Based on

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the recommendations of Naming Committee, Friends approved Garry Thomas for a one-year term, and Steve Mohlke and Nancy Riffer for three-year terms on Nominating Committee. @

2014 12.11 Treasurer's Report. Mike Simkin, Treasurer, highlighted some distinguishing features of the November end-of-month financial statement. Our total liquid assets were about \$81,000. With just two weeks remaining in our fiscal year, we are at about 82% of the budget request. Mike anticipates that while we may not meet our budget request, we also may not go into deficit (as spend-

ing is also less than budgeted). Friends received the report. @

2014 12.12 Other concerns. There were no other concerns.

Twenty-four Friends settled into worship at 2:40 before adjourning. Our next regular Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business will be held at the rise of Meeting on January 11, 2014.

Respectfully submitted,

Marin Clarkberg, Recording Clerk

Women's Chair Yoga, Mondays and Fridays

Women's chair yoga meets on Mondays and Fridays from 11am to noon in the Third St. Meetinghouse. Gentle movements of body, mind and spirit. We all have Beginner's Mind. Just come, or contact Nancy Gabriel for information: ntg2@cornell.edu, 277-8930. We make a voluntary donation for the teacher.

Housesitter Needed

I am looking for a house sitter for February to April. The sitter would probably need a car. Please call me at 618.203.6793, mornings or evenings. Thanks,

— Dreia Spies

January 2015 Calendar of Ithaca Monthly Meeting

Midweek Meeting at the Burtt House Wednesday, January 7, 7:30p

Join us for thirty minutes of worship followed by a period of fellowship. The Burtt House is at 227 N. Willard Way, and we meet in the Meditation Room, the first room to the right as you enter the door. (Note: there are no other midweek meetings at the Burtt House planned for January.)

Annual Meeting of the Corporation Sunday, January 11, Rise of Meeting

See article on page 2. All Friends are asked to attend, and to sign in. IMM is incorporated as a nonprofit religious corporation. In this legally-mandated meeting, we will hear a reports on behalf of the President of the Corporation and Clerk of Trustees, the Secretary of Corportation and Recording Clerk of Trustees, and the Treasurer of the Corportation and of Trustees.

Annual Meeting of Ithaca Monthly Meeting Sunday, January 11, following Corporate Mtg

Annual reports will be presented from the Meeting's committees. Please bring your lunch, and join us in this remarkable summary of 2014.

Dish-to-Pass Brunch Sunday, January 25, Rise of Meeting

Bring something tasty to share. All are invited for fellowship even if not bringing food.

State of the Meeting Discussion Sunday, January 25, following brunch

See article on page 2. Join in this reflection on the state of our meeting.

Newsletter submissions due Thursday, January 29, 5p

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

Every Sunday

9:15a Multigenerational worship

9:30a Multigenerational First Day School

10:30a **Meeting for Worship** for all ages

10:30a **Childcare (0-8 years old):** attenders may exit the meetingroom when they so choose to attend childcare.

Other Weekly IMM Events

Wed 5:30-6:30p Meeting for worship at the Third Street Meetinghouse