



# MONTHLY MEETING NEWSLETTER

*A publication of the Brooklyn Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends*

**March 2012**

## Occupy Wall Street Shares Its Message with Brooklyn Friends

*By Molly Rusnak*

On the afternoon of First Day, February 12, a panel of four shared their experiences with, and commitment to, the Occupy Wall Street movement. The panel included two Friends from Brooklyn Meeting.

The first to speak was Merissa Holmes, who described her previous experiences with student movements (including those with an anarchist history). Her focus was on tactics available to the Occupy groups for protesting against financial institutions and publicizing inequality, such as locking down banks and demonstrating at the homes of business or political leaders.

Matt Presto, a teacher at Friends Seminary, described how he educated his students about the movement. He explained the horizontal organization of Occupy Wall Street, in which interest groups are like spokes in a wheel and no central authority exists. He pointed out that the democratic decision-making process using consensus is similar to that which is employed by Quakers.

Informed by his experiences with the Palestinian uprising while attending a Quaker school there, Amin Hussein emphasized the effectiveness of direct action in empowering marginalized voices and circumventing the media.

Lyn Pyle and Tom Rothschild, Friends from Brooklyn Meeting, expressed their commitment to the Occupy movement and connected it to the Quaker testimonies of Equality and Nonviolence. Lyn expressed her enthusiasm for the participation of young people, who are rediscovering and reclaiming the world while dedicating themselves to our future survival. Tom, building on his own past experience with the struggle for Civil Rights, is now participating in the "Occupy Faith" group. This group is made up of members of spiritual and religious organizations, who are working together to lay a spiritual foundation for the movement. He is committed to this effort because it is based on community, non-violence, and equality and justice for all. Tom and Lyn recommended that Brooklyn minute our support of Occupy Wall Street and the Occupy movement at our next Meeting for Business. This support would be based on Occupy's use of democratic consensus and dedication to the Friends Testimonies of Equality and Nonviolence. A list of Meetings that have done this was distributed.

Following the presentations, Friends shared thoughts and questions with the panelists.

These included:

*"Clarify what Occupy Wall Street stands for."*

We were referred to the published

"Declaration of Occupation," but reminded that the group is evolving based on a "non-binding consensus" coming out of a "people's assembly."

*"What kind of direct action do you advocate and against what?"*

We were told that sites of injustice and capitalism are targeted and non-violent tactics are strategically used.

*"What specific results have you had?"*

Through the concept of the 99% vs. the 1%, Occupy has raised awareness and pressured politicians and business leaders to re-examine executive pay and economic inequality in general.

*"How do you reconcile the practice of consensus with Quaker practice of 'sense of the meeting' which is worship based?"*

This question was left to be considered later.

After the panel, Friends and guests separated into small groups for worship sharing and returned for a brief summary.

## Brooklyn Meeting Adds Eight New Members

*By Molly Rusnak*

### Membership Expanding

At the February Meeting for Business, the Meeting Recorders reported that, during this reporting year, eight new members were welcomed into Brooklyn Meeting. Not yet counted were Sara Niccoli and her daughter, Olive, who joined at this meeting.

The Recorders also gave the Meeting a picture of the present membership of Brooklyn Meeting. The total number attending Meeting this past year was 184 members and 240 attenders, 32 of them children.

### Questions Arise

As the Meeting reflects on increased membership and attendance and possible growth in the near future, questions about space and service needs arise. How do we bring new Friends into the life and service of the Meeting? How do we accommodate more children in our First Day School, coats in our closets, and space in our Social Room? How do we communicate with each other as our community grows larger?



*Lyn Pyle speaking about Occupy Wall Street. Listening are Andy von Salis, Martha Hyde, & Earl Whitted. Art by Lucy Sikes.*

## Regularly Scheduled Activities

### Meetings for Worship

11:00AM Sundays in the Meeting Room  
6:30PM Tuesdays in the Meeting Room

### Social Hour

12:00PM Sundays in the Ground-level Dining Room

### Hymn Singing around the Piano

9:45AM, First Sunday of every month  
in the Meeting Room  
Contact Heloise Rathbone: [hcrathbone@gmail.com](mailto:hcrathbone@gmail.com)

### Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business

1:00PM, First Sunday of every month  
in the Meeting Room

### Bible Studies

9:45AM, Second Sunday of every month  
in the Meeting Room

## Calendar of Events

### March, 2012

Fri, Mar 02 - Sun, Mar 04

*Cooking & Baking from the Cooks' Book*  
Powell House ([see www.powellhouse.org](http://www.powellhouse.org))

Sat, Mar 03

*Meeting for Discernment*  
Ithaca Meeting House ([see www.nyym.org](http://www.nyym.org))

Fri, Mar 16 - Sun, Mar 18

*Conflict & Intimacy*  
Powell House ([see www.powellhouse.org](http://www.powellhouse.org))

Sun, Mar 18

*Young Adult Friends worship sharing and pot luck*  
5pm at Steve May and Ben Hill's apartment  
All are welcome to attend  
Contact Steve May: [maystephen@gmail.com](mailto:maystephen@gmail.com)

Fri, Mar 23 - Sun, Mar 25

*Non-Theism Among Friends*  
Powell House ([www.powellhouse.org](http://www.powellhouse.org))

### April, 2012

Thur, Apr 05 - Sun, Apr 08

*Work/Messiah Sing*  
Powell House ([www.powellhouse.org](http://www.powellhouse.org))

Sun, Apr 15

*New York Quarterly Meeting*  
Fifteenth Street Meeting ([www.nyym.org](http://www.nyym.org))

### Quaker Studies for Newcomers and Members

1:00PM-3:00PM, Third Sunday of every month  
in the Meeting Room.

### Community Dinner

1:00PM, Last Sunday of every month  
in the Ground-level Dining Room  
*Volunteers are needed and appreciated for this monthly dinner that we prepare and serve to anyone who wishes to join us for a free, hot meal. Children are also encouraged to volunteer.*

### Childcare

Childcare is available every First Day (Sunday) for children ages three months to three years in the care of an early childhood teacher and dedicated volunteers.

### First Day School

First Day School meets from September to June, 11:00AM to 11:45AM each First Day (Sunday) and has three classes, roughly relating to the ages of the children: Bodies (4-6), Minds (7-9) and Spirits (10-12).

Fri, Apr 27 - Sun, Apr 29

*Women's Multi-Generational Weekend*  
Powell House ([www.powellhouse.org](http://www.powellhouse.org))

### July, 2012

Sun, Jul 22 - Sat, Jul 28

*New York Yearly Meeting Summer Sessions*  
Silver Bay ([www.nyym.org](http://www.nyym.org))



Robert Wilber & Earl Whitted. Art by Lucy Sikes.