



Newsletter of the

Ithaca Monthly Meeting

of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

July 2016

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 message body as simply: join

Marilyn's List:

To email Friends and others non-specifically Quaker messages that may be of interest to Friends, consider sending your message through Marilyn Ray. To join or contribute, email:
mlr17@cornell.edu

The Future of the Burt House

Rough Notes from Burt House Worship Sharing: June 13, 2016

The Meeting has been aware for some time that the Burt House—a house at 227 Willard Way that was bequeathed to the Meeting—is underutilized. This sense led to the formation of the Ad Hoc Burt House Committee.

This spring, two separate groups came forward with ideas for the Burt House. The Ad Hoc Committee asked both groups to a meeting at the Burt House two weeks ago. The meeting was open to everyone, but because of scheduling difficulties and short notice, not everyone who wanted to come was able to attend. The Ad Hoc Committee will be holding more regularly scheduled meetings starting later this summer.

Twenty Friends attended the meeting on June 13. At that time, neither group had a written proposal to present. We heard these summaries:

- One proposal, brought by some of the members of Social Justice and Peace Witness, calls for the use of two rooms at the Burt House for two people reentering the community from the Tompkins County Jail or the New York State prison system. One possible resident has already been brought to the attention of the Meeting. This individual would not move in until mid-2017.
- The other proposal, brought by Karen Friedeborn and Angela Hopkins, calls for opening a Center for Racial Justice in the Burt House, a center that will allow Friends of Color a sanctuary to meet, to organize, to find their voice, and to foster leadership. (On the night of the meeting, we were still calling it a “retreat center,” but we will refer to it as the Center for Racial Justice here.)

The comments below have had personal information removed and are grouped by theme.

Racism work

- Our work in the meeting has been toward reaching out into the community and working on racial justice. This proposal is an extension of that.
- Friends of Color need a space to share their experiences and their lives together. So far, they have had to meet at odd times tacked on to larger gatherings, in the early morning or late at night.
- The work done at the Center for Racial Justice is not just for Friends of Color. It is for the whole Society of Friends. The issue of racial justice concerns us all.
- Getting to and from Ithaca may be a challenge for some people.
- At the White Privilege Conference I became aware that white people cannot be part of everything. Everybody needs a place for themselves.
- I did not understand before why white people could not be part of these kinds of gatherings before, but I think I understand this now.

Burt House, continued on page 2

Work with released prisoners

- The Burt House as a spiritual community offers something special to persons returning from prison. It is a place of opportunity.
- Several other groups in the community are actively working on a re-entry program with a residence planned for above the Re-Use Center. We should be careful not to duplicate the services they are planning to offer.
- We need to make sure that safety and supervision are both addressed.
- There are other places in Ithaca that released prisoners can live, but there is no other space available for Friends of Color, so perhaps we should let other programs work with prisoners and we can use the Burt House for the Center for Racial Justice.

The Burt House as a community

- The House has been underutilized and this meeting is a wonderful place to discuss ideas for its right use.
- The idea of selling the Burt House has been mentioned, but I could not support the idea without a clear plan for what to do with the money the sale would produce.
- Wonderful things are happening here now. There is something inspiring about this house.

Going forward

Many Friends spoke of feeling moved and grateful just to be talking with a group of Friends about positive ideas for the use of the House.

Several Friends spoke of supporting both proposals, or feeling excited by both proposals.

Several voiced the hope that the proposals might not exclude each other, that they might be reconciled in a way that we can't see now.

A deep wish to feel the presence of Spirit in these sessions was voiced.

Several Friends shared the conviction that subsequent sessions ought to be grounded deeply in worship.

For the Ad Hoc Burt House Committee,

— Marilyn L. Ray <mlr17@cornell.edu>,
Alexa Patricia Yesukevich <apy3@cornell.edu>,
and Antonia Saxon <antonia@iecc.com>

July in IMM History

5 Years Ago (July 10, 2011)

Melody Johnson reported for Trustees on the sale of the Route 79 property to the City of Ithaca, which was completed June 30, 2011.

10 Years Ago (July 9, 2006)

Margaret McCasland was welcomed into membership of IMM. Bruce Berggren-Thomas was also welcomed into membership upon transfer from Blacksburg, VA Monthly Meeting.

Marin Clarkberg reported that about 40 children attended the Quaker camp over the previous week. They got poured on, on Monday, but spirits were not damped. It was a great, fearless week.

20 Years Ago (July 8, 1996)

Peace and Social Action brought a concern about the recent arson of many African-American churches. A number of organizations across the country are responding, both with labor and with funds. Friends approved making a contribution from the P&SA funds. A special appeal will also be made after meeting on the 3rd and 4th Sundays of July. The total raised will be forwarded to Poplar Ridge Meeting or to another Quaker organization with the same goal.

25 Years Ago (July 8, 1991)

The IMM Treasurer reported that the final installment had been sent to AFSC for relief in the Middle East, thus fulfilling our commitment of a \$1,000 contribution.

50 Years Ago (July 11, 1966)

Ned Burt, Chairman of Ministry and Counsel, introduced a full discussion of the role of elders and overseers in IMM and the place of Ministry and Counsel. Elders have been serving for life and overseers for two-year terms. The question of whether in a small Meeting like ours there is a role for elders and overseers was discussed. It was felt that there should be more community in the whole Meeting, more caring of individuals for each other, and more spiritual quality in the Meeting for Business. The Meeting is lax in making and keeping contact with new members and attenders outside of Meeting for Worship. Either each member of Meeting needs to take on this responsibility or a new committee needs to be formed; the former option is preferable. The Overseers are to meet with the Clerk to determine if they have a real role in the Meeting. The Elders present were asked to visit those not present to inform them of the discussion and of the possibility that the position of Elder may be eliminated from the Meeting.

60 Years Ago (July 10, 1946)

Regarding a further program of sending food to Europe, it was decided for now to work through CARE. The Treasurer was directed to send two \$15 CARE boxes to a German Friend, Martha Legatis, in Kassel. She will distribute the food according to the needs around her.

— Tom Brown, IMM Historian

Earthcare Circle of Discernment

Earthcare would like to invite anyone interested in the meeting for help in creating a “Circle of Discernment” exploring what people are beginning to recognize as many of the common roots of racial and resource injustice, of exploitation of both people and natural ecosystems, of labor and land.

We propose to use both historical readings and the Quaker practice of Communal Discernment applied to research described in the Quaker Institute for the Future (QIF - <http://www.quakerinstitute.org/>) pamphlet “A Quaker Approach to Research: Collaborative Practice and Communal Discernment.” Please see this QIF pamphlet available online at <http://www.quakerinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/QIF-QAR-web.pdf> to understand this approach. We are also beginning to work with Meeting for Business to invite QIF for their annual week-long research seminar here to Ithaca in 2018.

We are interested in going beyond the Cartesian lens of white rationalism which has shaped our ideas growing up, to learn how green and black and other lenses on history can expand and change

the narrative. We would like to learn if Communal Discernment is a good tool to imagine ourselves past a human-centered historical awareness that has looked at the world through the extremely narrow lens of self-interest and self-justification.

This Circle begins by asking the questions: How can examination and research into the underpinnings shared by both ecological biodiversity and cultural diversity illuminate what we know about the other? How can these ideas give us insights in a way that will irrevocably change how we act, both toward the earth and to other humans and, perhaps, the universe?

We see this Circle as having a life of its own that will dynamically evolve. The result hopefully will be a book or pamphlet published by QIF. One of these books, *Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy*, is available in our own Meetinghouse library

If you are interested respond to Betsy Keokosky at evk1@cornell.edu. We will compile a reading list, but book lists may vary according to individual. We would probably meet together on a monthly basis as determined by the group.

— Betsy Keokosky

Powell House Retreat Nurtures Seeds of Growth

In May, four of us from Ithaca Monthly Meeting—Steve Mohlke, Leo Mohlke, Carolyn Kenyon and myself—attended a weekend retreat at Powell House, a Quaker retreat center in Old Chatham, New York. After having accepted the invitation to attend, I was delighted to learn that IMM sponsors first-time visitors to Powell House. The retreat, “From Seed to Flower: Nurturing Tender New Growth of the Light Within,” was skillfully led by Christopher Sammond and Steve, with plenty of active participation from the group of about two dozen.

Powell House exemplifies the Quaker testimony of simplicity, from the homey décor to the gracious old trees that shelter those who stroll down the road during breaks. The staff went out of their way to accommodate our needs, and everyone cheerfully pitched in to wash dishes and make up beds for the next group of retreatants.

Through a series of exercises and reflections, the leaders created a safe container for expressing nascent thoughts and revealing vulnerabilities leading to insight. After a vigorous discussion of creating Sabbath, a weekly time of rest and reflection, some of the participants, myself included, established a schedule of touching base weekly with another person committed to practicing the Sabbath in whatever way we define that practice. For me, it has meant setting aside the entire day Sunday to turn inward. My simple guidelines are:

- Slow down
- Avoid use of electronic devices: cell phone, computer, screen time in general
- Spend as much time as possible walking and resting in nature

A quote offered at the retreat speaks to the desired outcome of such a commitment:

“When one stills the clamor of inner voices and outer involvements, and comes to a quiet, open condition, one can sense

a focus, or a clarity of intention, in which fear and striving do not seem relevant. Time also is not felt, and there is a dawning or fresh sense of possibility, change, and growth. Friends have called this low, beautiful thing of potential and power the Seed.”

— Brian Drayton

A Mary Oliver poem offers encouragement for this journey:

Wild Geese

You do not have to be good.

You do not have to walk on your knees

for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.

You only have to let the soft animal of your body

love what it loves.

Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.

Meanwhile the world goes on.

Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain

are moving across the landscapes,

over the prairies and the deep trees,

the mountains and the rivers.

Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,

are heading home again.

Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,

the world offers itself to your imagination,

calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting -

over and over announcing your place

in the family of things.

I am grateful to the Ithaca Monthly Meeting for generously funding my participation in this retreat and hope the seeds planted bear fruit in our community.

— Laura Peters

Supporting Hospicare through Women Swimmin'

This is the 13th year of an Ithaca tradition: Women Swimmin' for Hospicare! The funds raised through Women Swimmin' help Hospicare provide compassionate, skilled end-of-life care to our friends and neighbors throughout Tompkins and Cortland counties. Women Swimmin' also makes it possible for licensed grief counselors to provide bereavement support services to anyone in our community who is grieving a loss, regardless of when the loss happened or whether the loved one died on hospice services. This year our goal is to raise \$380,000 to support these important services.

Several F/friends from our Meeting are helping to make this happen. On Saturday, August 13, **Marin Clarkberg** and 300 or so other women will swim across Cayuga Lake, escorted by about 170 volunteer boaters in canoes and kayaks.

They will be supported on shore by about 100 volunteers, including **Bronwyn Mohlke** and **Chris Dunham**. I'll be busy that morning organizing swimmers and putting plans in place. From now until August 13, I've also been swimmin' laps at the Ithaca College outdoor pool as part of Women Swimmin' Laps for Hospicare. More than a dozen women from Ithaca and other parts of central NY have signed up to swim Laps at local pools and fundraise for Hospicare. It's another way to be part of this fun, engaging event for those of us who aren't able to swim across the Lake on Aug 13.

We'd love to have more F/friends join us as Laps swimmers, or volunteers or escort boaters during the Lake swim. To sign up to volunteer, register to boat or support Marin, Melissa or any of the women swimmin', please visit womenswimmin.org

— *Melissa Travis Dunham*

Interfaith Climate-justice Action Network

Join ICAN at the Ithaca Children's Garden to celebrate watersheds and gardens: everybody has a part to play.

On Tuesday, July 19, the Interfaith Climate-justice Action Network (ICAN) will hold their quarterly gathering at the Ithaca Children's Garden (ICG) for a fun-filled, family-friendly evening of information and inspiration. Our guest speaker will be Hilary Lambert, Steward, Cayuga Lake Watershed Network.

5:00 arrive at the ICG's main gate; explore the gardens

5:30 Dish-to-pass picnic—with singing!

6:30 Hilary Lambert: "It takes a network to protect a watershed"

The Garden's mission is "inspiring the next generation of environmental stewards." According to their website, ithacachildrengarden.org, "young visitors' favorite past-time is watering the garden (and pathways and their own feet)," so please wear appropriate footwear.

The songs we plan to sing are from *Rise Up Singing* and *Rise Again*. Let Margaret McCasland know if you'd like to help lead the singing.

The Ithaca Children's Garden is on Rt 89 at the south end of Cass Park. Once you're in the parking lot, look for the ICAN sign near the main gate. The rain date will be Wednesday, July 20.

We still plan to have an eco-cruise on Cayuga Lake, but it will probably be in August.

— *Margaret McCasland*

Ithaca Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
Monthly Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, June 12, 2016

Clerk: Antonia Saxon

Assistant Clerks: Marilyn Ray, John Lewis

Recording Clerks: Marin Clarkberg, Blair Jennings

(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.)

2016 6.1 Gathering

Ithaca Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends met in Monthly Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business on June 12, 2016. At 12:20pm, 15 Friends gathered and settled into worship. Clerk recognized Karen Reixach who was holding the Meeting in the Light.

"May words of the Spirit be spoken, and words of the Spirit be heard."

2016 6.2 Earthcare Witness Report on its participation in Circles of Discernment and its desire to host summer 2017 or summer 2018 Quaker Institute for the Future week-long research seminar

Betsy Keokosky reported on behalf of Earthcare Witness sharing that the committee has decided to create a "Circle of Discernment" in order to explore the perspective that racial/cultural prejudice and resource/species destruction are related. She described the value of using Quaker discernment to address this issue, as well as the questions and expectations of this process.

Jim Grant shared the committee's desire to host the Quaker Institute for the Future (QIF) research seminar here in Ithaca during the summer of either 2017 or 2018. He likened the gathering to Meeting for Worship with Attention to Research. He shared a variety of resources Friends can access to learn more about (QIF), as well as some of the attendant responsibilities for hosting meetings, such as opening doors, offering space and participating in sessions. Earthcare Witness is not asking for funding or hospitality at this point. The committee will have more specifics by end of summer of 2016. Both Jim and Betsy answered questions as they arose.

Friends received the report.@

2016 6.3 Ministry and Worship Committee

1. Recommend membership for Christopher Church

John Lewis reported that he, Chuck Mohler and Melody Johnson comprised the clearness committee that met with Christopher Church. The clearness committee recommends his membership to Ithaca Monthly Meeting of Friends.

Friends received Christopher into membership.@

2. Recommendation regarding the presentation of Annual Reports

Chuck Mohler reported that Ministry and Worship recommends assembling all Annual Reports ahead of January's Annual Meeting as the committee traditionally has, but dividing delivery of the reports between January and February Meetings for Worship with Attention to Business. This allows Friends relief from the mara-

thon January meeting and may allow the inclusion of one or two ordinary agenda items at the January meeting if necessary.

A comment was shared that there is historical precedent for this practice.

Friends received the report.@

3. Change to membership policy regarding youth membership

Marilyn Ray read the following proposed change to the policy:

"Parents of a child under the age of 16 may request membership in the Meeting for that child. Children may also request membership for themselves. If the Ministry and Worship Committee determines that the child and all custodial parents are in agreement regarding the membership, then the child will be recorded as a member.

"Children received into membership have full membership. No clearness committee is required once they reach adulthood.

"Like other out-of-touch members, members who joined as children who don't attend meeting regularly and/or live out of town will be contacted once every two to three years to determine if they want to remain members. Ministry and Worship recommends informally that these calls not start until the child reaches the late twenties, that being the age when decisions about religious practice start to become clearer."

This minute supersedes the minutes of November 8, 2002 and February 9, 2003.

Friends approved the change to the policy.@

2016 6.4 Treasurer's Report

Treasurer's report was postponed due to technical difficulties.

2016 6.5 Other Concerns

A Friend shared a concern related to a voluntary cash donation made in appreciation for use of the meetinghouse by the Upstate Coalition Against the Drones. This Friend expressed a desire that peace groups understand they are welcome to meet here free of charge.

This Friend would like IMM to be publicly known as a "peace meeting" willing to support any group that is working toward peace without regard to monetary contribution, voluntary or otherwise. TSMC will consider this concern.

2016 6.6 Closing Worship

Sixteen Friends settled into silent worship at 12:59 P.M. before adjourning. Our next regular Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business will be held at the rise of Meeting on July 10, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,

Blair Jenning

Women's Chair Yoga, Mondays and Thursdays 11a-noon

"We call on the teacher within" to restore us in mind & heart, body & spirit through gentle movement and centered breathing. Renewed, we move outward to bring wholeness to our world. In summer it sometimes happens that there are too few to meet, so check before coming for the first time. Check with Nancy Gabriel, 339-7123 call or text; No special gear required.

Multigenerational Retreat at Hector, Aug 26-28

We will once again be holding our Multigenerational Camping Retreat at the Hector Meetinghouse. We will camp there on Friday and Saturday August 26 and 27 and have shared meals for Saturday breakfast through Sunday brunch.

We will begin on Friday at 4pm, with camping set-up and dinner preparations. A potluck supper will happen at 6pm, to which all are welcome! After supper we'll have time for singing and worship around a campfire, until bedtime!

Saturday will see us sharing a communal breakfast, relaxing on the beautiful and tranquil Meetinghouse grounds, and then splitting into the "goers" and the "stayers." Goers might go berry-picking and swimming on Saturday, while stayers do crafts. Saturday evening will look much like Friday. If you have other ideas or requests for how we might spend our time together, please pass them along!

Friends are welcome to come for the whole retreat or any part. We will end with a dish to pass brunch after Meeting at the Hector Meetinghouse on Sunday, August 28.

— *Melissa Blake*

July 2016 Calendar of Ithaca Monthly Meeting

Meeting for Worship at Hector Meetinghouse Summer Sundays

Weekly summer worship at the Hector Meeting House on Perry City Road, continuing into September. Meetings begin at 10:00. All are welcome. Dreia Spies is coordinating, and will be happy to answer questions.

ARCH Afternoon Tea Friday, July 8, 2-4p

The ARCH Visitors (Aging Resources, Consultation & Help) invite you for Tea/Coffee and Refreshments on July 8th, 2-4 pm at the Meetinghouse, 120 Third St (corner of Madison St). Come join us for conversation, laughter, and the opportunity to be together! Please RSVP to Susan Wolf by July 5th. Also, let us know if you need transportation. We will try to find transportation for all who wish to come.

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business Sunday, July 10, Rise of Meeting

Join in the Quaker decision-making process. Agenda items should be sent to our clerk, Antonia Saxon, by the preceding Wednesday.

Dish-to-Pass Brunch Sunday, July 24, Rise of Meeting

Bring something tasty to share if you can. All are welcome.

Newsletter Deadline Thursday, July 28, 5p

Please send your newsletter contributions to Marin Clarkberg at clarkberg@cornell.edu, or 150 Giles Street, Ithaca NY 14850.

On Sundays

- 10:00a **Meeting for Worship** at Hector Meetinghouse
- 10:20a **First Day School** gathers upstairs at Third Street.
- 10:30a **Meeting for Worship** at the Third Street Meetinghouse
- 11:15a **First Day School** attenders enter the meetingroom for intergenerational Meeting for Worship.

Other Weekly IMM Events

- Wed 7:30p **Meeting for worship** at the Burt House, 227 N. Willard Way