



# BROOKLYN MEETING NEWS

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

*brooklynmeeting.org*

**April 2014**

## **March Meeting for Business Addresses Social Action and Finances**

### **New Calendar for Financial Decisions and Reports**

The Meeting approved the suggestion of Finance and Collections Committee to begin the new financial year in January rather than April. A new calendar of reports was accepted, including a preliminary budget in November, the auditor's report in April, and an interim treasurer's report in June.

### **Suggestions Are Made for Donations from the Socially Responsible Fund**

Friends heard applications from the Quarterly Meeting Africa Education Committee for a contribution to the Friends Schools in Africa, and also from a Friend with a drama project in the Bronx. After some discernment, the meeting referred these and other possible suggestions to the Peace and Social

Action Committee for review and recommendations.

### **The Peace and Social Action Committee Gives Its Annual Report**

This past year the Peace and Social

sponsored a visit from the Two Row Wampum Campaign, which honored the first treaty between the Onondaga Nation and European settlers in New York state. The campaign focuses on renewed action to protect the environment.

A potluck dinner and overnight hospitality were provided. Committee members also participated in a rally against Fracking in Albany. The committee is recommending that our Socially Responsible Fund support the Two Row Wampum Teach-in, local sustainable foods for our

Community Dinner and four events protesting fracking. Finally, our teen group is asking for assistance in

creating a documentary about activism among farm workers, which would include a trip to Florida.

*-Molly Rusnak*



Action Committee has followed a strong interest in witnessing for food justice and care of the environment. The committee presented an event that brought local advocates for these issues to the Meeting for discussion and questions. The committee also

## **Brooklyn Friends School Reports to Quarterly Meeting**

At the most recent New York Quarterly Meeting, held at Morningside Monthly Meeting, Brooklyn Friends School shared its accomplishments over the past year as well as the present state of and future plans for the school. Activities of special interest to Brooklyn Friends were:

- Help to our Friends Schools in Africa. Two BFS faculty members, sponsored by the Quarterly Meeting, traveled to Africa to train teachers at the Kisangura Schools.
- A "Collection" on social justice as it relates to the prison system.
- The Horizons Program, a five-week summer enrichment program for children in three neighboring public schools.
- Brooklyn Friends meeting with students and faculty to share their experiences within Meeting for Worship.

Statistics of interest to Brooklyn Friends were:

- Diversity in the school: percentage of students of color is currently 38%
- Brooklyn Meeting students comprise 4% of the student body
- 30% of students receive financial aid

Brooklyn Meeting has had a close relationship with Brooklyn Friends School since the school began.

*-Molly Rusnak*

## **Educational Fund Committee Reports to New York Quarterly Meeting on Tuition Aid to Quaker Children**

The committee awarded grants of \$15,000 for tuition this past year. It received more applications than it could afford. However, next year more resources will be available as

additional endowment funds are expected.

*-- Molly Rusnak*

## **Memorial Meeting for Emily Ranseen**

At 1 p.m. on First Day, February 23, Friends gathered to remember Emily Ranseen, a long time attendee at Brooklyn Meeting, in silent worship and vocal ministry. Emily is very much missed, as she was a faithful member of the Welcoming Committee, often substituting for others. Her smile and handshake were an important part of coming to Meeting for Worship on First Day.

Few Friends may have realized the rich background and intellect Emily brought to Brooklyn Meeting. She was both a landscape designer and a librarian, an expert in world Quakerism and a knowledgeable and independent thinker on many issues important to Friends. Some will remember her project of writing Quaker letters to servicemen in Iraq and Afghanistan. This project clearly represented her study and understanding of the Peace Testimony as loving the individual while disagreeing with the institution or the policy. This approach was similar to the past Quaker witness of service in Germany directly after World War II, and also of our personal contacts in Iran when our countries were in a hostile situation.

Few of us were aware of the severe health issues with which Emily courageously struggled. She may have wanted it that way, valuing our friendship more than our sympathy. But now, in this memorial meeting, we could understand and appreciate more fully both the challenges and achievements of her life.

*-- Molly Rusnak*

## **A Disintegrating Pipe and Other Property Matters**

-- As female Friends may have observed, the drain pipe leading from the women's bathroom to the street recently succumbed to old age and has been replaced. This was a delicate operation because the roots of our remaining tree were involved.

-- The Property Committee is now seeking a part-time superintendent to manage the maintenance and cleaning of our Meetinghouse.

-- New windows will be installed in the Meetinghouse over the summer.

*-- Molly Rusnak*

## **A Report from the Touch Aids Dinner, a Brooklyn Meeting Tradition**

Each Monday evening for 17 years, Brooklyn Meetinghouse has hosted a dinner and social occasion for our neighbors with AIDs. Originated by our past member Alan Kehoe, the dinner has been maintained through the years by long-time attendee Ken Diamondstone and his partner, Joe Kopitz. The total list of attendees includes seventy people; today, some thirty people are here.

Volunteering for this event, one arrives at about 5:45 PM to prepare enough baked chicken, asparagus, salad and browned potatoes for 25 to 30 participants. Luscious desserts are donated by Betty's Bakery on Atlantic Avenue. Some produce is donated as well, enough to take home later. Students and a teacher from Brooklyn Friends School are here to assist, and

Carol, a long-time volunteer, is here as well.

When all is ready and guests have arrived and greeted each other, a circle of silence is formed before the serving begins. It is clear that these men and women, of a variety of ages and backgrounds, are happy to be together again. They enjoy the conversation, the plentiful food, and the welcoming atmosphere of the Meeting Social Room.

-- Molly Rusnak

### **Sing-Along: a Joyful Occasion**

After Social Hour on First Day, March 9, Friends of all ages gathered in the Social Room to sing together with a guitar accompaniment. The song book provided brought older Friends back to the days when folk music was an integral part of the worker, peace, and civil rights movements of the 1950s and '60s. The sing-along also brought fond memories of our late neighbor here in New York, Pete Seeger. Hopes were expressed for another sing-along in the future.

-- Molly Rusnak

### **Quaker Witness: African Education Committee Supports Two Schools**

As Brooklyn Meeting considers how to distribute funds designated for Quaker witness, two schools in Kenya and Tanzania have been the special project of New York City Friends for the past eight years. Jim Morgan and Marna Herrity Congden, from Brooklyn Meeting, have visited them regularly. These schools serve children who have been orphaned by AIDs, from illiterate backgrounds, and

suffering from food deprivation. Quaker contributions have been used to build classrooms and housing for teachers, provide clean water and latrines, and buy uniforms and necessary school supplies. Friends can find out more about the desperately-needed work of these Friends schools on the New York Quarterly Meeting website.

-- Molly Rusnak

### **Six NYC Quakers go to Albany to join 2000 others in Anti-Fracking Rally**

Did you know that New York State is the only state in the Union to have a ban against fracking? The environmentalists in this state have worked successfully, so far, to protect our water and our food against the effects of fracking for liquid natural gas. But lobbyists from the gas and oil industries are bearing down on our representatives and our governor, urging them to allow fracking in our countryside.

Even though thousands of people from all over the state went to Albany to demonstrate against fracking, the governor made no mention of the issue in his speech and the press hardly covered the anti-fracking movement.

Fracking involves the injection of water, chemicals, and sand underground to crack open rock formations that contain gas. Documented risks include contaminated groundwater, wastewater that contains radioactive elements, and air pollution.

The New York Yearly Meeting issued a press release on fracking on November 29, 2012, which puts

this issue in the context of Quaker beliefs:

“As Quakers, we experience the Divine through loving and truthful relationships with all people and all creation. After extensive efforts to inform ourselves about fracking we have concluded that it is inconsistent with our faith and practices, which include a commitment to integrity, community, equality and care of God’s creation. We observe that the natural gas industry and government agencies have placed financial gain over the health of our communities and the environment.”

What can you do to help? Call your state senator and state representatives, ask them where they stand on fracking, and encourage them to continue to ban fracking in our state. Also, call the Governor’s office at 866-961-3208 and express your beliefs. The Peace and Social Action Committee will support you in your efforts by providing information about lobbying and contact numbers for your representatives.

-- Mary Doty

### **Gasland Movie Motivates Quakers to Act**

On Sunday, March 23, the Peace and Social Action Committee hosted a screening of the film *Gasland*. This award-winning documentary is about hydraulic fracturing -- fracking for short -- a toxic and risky technology newly-used for the extreme extraction of natural gas. We learned that the Energy Policy Act of 2005 exempts those who practice this process from the need to comply with the Safe Drinking Water Act, the Clean Air Act and many other

federal environmental laws. Josh Fox, the writer and director of the film, visited communities across the United States to explore the impact of fracking. He found many people living near fracked gas wells whose well water is now contaminated, whose air has been fouled, and whose family members suffer chronic health problems. All of these things occurred after the land near their homes had been fracked.

Ling Tsou from United for Action led the discussion after the movie. She pointed out that New York is the only state to have a temporary moratorium on fracking. This is the direct result of citizen action all over the state, protesting fracking and calling for renewable forms of energy rather than gas and oil energy sources. The Governor and our representatives in Albany are under tremendous pressure from the oil and gas industry to lift the moratorium and allow fracking. The environmental movement in this state is strong but small and we must work constantly to protect our foodshed, our water supply and our air.

What can you do?

-- Call Governor Cuomo at 1-866-584-6799 and tell him to permanently ban fracking in our state. Repeat this simple action every Monday until we have a ban in New York state.

-- Join United for Action. Go to [Unitedforaction.org](http://Unitedforaction.org) and sign up to be on their email list. They will send you alerts on actions you can take to protest fracking and support renewables.

--Come to the next Peace and Social Action Committee program. On Thursday, April 24, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. there will be a panel discussion with representatives from the Two Row Wampum

Renewal Campaign and from upstate Quaker meetings (including Christopher Sammond from Yearly Meeting). These individuals will discuss actions they have taken against fracking as well as ideas for future action.

-- *Mary Doty*

### **Spring Visiting and Work Day at the Quaker Cemetery in Prospect Park**

Saturday April 12, 2014, from 10 am -4 pm

Beverages and Cookies will be provided, please bring you own lunch. Come rake leaves, pick up small branches, pull weeds and help beautify the cemetery. Also visit gravesites of friends and family, and go on a history tour of the cemetery at noon or 2 pm.

Mary McDowell Friends School will join New York Quarterly Meeting for this day of work, fun and fellowship.

### **Easter Weekend in The Wilderness, with hiking, camping and worship**

April 19-20, 2014

Two years ago, about a dozen Quakers went to the Delaware Water Gap for a two-day camping trip. We had so much fun, we wanted to do it again. This weekend's camping and hiking trip will go to Camp Nawakwa in Harriman State Park, a historic mountain-style camp maintained by the not-for profit Adirondack Mountain Club. On Saturday we'll go for a hike, then cook our meal as a group, enjoy dinner by the

fireplace, and follow it all with dessert, games and conversation and, if people bring instruments and their voices, music! In the morning, we'll enjoy a hot breakfast before hiking to a scenic viewpoint for Easter worship and lunch. To stay overnight, you need a warm sleeping bag, but you don't need a tent.

Costs

\$45 (includes camp fee, Sat. dinner, Sun. breakfast and Sun. bag lunch)

Registration

Registration with deposit required by 6pm, Thurs. April 17.

Limited to 10 participants.

Please request a full written description of the trip before sending any money.

Access:

Camp Nawakwa is accessible by foot, bicycle or car.

For questions and information requests, please contact Miriam Kelly.

E-mail: [miriam\\_g\\_kelly@hotmail.com](mailto:miriam_g_kelly@hotmail.com)

Phone: (646) 623-3984

### **Book Table Committee Seeks Donations**

The Book Table Committee invites our community to donate used books in good condition to our semi-annual book sale, which will take place May 11 and 18.

Please note: we cannot accept donations prior to April 27 and all donations have to be arranged with a member of the committee. Last fall's sale raised nearly \$250, which will be used to purchase books for First Day School (with the remainder donated to Yearly Meeting).

We are also seeking volunteers to assist us with moving

the books from storage before and after the sale days, and one volunteer with a car to transport any unsold books to Housing Works on May 18 at the conclusion of the sale. For more information, stop by the book table during social hour or contact Amy Hundley, [amy.f.hundley@gmail.com](mailto:amy.f.hundley@gmail.com).

Thank you!  
--The Book Table Committee

### Quotation Corner

"Our task is to listen to the news that is always arriving out of silence."

- Rainier Maria Rilke

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## Submission Guidelines

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The Communications Committee welcomes Brooklyn Meeting News contributions from all Meeting members and attenders. Our newsletter includes a variety of content which may be of interest to our community, including but not limited to:

- Recaps of recent Meeting events
- Previews of upcoming events
- Issues pertaining to our

Quaker faith and history

The newsletter is published on the first Sunday of each month, and we request that submissions for the next issue be submitted at least two weeks in advance. General Guidelines:

- Please send an email to [newsletter@brooklynmeeting.org](mailto:newsletter@brooklynmeeting.org) so that we may briefly discuss your contribution, as regards its timeliness, appropriateness, and length.
- Contributions should

generally be brief, between 150-450 words in length.

- Please send your newsletter submission as an attached Word document.
- Keep in mind that contributions will be copy edited, and may not appear in the newsletter in exactly the same form as how they were submitted.

**Thank you for your interest and we look forward to your input!**

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## Regularly Scheduled Activities

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### Meetings for Worship

9:00–9:50 AM and  
11:00 AM–NOON on Sundays,  
in the meeting room  
6:30 PM Tuesdays,  
in the meeting room

### Childcare

Sundays during 11:00 AM worship, for  
children of 3 months to 3 years, in the care  
of an early childhood teacher and dedicated  
volunteers

### First Day School

10:45 AM – 11:45 AM, Sundays, September  
to June. Three classes, roughly related to  
age: Bodies (4-6), Minds (7-9) and Spirits  
(10-12).

### Social Hour

12:00 PM Sundays,  
Ground-level dining room

### Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business

1:00 PM, first Sundays, in the meeting  
room

### Hymn Singing around the Piano

10:00 AM, first Sundays, in the meeting  
room

### Readings of Spiritual Texts

10:00 AM, second Sundays, in the  
meeting room

### Worship Sharing

10:00 AM, third Sundays, on the third  
floor

### Community Dinner

1:00 PM-3:00 PM SET-UP  
3:00 PM-4:00 PM MEAL/SERVING  
4:00 PM- 5:00 PM CLEAN-UP, COME FOR  
SOME OR ALL!

Last Sunday of every month, ground-  
level dining room; volunteers appreciated  
for this monthly dinner for anyone who  
wishes a free hot meal. Children  
encouraged to volunteer.

Contact: Andres Colapinto,  
acolabus@gmail.com

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## Upcoming Events

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*Ongoing additions to upcoming Meeting events are regularly added to the Meeting website at <http://www.brooklynmeeting.org/calendar>.*

*To submit an event, email [calendar@brooklynmeeting.org](mailto:calendar@brooklynmeeting.org).*

*Member Kate Rapoport also maintains an*

*email event announcement list; send a request to [brooklyn.kittens@gmail.com](mailto:brooklyn.kittens@gmail.com) to join.*

### April 2014

*Saturday, April 12:*

*10am-4pm, Prospect Park*

*Spring Visiting and Work day at the Quaker  
Cemetery*

*See article in the newsletter.*

*Saturday, April 19:*

*9:30am - 4:30pm, Chatham-Summit*

*Meeting House*

*Young Adult Friends Mini-Retreat: During  
one day gatherings (see below), we'll be  
working together in small and large groups  
to consider New England Yearly Meeting's  
latest Young Adult Friends Epistle. How do  
we create the life we feel we truly want to be  
living? Are we living faithfully into the life  
we want to live? How can we support each  
other, connect with each other, and know  
each other more deeply?*

*Saturday and Sunday, April 19-20:*

*Easter Weekend in the Wilderness*

*See article in the newsletter.*

*For questions and information requests,  
please contact Miriam Kelly.*

*E-mail: [miriam\\_g\\_kelly@hotmail.com](mailto:miriam_g_kelly@hotmail.com)*

*Phone: (646) 623-3984*

*Sunday, April 20:*

*1-3pm, Meeting House*

*Quaker Studies topic: The structures that  
support our beliefs in Brooklyn Meeting and  
beyond: clearness committees, pastoral care,  
Quaker organizations*

### May 2014

*Sunday, May 11 and Sunday May 18:*

*Meeting House*

*Semi-annual Book Sale*

*The Book Table Committee invites our  
community to donate used books in good  
condition to our semi-annual book sale.*

*See article in the newsletter.*

*Sunday, May 18:*

*1-3pm, Meeting House*

*Quaker Studies topic: Advices and Queries;  
the role of Scriptures.*

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*Send additions to Regularly Scheduled Activities or Upcoming Events to [calendar@brooklynmeeting.org](mailto:calendar@brooklynmeeting.org).*

*Send inquiries or suggestions about the newsletter to [newsletter@brooklynmeeting.org](mailto:newsletter@brooklynmeeting.org).*

*The Monthly Meeting Newsletter is published by the Communications Committee of Brooklyn Monthly Meeting.*

*Current members: Eli Gwynn (clerk), Ben Hill, Molly Rusnak, and Anna White.*

*Drawing by Lucy Sikes*

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