

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

June 2010

IMM CONTACTS

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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 body of the message as simply:

join

Events:

To set up or schedule a program or presentation for the meeting, please see the instructions on the website.

Website: ithacamonthlymeeting.org

**Newsletter Submissions
Due June 24th**

Please provide your newsletter contributions to Rini Clarkberg:
150 Giles St., Ithaca, NY 14850
607-279-4722 • mec30@cornell.edu

Two Histories

— *Steve Mohlke, Clerk*

A couple weeks ago I received two messages about how individuals in Meeting relate to the whole group. The messages arrived by email several hours apart on the same day. They were both from long time, seasoned, members of our Meeting. One said that “this Meeting has a history giving individual concerns too much weight.” The other one said that “this Meeting has a history of wanting to force majority opinions through.” After a good chuckle about the polar opposition of these two statements I realized that both were true. Both are problematic. The solution is not to shift in one direction or the other. However, these two opposites share a solution and our Meeting has a history of that as well. I suggest that it is: we need to continue to spend more time together.

When I reflect on the conflicts in Meeting over the last 10-15 years, I think that more of them had to do with misunderstandings than with genuine ideological differences. Many of those misunderstandings appear to be ideological at first. In cases when we have taken the time to talk with one another, those ideologies often fall away as we learn about how we each use words, about our communication styles and about our personality types. This takes time. And patience. Sometimes we have to hold seeming contradictions together and accept the discomfort involved.

Identifying individual concerns in tension with the group lets us know where to direct our attention. There is no easily-named prescription which quickly eases these tensions. This is where discernment comes in. In each situation that arises we need to try to find the truth with help from the Spirit.

This reminded me of a clerking clinic I attended with Arthur Larrabee in April of 2009. We spent some time focusing on reasons groups move forward with something when not all are in agreement. We produced two lists.

Reasons that Meetings have reasonably used to go forward even though there seems to be an objection:

- The objector can't embrace the expectations of the process—"I don't like it and I don't want to talk about it."
Our process expects each of us to engage with the issue and talk about it.

Two Histories, continued on page 2

Midnight at Spring Gathering

I walk down the path to my room.
I stop.
I feel darkness coming in around me
as I pass a shadow.
I am not afraid.
I stand still, listen, and feel.
I hear wind whistling in the trees,
Waves crashing on the beach, and
The angry screech of a machine
inside.
And beneath all that, silence hangs in
the air.
I look up.
The night sky gazes back from above.
A tree looms over me.
I feel cool night air blow up from the
lake.
And I smile.

— *Thea Clarkberg*

- When the objector is not addressing the matter at hand
- When the objector has not participated in the process

Reasons that meetings have inappropriately used to go forward—these are not theologically defensible:

- The relative numbers (50 in favor, 2 against)
- Urgency of the matter

- The nature of the objections
- The amount of time that has been put into the matter
- The feelings in evidence
- The personality of the person objecting
- The circumstances
- Fear of the consequences of alienating someone involved

- The consequence of not doing A would result in B and B is unacceptable

The diversity that sometimes challenges us is also our strength. Experience teaches us that when we work through our differences of communication style, word usage and personality, we find a core of truth and mutual understanding that is solid and shared and satisfying.

Our New Meetinghouse: Developments on Third and Madison Street

Friends are invited to visit the Ithaca Monthly Meeting website to read about progress towards a new meetinghouse:

ithacamonthlymeeting.org/news-announcements/our-new-meetinghouse/

Some updates are summarized here:

Clean Out

The task group charged with cleaning out the building worked with 50 additional helpers from our meeting to empty the building of its contents. This work would have cost Ithaca Monthly Meeting approximately \$5,000 to hire out. In addition, the sale of interior contents have totaled a few thousand dollars. “Big Bertha,” the mixer, sold for \$1,000!

June 1st: Meet the Architect

Friends are invited to meet the architect, Claudia Brenner, on Tuesday, June 1st, 7pm at the Burtt House. The Project

Management Committee will present the floor plan, and friends will be asked to provide input in the following areas:

- Flooring in general and the Meeting Room in particular
- Our expectations for the kitchen
- Windows and doors in relation to cost, environmental impact and attractiveness
- Noise abatement between spaces
- The quality of light in the Meeting Room
- Insulation

Fundraising

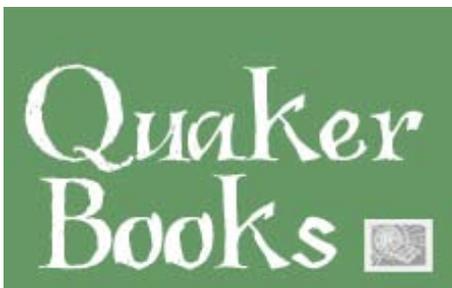
The Trustees of our meeting have set a fundraising goal of \$350,000 for the purpose of renovating the building at the corner of 3rd and Madison Streets. As of May 29th, pledges received put us more than a third of the way to our goal. Friends are invit-

ed to send their pledges to Mike Simkin, Treasurer. (See pledge sheet, page 3.)

The Budget and Design Choices

At the we decided to buy this property we had in hand a rough estimate of the costs of renovation. That rough estimate—around \$350,000—was for a bare bones renovation only.

Concern for the overall budget has led the Project Management Committee and our architect to exercise restraint in early design choices. We expect that the initial plans will *not* include an elevator; a commercial kitchen; a dramatic skylight; air conditioning; or other optional add-ons. However, once Meeting has a better sense of both available funds and the true cost of our renovation, we may like to consider where we would most prioritize spending a little more.



Meetinghouse Fundraiser

Friends are invited to shop from the FGC bookstore on the web, <quakerbooks.org>, in the month of June. At checkout, enter the code “ITHACA” and 10% of your purchase will be donated to our New Meetinghouse Fund.

Indian Affairs Committee Retreat

Susan Wolf, a member of the YM Indian Affairs Committee, organized a one-day retreat sponsored by the committee at Kanatsiohareke, a Mohawk community just west of Albany. Fourteen people attended and had a rich and rewarding day. Tom Porter, a Mohawk Elder and spiritual leader, spoke to us at length on Saturday morning. In the afternoon, Jens Braun showed slides and spoke about the AVP work he participates in in Bolivia and Ecuador. We also had time to relax and share. Everyone expressed the hope that we will have another retreat in the near future.

Phlox

First, in spring, a sturdy green stem, a pillar built to last.

Then, out come the long drips of emerald, expanding and growing so fast.

Next: a thin thread of green is the stem of a tiny wine glass, filled with a droplet of deep purple, the bud of a coming flower.

Now a burst of lavender fireworks, the broad flat petals smelling of a sweet something words cannot describe.

— *Thea Clarkberg and Hope Kenmore*

The Ithaca Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
Meetinghouse Fund
5/16/2010

Renovating our new building will take the support of everyone in our Meeting. We will need both contributions to the renovation effort and an increase in annual contributions to help pay for the maintenance and ongoing expenses of the new building. We need to know how much each of us intends to contribute so that we can make responsible decisions about funding for the Meetinghouse project. Pledges should be returned by June 15, 2010, to Mike Simkin (3137 Jacksonville Rd. Trumansburg NY 14886).

I/We pledge to support the new meetinghouse by contributing the following total amount to the Meetinghouse Fund. (This can be contributed over the next three years.) Our fundraising goal is \$350,000. To reach this goal with our typical 64 contributing households we need contributions as follows:

- \$600 (30 contributions needed at this level)
- \$1,400 (15 contributions needed at this level)
- \$7,000 (10 contributions needed at this level)
- \$14,000 (5 contributions needed at this level)
- \$35,000 (3 contributions needed at this level)
- \$70,000 (1 contribution needed at this level)
- Other \$ _____

Part (or all) of my/our contribution will be in stock, or will require other special handling.

We need annual giving to increase by about 15% to cover operating costs of the building without decreasing our other activities. An increase in annual donations beyond 15% could allow us to pay off a mortgage on the building.

In addition, I/we plan to increase my/our annual contribution by \$ _____ per year for the foreseeable future.

I/We can contribute labor if needed (describe) _____

I/We have something else to contribute (describe) _____

The Development Committee would like to visit with you to answer any questions you may have.

I/We have all the information I/we need and will not require a call from the development committee.

Name(s) _____

The best way to contact me/us is _____

Upcoming Events at Powell House... Get more info and register at www.powellhouse.org

Commencement, Conversion, and the Kingdom: Quakers and Money

June 25-27, 2010

In this weekend workshop led by Jennie Isbell, participants will examine their individual and their community's attitudes about money and faith.

Engaging Friends' tradition, the Bible, American culture and our own stories, we will discover and perhaps reframe our relationship with money. Friends will have the opportunity to prayerfully consider how their faith is (or can be) indicated in all practices related to money, both income and expenditures. Participants may arrive prepared for our time by considering in advance their earliest lessons about money (particularly from family and childhood faith communities), and one or two vividly recalled stories about giving or receiving money.

Jennie Isbell is a member of Clear Creek Monthly Meeting in Richmond, Indiana. She has worked in higher education administration for 16 years, primarily in fund-raising and outreach. She has a persistent concern for helping individuals and groups find the intersections between faith and life.

Also coming up:

July 8-11 UnWinding: Grades 10th-12

July 16-18 On the Way To Silver Bay and Kick-off for Powell House's 50th Anniversary

Aug 6-8 Spiritual Healing--the Annual FIPSH weekend

Aug 20-22 Feeding The Fire Series IV: Different Ways In

Aug 26-29 In Jesus' Name: John Edminster, Planning Committee Clerk

Sept 10-12 Powell House Committee Weeekend

Sept 13-15 Mary McDowell Center For Learning

Oct 15-17 Fall Work Weekend Contra Dance and Storytelling

Oct 29-31 Feeding The Fire Series V: The Individual and the Community (Jennie Isbell)

Nov 19-21 The 2nd Quaker Abolition: Ending Torture--QUIT! (John Calvi and Chuck Fager)

Nov 30- Dec 1 Northeastrn Organic Farmers' Retreat

Dec 10-12 WinterSong Grades Grades 8th-12th

Dec 30-Jan 1 New Year's Celebration

Minutes of the April 25, 2010 Called Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business Ithaca Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

Steve Mohlke, Clerk

Tonia Saxon, Assistant Clerk

Marilyn Ray and Nancy Gabriel, Co-Recording Clerks

Mike Simkin, Treasurer

(The @ signifies that the minute has been read and approved during Meeting. Please note that copies of all reports provided during this Meeting are on file with and available from the Recording Clerk.)

2010034.4/25.1 Gathering

Ithaca Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society Friends met in the Café at Anabel Taylor Hall, Cornell University on April 25, 2010 for a Called Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. At 12:30 PM, 20 Friends settled into silence. Clerk opened the Meeting with the words, "May it be words of the Spirit that are spoken and words of the Spirit that are heard." He introduced Carolyn Kenyon and Bruce Berggren-Thomas, who would be holding the Meeting in the Light, and reviewed the day's agenda. Clerk then read passages from a lecture by Bill and Fran Taber, "Building the Life of the Meeting." In the lecture, the Tabers quoted from Howard Brinton, describing God's work in the community:

...[T]he function of the divine is...to gradually bring into an orderly unity [the] diversified and individualistic elements of being. Creation develops not by bringing about uniformity but by creating diversity which then requires a greater degree of integration.

After another period of open worship, Friends addressed the day's business.

201004.4/25.2 Project Management Committee

Lynne Truame presented the report of the committee. Project Management Committee's members are Rini Clarkberg, Tonia Saxon, Mike Simkin, and Lynne Truame, with Tony Serviente co-opted. The report outlines the PMC's processes of soliciting input, checking references, and setting criteria by which to come to a recommendation for a contractor. Friends reviewed and discussed the report. Concerns were raised relative to environmental practices and maximizing our project's eligibility for New York State Energy Research and Development Authority [NYSERDA] grants; and wage and social justice issues. Friends urged the committee to include these concerns in negotiations with the contractor, architect, and structural engineers. Friends APPROVED the committee's recommendation designating Latipac as the preferred contractor with whom to begin considering design and cost of the meeting-house renovation. @

201004.4/25.3 Trustees' report

Tom Brown presented the Trustees' report, which had been previously distributed. Item #2 in the report, regarding the choice of a structural engineer, was discussed at some length and Trustees will follow up on concerns raised. With that understood, Friends received the report. @

Sixteen Friends settled into worship at 1:50 PM and the Called Meeting was adjourned. Our next Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business will be held on May 2.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy Gabriel, Recording Clerk

**Minutes of the May 2, 2010 Monthly Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
Ithaca Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends**

201005.1 Gathering

Ithaca Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society Friends met for Monthly Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business in the Café at Anabel Taylor Hall, Cornell University, on May 2, 2010. At 12:30 PM, 22 Friends gathered and settled into silence. Clerk introduced Barbara Barry and Rebekah Tanner, who would be holding the Meeting in the Light, and reviewed the day's agenda. Clerk then read passages from the book by Roy M. Oswald and Robert E. Friedrich, *Discerning Your Congregation's Future*, on the qualities of group discernment, and the need to hold open the way for individual voices which may bring prophetic challenges to test, and be tested in, the community.

After another period of open worship, Friends addressed the day's business.

201005.2 Trustees

Marilyn Ray presented the Trustees' report. In response to concerns about the structural assessment of our building, Trustees brought the following Minute for Meeting's consideration:

Based on Peter Novelli's knowledge of and expertise with post-civil war structures in Ithaca, and if acceptable to our architect, MM grants Trustees permission to determine if it is feasible for MM to hire Peter Novelli as a consultant to walk through the new Meetinghouse to answer the following two questions: Are there structural issues about the building to which we should pay special attention? If so, what are they? Trustees are further authorized to make a decision about and to spend up to \$800 for this service.

Friends discussed both general and specific concerns brought up by the proposed Minute. While respecting the value of specialized expertise, Friends are also wary of creating unnecessary obstacles and costs in proceeding with our renovation. Friends also reiterated support for empowering the Trustees in their decision-making. The Minute was APPROVED. @

201005.3 Earthcare Witness Committee

Margaret McCasland brought a proposed Minute from EWC on Stewardship of Earth via Stewardship of Property, and presented background material in reference to it. In the discussion, Friends concurred with the commitment to the goals of the Minute while seeking to keep our statements mindful of constraints we are certain to encounter. Tensions between alternatives will persist, as will the need for discernment and balance. Attention was drawn to the effects of the tone set by a Minute, which is an enduring document and needs to reflect a shared unity—perhaps in contrast to the tone of Queries or Advices. The Earthcare committee will revise the Minute in the light of this discussion, and bring it to a future business meeting. @

201005.4 Ministry and Worship.

Carolyn Kenyon brought the annual State of the Meeting report, written by the committee with input from many members and attenders. After listening to the reading, and with a minor change, Friends APPROVED the 2009 report to be sent to NYYM and to out of touch members and friends of our Meeting.

201005.5 Treasurer

Mike Simkin presented the monthly financial report, and briefly reviewed the history of resources held for an eventual meetinghouse. After the purchase of the Third Street property, approximately \$75,000 remain in new-meetinghouse funds. Friends received the report.@

201005.6 Clerk's business

Steve Mohlke brought two items to our attention. 1) We have received a letter from Sandy Rea, Clerk of the Middle East Working Group of Philadelphia YM, informing us that Violet Goncarovs has been chosen to be part of the Young Friends' delegation to Palestine this summer. Clerk suggested that the Scholarship Subcommittee of Ministry and Worship coordinate support for Violet's trip. Friends wishing to contribute should send their offering to IMM, designated for the Scholarship Fund. 2) Rebekah Tanner has requested a clearness committee to test a leading toward a healing ministry. This request will be taken up by Ministry and Worship.@

201005.7 Other concerns

Gina Varricchio would like to labor with a leading to form a Gardening Committee especially focused on involving the children of the Meeting as fully-participating committee members. Clerk will work with Gina on this. Nancy Gabriel expressed her sense that this will not be the only modification of our committee structure to grow out of our acquisition of a meetinghouse.

After gathering into silence and with a final reflection on group discernment, sixteen Friends settled into worship at 2:50 PM. Our next Called Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business will be held on May 16.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Nancy Gabriel, Recording Clerk*

Advices & Queries from NYYM Faith & Practice

Advice 16. Friends' business meetings are meetings for worship with a concern for business. When there seems to be disagreement, a free expression of all opinions should be encouraged. Those who speak in meetings for business are advised not to be unduly persistent in advocacy or opposition, but, after having fully expressed their views, to recognize the generally expressed sense of the meeting. A deep and seeking silence can help to reconcile seemingly opposing points of view. Meetings should be conducted in the spirit of wisdom, forbearance, and love.

Query 5. Do we keep to moderation and simplicity in our daily lives? Have we allowed the acquisition of possessions to interfere with God's purpose for us? Are our homes places where the presence of God is felt by those who live there and those who visit there? Do we choose such recreations as are wholesome and consistent with Christian character? Are we careful in our choice of ways to use our time and energy?

June 2009 Calendar of Ithaca Monthly Meeting

Please also see the online calendar at <http://ithacamonthlymeeting.org/calendar/>

Meet the Architect Tuesday, June 1, 7p

This event will be held at the Burtt House, 227 Willard Way in Ithaca, and will take the place of a scheduled Called Meeting. For more information about the agenda, see "our New Meetinghouse" on page 2.

Burtt House Spring Work Day Saturday, June 12, 10a-1p

All who are able are invited to help at the Burtt House Spring Work Day Saturday, June 12 from 10 AM until 1 PM. Come for whatever portion of this 3-hour period you are available. All work will be outdoors and will consist mainly of weeding, pruning, and general clean-up. Tools will generally be provided, although extra clippers/pruners may prove useful. You may also find light-weight gardening gloves helpful (some will be provided).

Mother's Blessing for Melissa Mueller Saturday, June 12, 3p

In anticipation of welcoming a new baby to our Meeting, there will be a Mother's Blessing for Melissa Mueller on Saturday, June 12, at 3:00 pm at the home of Melody Johnson and Dick Crepeau. Women, men, and children are welcome to come join in the time together to help Melissa and Ernest prepare for the arrival of their baby in late June. Although the focus of the Mother Blessing will be preparing the expectant mother, father, and baby for birth,

gifts are still welcome! For those who are so moved, there is a gift registry at Mama Goose. For other ideas or for more information, contact Bronwyn Mohlke (277-4183 / bjm9@cornell.edu) or Melody Johnson (272-8755 / rcrepea1@twcny.rr.com).

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business Sunday, June 13, Rise of Meeting

Agenda items should be provided to Steve Mohlke, clerk, by the preceding Wednesday. (Contact information is on page 1.)

Women's Fellowship Friday, June 18, 7p

Please join us at 7pm in the space formerly occupied by ABC Cafe at 310 Stewart Avenue. All are welcome. Have dinner or tea or baked goods... or not.

Peace Witness Committee Saturday, June 19, 10:30a

The Peace Witness Committee is an open committee of the Meeting. All are welcome to join us at the Burtt House as we work to bring Quaker peace witness into our lives and our community. Please feel free to contact Elizabeth Schneider at 273-3566 or neschneid@aol.com. All are welcome.

Called Meeting for Meetinghouse Issues Sunday, June 27, Rise of Meeting

Agenda items should be provided to Steve Mohlke, clerk, by the preceding Wednesday. (Contact information is on page 1.)

Every Sunday

- 10:30a **Meeting for Worship** for all ages (beginning May 30th, Meeting for Worship begins at 10:30a)
- 10:45a Children are invited to enjoy the outdoors behind the Hector Meetinghouse. Adult supervision provided.

Other Weekly IMM Events

- Wed 7:30p **Midweek meeting** for worship at the Burtt House
- Thurs 5-5:30p **Peace Vigil** at the bottom of East State Street near the Community School for Music and Arts