



MONTHLY MEETING NEWSLETTER

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

APRIL 2012

Bayard Rustin Honored

On March 15 at Fifteenth Street Meetinghouse the American Friends Service Committee, Fifteenth Street Meeting, Friends Seminary, and City Lights sponsored a celebration of the life of Bayard Rustin entitled “A Faithful Life.” Rustin was an influential leader within the Peace and Civil Rights movement for many years, and also a Friend.

The celebration began with refreshments and music, and then several speakers shared their views of Bayard Rustin both as a person and as an organizer and inspirational leader. Among those who did so was Michael Lang, editor of the recently-released book “I Must Resist: Bayard Rustin, A Life in Letters.” Also speaking was Daniel Seeger, the long time director of the American Friends Service Committee and a member of Fifteenth Street Meeting.

The occasion lifted our spirits in a time when Quakers, and the country as a whole, are looking for the kind of inspiration and guidance that Bayard gave so freely.

—Molly Rusnak

Ministry & Counsel Committee Launches “Friendly 8’s”

In order to bring together members and attenders young and old in Brooklyn Meeting, Ministry and Counsel is putting together a series of potluck dinners throughout Brooklyn. The dinners, which begin on April 15, feature volunteer hosts who contact guests from a sign-up list and set a date. The guests bring food, and all participate in the ensuing conversations. Sign-up sheets are available after Meeting for Worship, in the Social Room

One of the primary areas of conversational focus at the dinners will be about what has brought the guests to Quakerism. The idea is to have a good distribution of ages, attenders and members

at each dinner, reflective of the Meeting itself. Through the years Brooklyn Meeting Friends have participated in gatherings like these to create a connected community, and now that the Meeting has become larger it is even more important.

—Molly Rusnak

It’s Quaker Business

Three Clerks Tell Their Stories

On the First Day afternoon of March 18, three clerks shared their experiences with the unique business process of Friends and made practical suggestions based on what they have learned.

Nancy Black, Clerk of New York Quarterly Meeting for the past five years, described Quaker business practice as seeking divine will within a group. It differs from consensus because the main purpose is to seek divine guidance together while considering an issue. The Clerk can use periods of silence throughout the meeting in order to maintain a worshipful center. Participating Friends focus on what is best for the group, not just on what they think. The Clerk provides an agenda, remains neutral, keeps the group focused, and suggests a minute if unity develops. The silence of members indicates consent. She pointed out that clarity and correct information are necessary. If a Friend is inappropriate, other Friends or the Clerk can stand silently. Ministry and Counsel can provide a member to sit with an individual who has difficulty with the discipline.

Barbara von Salis shared her experiences with young Friends in the New York Yearly Meeting and Friends General Conference. She spoke of “firm love” in clerking these groups, as well as the need to guide and channel the energy of participants. She also described the use of modern technology in bringing Friends together across distances, such as video-enabled conference calls in which participants can see

as well as hear one another.

Benjamin Warnke described clerking in several different situations, including American Friends Service Committee, Brooklyn Friends School Committee, and the Quarterly Meeting Property Task Group. He emphasized the importance of the relationship between the Recording Clerk and the Clerk in developing minutes. He pointed out that the worship in a meeting for business is often not visible, even when it is present. He commented on the challenge of being “mindful of the time” while giving everyone a chance to speak on every issue. Items can be held over until the next meeting if they are taking too long.

After the presentations, more questions were raised (many of them practical) and suggestions were made. There was agreement that non-Quakers should be helped to participate, that participants can be limited to one message on a topic, that one or a few people opposed to what seems to be the sense of the meeting can be asked to stand aside, and, finally, that the Clerk can use silence to bring the meeting back to the center. It was emphasized that clerks should seek support from a small group or a trusted individual in all aspects of clerking on a regular basis.

Approximately thirty Friends participated in this workshop.

—Molly Rusnak



Artwork by Lucy Sikes

Regularly Scheduled Activities

Meetings for Worship

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

Social Hour

12:00 PM Sundays,
Ground-level Dining Room

Hymn Singing around the Piano

10:00 AM, First Sunday of every
month, in the Meeting Room

Worship Sharing

10:00 AM, First Sunday of every
month, on the Third Floor

Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business

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

Readings of Spiritual Texts

10:00 AM, Second Sunday of
every month, in the Meeting
Room

Quaker Studies for Newcomers and Members

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

Community Dinner

1:00 PM, Last Sunday of every
month, 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

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

Upcoming Events

April, 2012

Mon, Apr 02:

Planning meeting for Hikes with
Worship, at Meetinghouse, 6:30 PM
– 8:30 PM; *contact* Robert Matson,
Rmatson at TheInnovationWorks
dot com

Thur, Apr 05 – Sun, Apr 08:

Work/Messiah Sing; at Powell
House; *see* www.powellhouse.org

Sat, Apr 07:

Worship sharing and potluck, at
apartment of Eunice Gomes, 5 PM;
contact Eunice Gomes,
ecggoodvictory at gmail dot com

Sun, Apr 15:

New York Quarterly Meeting; at
Fifteenth Street Meeting; *see*
www.nyym.org

Occupy Wall Street worship
sharing, at Zuccotti Park, time
TBA; *contact* Cressa Perloff,
watercressa at yahoo dot com

Fri, Apr 20 – Sun, Apr 22:

Awesomely Aware AP and
Busting Butt Butler Training, part
of the adult-presence series of
the Powell House Youth
Program, at Powell House; *see*
www.powellhouse.org

Sat, Apr 21:

Spring visiting and work day, at
the Quaker Cemetery in Prospect
Park, 10 AM – 4 PM; *contact*
Robert Wilbur, (718) 938-1800

Sun, Apr 22:

Bedford Stuyvesant Worship
Group, at Bedford Stuyvesant
Restoration Plaza, 3 PM – 5 PM;
contact Héloïse Rathbone,
hcrathbone at gmail
dot com

Fri, Apr 27 - Sun, Apr 29:

*Women's Multi-Generational
Weekend*, at Powell House;
see www.powellhouse.org

May 2012

Sun, May 20:

Occupy Wall Street worship
sharing, at Zuccotti Park, time
TBA; *contact* Cressa Perloff,
watercressa at yahoo dot com

Sun, May 27:

Bedford Stuyvesant Worship
Group, at Bedford Stuyvesant
Restoration Plaza, 3 PM – 5 PM;
contact Héloïse Rathbone,
hcrathbone at gmail
dot com

June, 2012

Sun, Jun 17:

Occupy Wall Street worship
sharing, at Zuccotti Park, time
TBA; *contact* Cressa Perloff,
watercressa at yahoo dot com

Fri, Jun 22 – Sun, Jun 24:

Not Just Fun & Games, a youth-
type weekend for adults, at Powell
House; *see* www.powellhouse.org

July, 2012

Sun, Jul 15

Occupy Wall Street worship
sharing, at Zuccotti Park, time
TBA; *contact* Cressa Perloff,
watercressa at yahoo dot com

Sun, Jul 22 - Sat, Jul 28

New York Yearly Meeting
Summer Sessions, at Silver Bay;
see www.nyym.org