



BROOKLYN MEETING NEWS

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

brooklynmeeting.org

May 2014

MEETING FOR BUSINESS, APRIL 6 – A FULL PLATE

Long-Time Friends Join Brooklyn Meeting

Some Friends join the Meeting after attending for a short while; others live with us and contribute to the Meeting for a long time before becoming members. Caroline, Alden and Cordelia Harting fall into the latter category. They are well known to many of us, and welcomed into membership at this Meeting for Business. Additionally, a first letter applying for membership was submitted by Sheila O'Hara, who has served as clerk of our Property Committee for eight years.

Brooklyn Meeting Will Consider New York Yearly Meeting's Apology for Slavery and Racial Discrimination

The Meeting approved a suggestion by the Clerk of Ministry and Counsel to form an ad-hoc committee, to serve for one year, with the purpose of preparing a forum for the Meeting to discern the New York Yearly Meeting Apology for Slavery proposal. [details on the Apology are in a separate article].

Meeting Approves a Photography Project by the Aperture Foundation [details in a separate article]

Donations from the Socially Responsible Funds Are Approved

The Peace and Social Action

Committee recommended the following donations for the coming year:

- Community Dinner -- \$1,000
- Two Row Wampum Teach-in -- \$1,000
- Teen Documentary Project on Farm Worker Activism -- \$2,500
- Series of Anti-Fracking Events -- \$3,500
- Great Lakes Africa Education Committee -- \$2,500

Finance and Collection Committee Proposed Interim Budget is Accepted

The Meeting budget year is being changed to the calendar year. The budget ending at the end of 2014

includes expenses of \$75,818.10 and an income of the same amount, \$75,818.10.

Financial Notes:

- Many Brooklyn Meeting Committees regularly do not spend their full budgets.
- The maintenance of our Meetinghouse is not paid for by Brooklyn Meeting, but by the New York Quarterly Meeting from trusts composed of past contributions.
- Approximately half of the funds donated by Brooklyn Friends are sent to New York Yearly Meeting.

Library Committee Provides a Detailed Report

The Library Committee reports that it has undertaken an extensive overhaul of the library collection. This includes repair and reorganizing of existing books, purchasing new books (including requests from members), placing reviews of new books in the Newsletter, organizing Pendle Hill Pamphlets, receiving donations, and an index in the Brooklyn Meeting Website (librarything.com/home/brooklynmeeting).

New titles are primarily historical, such as *The Underground Railroad On Long Island*, *The Essential Elias Hicks* and *The Last Runaway Chevalier*.

In addition, this writer



recommends:

- Have a committee member available on Sundays to assist Friends in locating and taking out books.
- Keep the library table free for looking at books, especially for children.

A Welcome Welcoming Committee Report

This past year attendance at 11 AM Meeting for Worship has averaged 100 adults and 15 children, with an average of four messages per gathering. The Welcoming Committee sponsored a successful Game Night and Contra Dance.

Blue Book of Committee Descriptions Complete

The Blue Book has been completed. The descriptions of the Meeting Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer and the Finance and Collections Committee were approved.

- Molly Rusnak

Why Is Brooklyn Meeting Growing?

While New York Yearly Meeting and its Monthly Meetings are shrinking, Brooklyn Monthly Meeting continues to attract new members and attenders. Why is this happening? And is there anything other Meetings can learn from Brooklyn? If YOU would like to detail your personal path to Brooklyn Meeting in an upcoming issue, please email newsletter@brooklynmeeting.org

The Newsletter has undertaken an informal survey of new attenders in Brooklyn Meeting and found several reasons for this growth in membership:

- Knowledge of Friends Schools
- Reputation of Friends on social issues, peace, slavery, and the environment
- An interest in meditation, silence

and inward spiritual growth

- Meeting location in an area of population increase.
- A young adult group that meets regularly
- Visibility of Meetinghouse, transportation

-- Community involvement of the Meetinghouse; use of the Meetinghouse in the community

- Website – BrooklynMeeting.org – and the belief description that can be found on the website

- Diversity in race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation

Many Meetinghouses are on areas of diminishing population and may benefit by setting up worship groups or young adult groups in other locations. Some Meetinghouses are tucked away and not visible from the street, but all can be clearly marked with visible signs. Information can be available on the web along with brief descriptions of services and Friends beliefs and practices. Public out-of-door worship or vigils around issues may draw new people in. Notices can be targeted to young people using appropriate internet sites, and Meetinghouses may be shared with community groups or preschools to bring in new people and make Friends part of the larger concerned community.

When visitors come to Meeting they are introduced and welcomed after Meeting for Worship. Visitors with children are directed to Child Care and First Day School. A truly silent Meeting is fostered by the Ministry committee which also resolves conflicts in the Meeting quickly and clearly. An atmosphere of peace and kindness brings new people in and serves the membership well. It helps if the Facing Bench is diverse.

As many new Attenders come from Friends Schools, the Yearly Meeting could help local Monthly Meetings by contacting Friends Schools for

information about alumnae and new graduates coming to New York State. The Yearly Meeting could ask the schools to inform graduates and alumnae about Meetings near where they will be locating. Member visits could be made to schools as well.

If the priority of New York Yearly Meeting is survival and growth, many other ideas will come forward in Yearly Meeting gatherings to build membership in a faith that has much to offer modern young adults and families.

Note: The Communications Committee is always interested in sharing the personal stories of our members and attenders, regarding what led them to Quakerism in general and Brooklyn Meeting specifically. If you'd like to share your story in our recurring "My Journey" column, please email newsletter@brooklynmeeting.org

- Molly Rusnak

Friends of the Wilderness Easter Weekend Hike

Over Easter Weekend, a group of eight Friends led by Robert Matson traveled to Harriman State Park for two days of hiking, worship, and fellowship. The group stayed at Camp Nawaka, a beautiful mountain-style camp maintained by the non-profit Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK). Stay tuned for more information regarding upcoming outdoor activities, as the next outing of "Friends in the Wilderness" is scheduled for July 12.

Aperture Foundation Will Photograph in Brooklyn Meeting

On June 15 the Aperture Foundation, a non-profit book publisher, will partner with Brooklyn Meeting on a photography project. Schuyler Duffy, who formerly attended Brooklyn Friends School,

photographs individuals in community, social and historical spaces. He will hold a workshop and photograph volunteers.

-- Molly Rusnak

New York Yearly Meeting Asks Meetings to Participate in “An Apology to Afro-Descendants”

As defined by New York Yearly Meeting, this apology includes the following ideas:

-- Slavery was an abomination. New York Yearly Meeting allowed members to hold slaves until 1771.

-- After the 13th Amendment was added to the U.S. Constitution, Friends Schools in New York State denied admission to African-American students and some Monthly Meetings were segregated.

-- We honor the many Quaker individuals and groups who supported the Civil Rights struggle and we recommit to the Quaker Testimony of Equality.

-- Molly Rusnak

Quarterly Meeting Approves New Lease for Building Next to Brooklyn Meetinghouse

Friends from all the Meetings in New York City met in 15th Street Meetinghouse Easter Day. Discernment and decisions took place regarding Quaker buildings and money.

-- The Audit and Budget Committee presented the audit for the past year, which was approved.

-- The Corporation Meeting heard a report from Trustees regarding capital projects and investments. Of special interest to Friends was the new emphasis on environmental concerns in our investments with Friends Fiduciary, including alternative fuels. Friends also supported investing in socially purposeful activities. Later in the meeting, the Ministry and Counsel Committee presented a concern about our investments. A future meeting led by Ministry and Counsel and Trustees to consider this concern is planned.

-- Of special significance financially was the approval of a new ten-year lease with the Department of Education for the building next to Brooklyn Meetinghouse. This lease is for \$34.90 a square foot, with a 3% annual increase. It will provide a

\$59,124 addition to the budget in 2015.

-- Flushing Meeting offered a second Flushing Remonstrance for Friends to support. The original Remonstrance was a statement for religious freedom made by early Quakers, at great personal risk, that led to the establishment of that freedom in New York City during colonial times. The new Remonstrance calls for freedom from surveillance and police searches.

-- Molly Rusnak

Did you know?

There were two Quaker meetings in Brooklyn from 1868 to 1959, our own Hicksite one at 110 Schermerhorn Street, and an Orthodox one, its building still extant at the corner of Lafayette and Washington Avenues in Fort Greene. It was “laid down” (i.e., abandoned) in 1959 and sold to a Protestant denomination, which in turn sold it, in 1964, to the Apostolic Faith Church, which now uses it as its place of worship.

Monthly Factoid provided by Michael Black, for the History Committee

Submission Guidelines

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 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!

Regularly Scheduled Activities

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

Upcoming Events

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.

Member Kate Rapoport also maintains an

email event announcement list; send a request to brooklyn.kittens@gmail.com to join.

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.

Quaker Studies topic: Leading a Quaker life
in the day-to-day world: money, family,
leisure, media, technology, and more.

June 2014

Sunday, June 15:

1-3pm, Meeting House

July 2014

Sunday, July 20, 2014 - 3:00pm - Saturday,

July 26, 2014 – 12:00pm

Summer Sessions at Silver Bay

Send additions to Regularly Scheduled Activities or Upcoming Events to calendar@brooklynmeeting.org.

Send inquiries or suggestions about the newsletter to 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.

Photo Credit Miriam Kelly
