



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

**November 2012**

**IMM CONTACTS**

**Meetinghouse:**

120 Third Street • Ithaca NY 14850  
607-229-9500

**Clerk:**

Steve Mohlke  
52 Gray Road • Ithaca NY 14850  
607-216-8411  
clerk@ithacamonthlymeeting.org

**Treasurer:**

Mike Simkin  
3137 Jacksonville Rd • T-burg, NY 14886  
607-387-5174 • mes13@cornell.edu

**Ministry & Worship:**

Tonia Saxon  
607-387-5244 • tonia@iecc.com

**Pastoral Care:**

Emily Williams  
703.297.9849 • ewy310@gmail.com

**Childcare Requests:**

Kathy Beissner • beissner@ithaca.edu

**Burt House:**

Violet Goncarov, Friend in Residence  
227 N. Willard Way • 607-273-5421

**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

**Marilyn's List:**

To email Friends and others about events in the Ithaca community, broader social causes or other non-specifically Quaker messages that may be of interest to Friends, consider sending your message through Marilyn Ray. To join or contribute, email:

m1r17@cornell.edu

**Website:** [ithacamonthlymeeting.org](http://ithacamonthlymeeting.org)

**The Danby Landbank: A Story of a Leading**

— *Betsy Keokosky*

A good place to start this story is 11 years ago after 9/11 in 2001 and my father's death in 2003. I felt driven to find out more about what was happening in the world globally. So I contacted a women's group in Gilgit, Pakistan through the sister of a Cornell student to learn more about Muslim women. I took classes. I volunteered in India concerned about women's issues. I started attending Quaker Meeting and initiated the sponsorship of Burmese refugees with Peace Witness. I ended up getting a Master's degree in City and Regional Planning with a concentration in Regional Economic Development using the great benefit of the free educational system offered to Cornell employees.

What turned my attention back to America and the economy was an overwhelming sense of unregulated global corporate greed and the effect it was having on the environment. I felt I could never learn enough about or influence places like India in my life time but I could start a different economic model here and use American influence to leverage its affect though out other parts of the world. An ambitious goal! Though women's issues were, and still are, a concern, I began to feel that finding alternative ways of doing economics and using energy were the main problems of the 21st century around which everything else revolved.

See "Landbank" on page 2

**Discernment: Retreat for IMM**

On Saturday, November 3, Christopher Sammond will lead us in a retreat focused on Spiritual discernment. This will be at the 3rd Street Meetinghouse from 9am to 4pm with lunch and childcare provided. The deadline for registering is Monday, October 29 at 5pm. To register go online to <http://tinyurl.com/9d74x84> or contact Carolyn Kenyon at <clkenyon09@gmail.com> or phone 273-7922.

*Spiritual discernment lies at the Heart of Quaker spirituality and practice. It's grounded in the central Quaker conviction of the availability to every person of the experience and guidance of God. Discernment is the faculty we use to distinguish the true movement of the Spirit to speak in meeting for worship from the wholly human urge to share, to instruct, or to straighten people out. It is the capacity we exercise in a centered meeting for worship for the conduct of business to sense the right course for the meeting to take in complex or difficult circumstances. It is that fallible, intuitive gift we use in attempting to discriminate the course to which we are personally led by god in a given situation, from our other impulses and from the generalized judgments of conscience.*

— "Spiritual Discernment" by Patricia Loring,  
*Pendle Hill Pamphlet 305*

Join us as we seek to build our capacity for discernment, both individually and as a Meeting community.

— *Carolyn Kenyon*

I knew I wanted to create an alternative economic model that fed back into the community and the environment, and alternative energy seemed to be a good fit for that. I also lived in the rural countryside around Ithaca; my husband and I had built two stone houses—one in Caroline and one in Danby—so biomass and its potential for developing the rural economy seemed a natural to me. A professor at Cornell, Jerry Cherney, was the grass energy guru and I talked to all of his acolytes. When my husband and I started building in Caroline in 1976, we had been lucky enough to become friends with a dying-out generation of farmers who lived with horse-drawn wagons and without electricity well into the 1950's. Listening to their stories taught me—a California girl from suburbia—a whole other way of life. So when we moved from Caroline to Danby and I found that there was no farmer to rent our fields, I began to think of using that model for energy: biomass energy. As a result I founded the Danby Land Bank Cooperative, a cooperative of non-farming, rural land owners. The logic was that by mowing fields going-to-brush on land owned by cooperative members, the weedy hay could be used for biofeedstock to replace heating fuel oil, while the owners in return could get reduced taxes through agricultural assessment and also their fields cleared for free. The contractor cutting the hay could be paid by the sale of it.

I took to leading meeting presentations and focus groups though this was a total jump out of character for the kind of shy and introverted computer nerd person I used to be. I became a social entrepreneur.

The Danby Land Bank was started in 2009. Now 3 years later, I, and some of my fellow enthusiasts, are again making a jump out of my comfort zone. Again we are attempting something I never thought I would do: becoming not just social but business entrepreneurs. Early adopters, no less. Again a death was partially responsible, this time of a dedicated friend, Tony Neuket, who had been working with me. To continue his efforts we got a feasibility study grant this year with SUNY/Cobleskill for a second organization, which he had helped found. Community Biomass Energy was to be a sister organization to multiple Land Banks like the one in Danby. The CBE business concept which evolved is to provide a simple, cost effective, efficient, and practical means to begin the implementation of agricultural biomass as a feedstock using micro residential Combined Heat and Power (CHP) as an ultimate goal. We will begin by making grass pellets with a mobile pelletizer and partnering with SUNY/Cobleskill to develop the retrofits for older outdoor slab-wood boilers to use gasification to burn pellets for heat, hot water, and electric power.

This Quaker group has always supported me in my head and heart, but now that something specific is happening I want to broaden that support. I feel that my courage to move ahead with this leading has come to me straight through this meeting. The first step is to let you know what I am doing; the Earthcare Committee is helping me by sponsoring a presentation. I hope to see you at the Third Street Meetinghouse on Friday, November 16, at 7 pm.

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### Community Email: Listserv and Marilyn's List

Friends are reminded that we have multiple ways to communicate via email. First, we have an IMM listserv. This listserv is to be used for announcements directly related to IMM or broader Quaker bodies *only*. Directions for subscribing to this fairly low traffic listserv are on page 1, in the left panel.

Marilyn Ray also maintains a less formal mailing list where she distributes items of broad interest. Marilyn is happy to forward messages related to social and political causes as well as events that are open and of interest to the broader Ithaca community. To participate in Marilyn's list, please contact her at [mlr17@cornell.edu](mailto:mlr17@cornell.edu).

— *Marin Clarkberg*

### "Richie Sing": Singing Event

The December Richie Sing will be held in memory of Carol Mohler. It will be an opportunity to sing some songs that were special to her and some that we feel reflect our connection with Carol and with one another. The Richie Sing, named for Richie Holtz, it's founder, has been meeting monthly for many years. Carol and Chuck attended regularly and hosted the sing at our Meetinghouse last fall. Anyone who likes to sing is welcome.

The sing will be at the Quaker Meeting House, corner of Madison and Third St, on Saturday, Dec 1. The dish-to-pass starts at 6:30 and singing at 7:30. Dick Crepeau, Melody Johnson and Sara Shaffzin will host.

— *Melody Johnson*

### Needed: Burt House Caretaker

We continue the search for a Caretaker/Friend-in-Residence of the Burt House. Violet Goncarov holds the position currently, but will transition out by the end of the year.

The duties of the Burt House Caretaker are many and can be time-consuming. The caretaker's general responsibilities include managing and overseeing maintenance of the house and grounds, the scheduling of events at the house, and maintaining close communication with the Burt House Committee and the Burt House Working Group.

The caretaker should be a person involved in activities of concern to Friends and who is committed to the goal that the house provides a warm and welcoming environment for all activities of the Ithaca Monthly Meeting. The caretaker should share the concern that the Burt House is a center for peace activities and peace education. In addition, it is the responsibility of the caretaker to oversee and nourish the spirit of cooperation within this living community.

Any adult or couple interested in applying for the position should contact Fell Cadwallader at [creativeconsonance@gmail.com](mailto:creativeconsonance@gmail.com) for more information and instructions on how to apply.

— *Melissa Travis Dunham*

*For the Burt House Committee and Burt House Working Group:  
Mary Balfour, Tom Brown, Wilma Brown, Fell Cadwallader, Blair Jennings, Chris Dunham, and Joanne Sturgeon*

## Observations from Two Flies on the Wall At Last Month's Young Friends Gathering

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The Browns have supported Meeting's outreach to our college-aged Young Friends for many years and served as Young Friends Advisors decades ago. We typically assist with the student welcome picnic each August for new and returning Young Friends. Because we were helping with transportation, we found ourselves sitting in on their October gathering. We found the event quite striking and wanted to share it with you.

Young Friends gatherings this year are larger than they have been in recent memory. It was impressive to see the 22 people present at this gathering sitting around a large oval circle in the Burt House living room, with a cozy fire adding to the atmosphere, chatting with each other as they partook of a dish-to-pass meal, to which many of them had contributed. But this was just the beginning.

The feature presentation for the evening had to be changed at the last minute because the scheduled Young Friends speaker developed computer problems that made it impossible to give and show her presentation. So Young Friend Megan was tapped to share experiences of her work with the Food Bank of the Southern Tier. As flies on the wall who deliberately did not insert ourselves into the ensuing discussion, we were awe-struck by several aspects of the program: the quality of projects Megan and other Young Friends had taken on or had previous experience with that fed into the discussion; the knowledge, questions, concerns, and responses of the group shown in the discussion about the many faces of hunger in

America as well as elsewhere (Friend Ros spoke of her experiences with programs in Australia/Tasmania, and others compared differences between hunger in Africa and hunger for quality food in the developed world that is often reflected by obesity); the extent to which the whole group focused in intently and showed a high level of interest in this topic; and finally, how well-informed and articulate these Young Friends are.

IMM sponsorship of Young Friends through Cornell United Religious Works (CURW) is as old as our Meeting itself. Over the decades, our minutes periodically note attendance of Young Friends at Meeting for Worship and their activities. The college years are an extremely busy time and often are an important time of spiritual searching. Not all Young Friends have Quaker backgrounds; some search out other denominations and some come to embrace Quakerism through the experience of Young Friends. Young Friends currently includes Ithaca College as well as Cornell students and spouses. It is also open to others who identify with this stage of life.

We hope this snapshot of just one gathering provides you a better sense of Young Friends and what they do. We certainly left this gathering with a feeling of both pride and of the importance of this facet of our Meeting's life.

— Tom and Wilma Brown

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### Alternative Gift Fair

The 2012 Alternative Gift Fair will be held on Saturday, December 1 from 11:00am to 6:00pm in two adjacent locations on Dewitt Park: the First Presbyterian Church, and the First Baptist Church.

*"The mission of the Ithaca Alternative Gift Fair is to provide our community with a meaningful alternative to holiday gift giving, one which celebrates personal charity, community health and well being, and the preservation of the planet."*

The Fair offers holiday shoppers an opportunity to choose gifts of charitable donations, rather than more "stuff," and last year raised \$68,000 in contributions, and over \$300,000 since 2004, all of which went to local non-profit organizations.

For those of you who are unable to go on December 1, for two weeks following the Gift Fair (from December 2 until December 16), you can make your selections and pay online; however, you will not receive gift cards for your selections. Note that this option does *not* become available until *after* December 1.

For more information (including a list of this year's participating organizations), go to <http://www.ithacaaltgiftfair.org>

Many volunteers are needed to pull off this wonderful annual event. If you are interested in volunteering, it is possible to contact the organizers of the event via the Website, or you are welcome to call Bronwyn Mohlke (277-4183) to sign up.

### Meetinghouse Event Sponsor Job Description

Several times a month we rent our meetinghouse to various non-Quaker organizations for their events. We are looking for an enterprising "event sponsor" to manage our event-hosting business.

This person would be responsible for opening the meetinghouse for these events, showing event attendees how to set the thermostat, use the kitchen, etc., making sure everything is put away at the end of the event, and closing the building. For this work the event sponsor will charge the event organization and will be paid directly by them. The amount will be based on the length and day-of-the-week of the event, how many people attend, and other factors. We expect the sponsor could make on the order of \$10 to \$40 per event, which would work out to \$30 to \$60 a month or so for a few hours of work per month.

The event sponsor will also be the contact person for the event-hosting business: returning the phone calls and emails of organizations that want to rent the meetinghouse. The event sponsor will collaborate with the Third Street Meetinghouse Committee to schedule events. They will also be responsible for advertising the availability of the meetinghouse to compatible non-Quaker organizations.

This job requires someone with good inter-personal skills and a very flexible schedule. We don't require the event sponsor to be a meeting member or attender, but it will be helpful if they are at least knowledgeable of and sympathetic with Quaker values. It will be helpful if the event sponsor lives near the meeting. If you think you would like to be our event sponsor, please contact Marion DaGrossa at 273-4020 or [mdagrossa@twcny.rr.com](mailto:mdagrossa@twcny.rr.com).

## November in Ithaca Monthly Meeting History

Compiled by Meeting Historian, Tom Brown.

### 5 Years Ago (November 11, 1992)

A joint report and approved minute from the Peace Witness and Social Justice Committees welcomed the Dhia family, which had recently immigrated from Iraq to the U.S. and to Ithaca. Friends were encouraged to provide financial assistance, goods and services, and especially, friendly companionship. A working committee for immigrant support was planned, to include at least one member from Peace Witness and Social Justice, as well as others.

### 25 Years Ago (November 9, 1987)

The Sanctuary program for Salvadoran refugees was an active part of IMM's peace outreach. Juan was currently living at the Burt House. He was gaining assistance in improving his English skills, and had been able to give effective local presentations to Amnesty International and the New Jewish Agenda. He needed to raise funds to send home to his family, and became an apprentice to a local painting contractor. A number of Friends and other sympathetic members of the community provided odd jobs to help with his financial needs.

—from *Sanctuary reports of October and November.*

### 35 Years Ago (November 14, 1977)

"Title to the [Hector] Meetinghouse was discussed. Hector [Monthly] Meeting was formed in 1822 as part of Canada Yearly Meeting. The present building, 'our meetinghouse,' was constructed in 1895 on land belonging to the Mekeel estate for Hector Meeting, which no longer exists. ... The sense of the Meeting is that we continue to press for ownership of the meetinghouse and

graveyard." [Historian's note: Earlier IMM minutes give dates between 1902 and 1907 for the construction of the current Hector Meetinghouse. No conclusive date exists but there is oral evidence for a date after 1900: Theodore Oliver, born in 1895, a former clerk of both the Hector Monthly Meeting and IMM, indicated his memory of when the current meetinghouse was built and that it was built to correspond very closely if not exactly to the previous meetinghouse on the same site. Previous history columns have described how IMM subsequently obtained clear title to the Hector Meetinghouse property.]

### 65 YEARS AGO (November 10, 1947).

IMM approved a lengthy statement of response to the Query of the previous month against taking oaths. It noted in part that "taking oaths imply that there are two standards of truth in the speaker, or that he does not always live up to his highest definition of truth. But Friends, like others, should always speak the highest truth known to them, and should so live that all their actions will lend credit to every statement they make." [Note: For many years in IMM business meetings, queries were not just read but were discussed in considerable depth, sometimes resulting in approved minutes.]

### 70 YEARS AGO (November 9, 1942)

It was decided to remember our members who are away at Civilian Public Service (CPS) camps with Christmas boxes.

"Five young men from the CPS camp at Big Flats attended our Meeting by invitation and gave a well-rounded description of the camp and camp life. We were but little disturbed by a blackout which occurred in the midst of their program."

#### **Advices & Queries** from NYYM Faith & Practice

*Advice 10. Friends are advised to observe integrity in their living and to inspect frequently the state of their temporal affairs. In their dealings with everyone they should endeavor to maintain a truly Christian character, ever bearing in mind the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."*

*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?*

**Ithaca Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends**  
**Monthly Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, October 14, 2012**

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Clerk: Steve Mohlke

Assistant Clerk: Antonia Saxon

Recording Clerks: Nancy Gabriel and Marilyn Ray

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

#### 201210.1 Opening

Ithaca Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society Friends met in Monthly Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, on October 14, 2012. At 12:10pm, thirteen Friends gathered in worship. Clerk reviewed the agenda, and extended our gratitude to Nancy Gabriel, who was holding the Meeting in the Light. Clerk introduces the Memorial Minute for Carol May King Mohler which was read by Antonia Saxon, Assistant Clerk. After the reading, Friends continued in open worship.

#### 201210.2 Continuing Quaker Education

Clerk reviewed the process for including items for the Monthly Meeting agenda. Someone identifies a matter needing attention of the Meeting. Most matters should be seasoned by a committee. The committee asks initial questions and challenges assumptions and identifies issues that may not yet have been considered. The matter is usually presented to the Clerk no later than the Wednesday before Monthly Meeting. A central question at this point is "what is being asked of the Meeting?" The agenda is typically published on the Friday before the Meeting for Business so that Friends have an opportunity to review it before the meeting. This process is designed to allow Friends to settle into discernment within the container of worship. @

#### 201210.3 Clerk/Assistant Clerk's Business

Antonia Saxon, Assistant Clerk, presented the following proposed charge and membership for the ad hoc piano committee.

The ad hoc piano committee will act as fact-finders for the Meeting, determining as far as possible what the most appropriate instrument for the Meetinghouse would be; where in the building it would be located; whether it could be moved around from room to room; how it would be secured to make sure it was not played at inappropriate times; initial and ongoing costs; and other issues that may arise. The committee will confer with the Third Street Meetinghouse Committee, Ministry and Worship, and Children and the Life of the Meeting as they prepare their report. When the report is ready, the Committee will present the report to Business Meeting. The decision about acting on any recommendations in the report will then be taken up by the Meeting. It may take more than one business meeting to season this to a point that we are clear about what to do.

Proposed committee members: Melody Johnson, Steve Paisley and Pat Pingel.

APPROVED @

#### 201210.4 Earthcare Committee

Larry Clarkberg presented a summary of a grant application to the NYYM's Witness Coordinating Committee's Witness Activities Fund. Friends APPROVED the following minute.

Ithaca Monthly Meeting supports the Friends Bike Clinic and endorses the application for a grant from the New York Yearly Meeting Witness Activities Fund. The Friends Bike Clinic is under the care of our Earthcare Committee, which provided some funding. The meeting provides space for bike parts and tools in the meetinghouse basement. A number of meeting members have participated in the bike clinics and have helped remodel the space. @

#### 201210.5 Social Justice Committee

Sue Baker-Carr presented the Committee's grant application to the NYYM's Witness Activities Fund. Friends APPROVED the following Minute:

The Ithaca Monthly Meeting supports the grant application for the Community Movie series and Discussion on Race. This series has received support from the Social Justice Committee and IMM hosted a series on Undoing Racism. This work is helping IMM knit itself into the Ithaca community, including the communities of color. @

#### 201210.6 Ministry and Worship

Clerk asked for questions or comments about the memorial minute for Carol May King Mohler which was read at the beginning of the meeting. The Minute was APPROVED as read. @

#### 201210.7 Burt House Committee Report

Chris Dunham described recent repairs made to the Burt House that cost approximately \$4,100. Friends received the report. @

#### 201210.8 Treasurer's Report

Mike Simkin, treasurer, reported that donations were up slightly in September. Total donations for the year to date are \$18,785, representing 34% of the budgeted donation requests for the year. Friends received the report. @

#### 201210.9 Other Concerns

None

At 1:50pm Friends settled into closing worship before adjourning. Our next regular Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business will be held at the rise of Meeting on November 11, 2012.

*Respectfully Submitted,*  
*Marilyn L. Ray, Co-Recording Clerk*

# November 2012 Calendar of Ithaca Monthly Meeting

## First Sunday Gentle Yoga Sunday, November 4, 9:45a

Join us upstairs every first Sunday of the month for a gentle yoga class led by Nick Boyar. Gentle stretching, relaxation, and breathing exercises. Appropriate for all ages and levels of experience and flexibility. No mat required. Latecomers are welcome. We will end around 10:20.

## Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business Sunday, November 11, Rise of meeting

Agenda items to Steve by the preceding Wednesday.

## Community Biomass Energy Friday, November 16, 7p

A presentation on the environment by our own Betsy Keokosky with light refreshments. Please see the page 1 article on Betsy's leading for more context.

## Meeting for Beading (and other crafts) Sunday, November 18, Rise of Meeting

Join us for Meeting for Beading... with attention to making gifts for ourselves and others! Get a head start on gift-giving for the holidays, or just hang out and knit. We will have some beading supplies and tools, a light lunch and ideas. Bring works in progress, snacks to share and/or craft supplies of your own. Contact Kris at kris.altucher@gmail.com if you have any questions.

## Quakers Studying the Bible Sunday, November 18, 9a

How do the scriptures correspond to your own experience? Curious? Join us for Bible Study. In *Opening the Scriptures*, Tom Gates explains that for George Fox, "The spiritual understanding of Scripture involves relentless stress on the inward meaning. In order to understand the Scriptures in a spiritual sense, we must discover how they correspond to our own experience." This ongoing group meets the third Sunday of each month.

## Earthcare Committee Sunday, November 18, Rise of Meeting

We are returning to meeting on 3rd Sundays, recognizing that during some months meeting-wide events may bump us out of this spot. All are welcome to join in the work of this committee.

## No formal First Day School Sunday, November 25

Instead of joining in their usual First Day School classes, children convene upstairs in the Activity Room as one mixed-age group.

## Dish-to-Pass Brunch Sunday, November 25, Rise of Meeting

All are welcome to join in fellowship. Friends are invited to bring a dish to share.

## Newsletter submissions due Thursday, November 29, 5p

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

## Richie Sing Saturday, December 1, 6:30p

A regular community singing event, this one will be held in memory of Carol Mohler. The dish-to-pass starts at 6:30 and singing begins at 7:30. Dick Crepeau, Melody Johnson and Sara Shaffzin will host. All are welcome. See page 2 for more information.

### Every Sunday

- 9:45a **Coffee and fellowship** in the library of the Third Street Meetinghouse
- 10:30a **Meeting for Worship** for all ages at the Third Street Meetinghouse
- 10:45a **First Day School**-aged Friends exit the meetingroom. *Note: there is no formal First Day School programming in the summer.* Please be mindful of footfalls while upstairs, and consider removing your shoes.

### Other Weekly IMM Events

- Wed 5:30-6:30p **Meeting for worship** at the Third Street Meetinghouse
- Wed 7:30p **Midweek meeting** for worship at the Burt House (227 N. Willard Way)
- Thurs 5-5:30p **Peace Vigil** at the bottom of East State Street near the Community School for Music and Arts