



# BROOKLYN MEETING NEWS

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

*brooklynmeeting.org*

**October 2014**

## SEPTEMBER MEETING FOR BUSINESS CONSIDERS FINANCE AND CLIMATE CHANGE

### Special Meeting on Climate Change

As suggested by the Peace and Social Action Committee, a special meeting is called for First Day, September 14 at 1 p.m. to prepare for Brooklyn Meeting's participation in the People's Climate March on September 21 and to discern what we might bring to the march.

### Brooklyn Meeting Provides Shelter for Climate Marchers

The Clerk announces that the Meetinghouse will be open for hospitality for those coming to New York City for the March, from Friday night (September 19) through Sunday (the 21<sup>st</sup> volunteer to be present and assist the guests.

### Ministry and Counsel Requests Additional Funds

The Meeting approved an additional \$1000 for the Ministry and Counsel Committee for this budget year. Among other services, the committee provides scholarships for Friends attending Quaker events, such as Yearly Meeting sessions, Powell House and Brooklyn Meeting Retreat.

### Meeting Finances Reviewed

The Audit Committee reports that Brooklyn Meeting books are in good order.

The Finance and Collections Committee gives an interim report. The committee is asked to compare this

year's collections with the same five months last year.

The Treasurer reports that New York Yearly Meeting is requesting an increase in our donation for the coming year. Friends decide to allow more time for consideration and for additional information from the Yearly Meeting as to its present financial status, possible deficits and previous donations. Friends are reminded that information about Yearly Meeting finances, trends and projections, as well as expenditures, are available on the Yearly Meeting website and in the Yearly Meeting Yearbooks available in the Meeting library.



### Social Hour Etiquette

The Social Hour Committee presents the Meeting with written suggestions for good etiquette during Social Hour with an emphasis on courtesy toward Social Hour Committee members. (Note: these suggestions are printed elsewhere in this issue.)

### Photography Project Scheduled

The Aperture Foundation Workshop, postponed from an earlier date, will take place on December 7. This will

involve portraits of older Meeting members. On that First Day, Meeting for Worship will take place in the Social Room.

*-- Molly Rusnak*

## Brooklyn Meeting Finances: The Audit Committee Reports

### Income for Year Ending March 31, 2014

Contributions from Members: \$75,663.80

Interest from Trusts: \$2826

Interest from Bank Accounts: \$82.43

Contribution from Meetinghouse Fund: \$200 [for upkeep of Meetinghouse]

Restricted To: Flower Committee: \$1517.04

Book Table: \$229.71

Community Dinner: \$200

Supplemental Funding Package (for Socially Responsible Giving)

Allocated, Not Spent: \$7502.77

Not Yet Allocated: \$2732.05

*-- Molly Rusnak*

## How New York Friends Invest Our Money

Brooklyn Meetinghouse and other Quaker-owned buildings in New York City are supported by trusts made up of substantial gifts from Friends in the past. These funds are invested with Friends Fiduciary, a Quaker investment group. While providing needed income for Quakers, Friends Fiduciary also expresses Quaker values in its decisions and actions two ways: gauging the

social impact of our investments and engaging in investor advocacy.

Friends Fiduciary has created a “Quaker Green Fund” that is fossil fuel free and also invests in new clean technologies including alternative and renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, water conservation and filtration, low carbon finance and cutting-edge clean technologies.

Shareholder advocacy by Friends Fiduciary has been in the areas of climate change, human rights, economic justice and lobbying disclosures. Friends have advocated through shareholder resolutions, requests for investigation by the Securities and Exchange Commission and requests for sustainability and other reports and information from companies exposing climate change risks. For example, Friends Fiduciary has asked the world’s largest public gas, oil, coal and electric companies to review the financial risks of carbon heavy investment plans. This applies to their financiers as well.

Other social issues Friends Fiduciary has addressed are working conditions -- such as urging clothing companies to sign on to the international Accord on Fire and Building Safety -- and also prevention of predatory lending practices. Friends Fiduciary joined other concerned investors in urging companies to divest from genocide in Sudan. They have also supported the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility’s statement on principles for confronting human trafficking.

-- Molly Rusnak

## Accounts from the People’s Climate March

At the People’s Climate March, Brooklyn Friends carried a banner which read:

**Brooklyn Quakers call on our government to convert the United States to**

**100% RENEWABLE ENERGY BY 2050**

**and to commit to a strong, binding, enforceable global agreement to achieve the same goal internationally.**

**Each of us also strives toward this goal in our own lives.**

Many people paused to read it, and it felt good to put out something so positive and doable. To one woman, I smiled and said “Catchy, isn’t it?” She then identified herself as a Quaker from California, and added that her meeting spent a lot of time talking, but never got so far as making a statement.

Jim and I planned to meet the march where Seventh Avenue runs into Central Park, so we could avoid a long stand on 58<sup>th</sup> go by, and it was amazing. The march passed by for three hours before the Quakers got to us! And that wasn’t the end of it.

Most impressive to me was the diversity. I’ve been in a lot of marches, but never one so diverse in age and ethnicity and what people were representing. First the indigenous people -- many of them people most affected by climate change -- then a huge number of high school students, and then labor and the unions out in force, then another huge contingent of young people representing colleges from all over the country. And on and on it went.

Maybe with this kind of involvement there really is hope we can move our electeds, or otherwise convince the oil and coal companies to leave 80% in the ground. As many signs said: “There is no Planet B.”

-- Lyn Pyle

I left First Day School Committee Meeting at 10 a.m. to join the Friends Seminary, Brooklyn Friends and Mary McDowell School group that left together from 15 Rutherford Place. We had a large group gathered in the outer courtyard at 15th Street. Tom

Rothschild was there with the BFS group. The school groups marched just in front of several college groups. We brought a large earth ball and parachute and we were behind a group that had a parachute with methane and carbon dioxide molecule “balls.” It wasn’t until after 2 pm when our group started to move. Some of the students had to leave early to get back to homework. I had the usual experience of unexpectedly seeing out of town Friends that I haven’t seen for a while.

-- Ben Frisch

My contribution to the climate march, since I couldn’t walk with them, was to provide hospitality to Friends who traveled a long distance.

There was a couple with a four-year-old son from Ithaca, New York. He is getting an early start on social activism. Another was a woman from Philadelphia, who has had a lifetime of marching for peace and economic justice. Her attendance was a last minute decision; she hopped on the Bolt Bus and made it up in two and a half hours.

The third family was a thirteen-year-old girl traveling with her parents. Well-known in Native American and Canadian social justice circles, she has long been a spokesperson for the environment and the rights of her indigenous people from Sliammon Bay in Vancouver, British Columbia. She is depicted in a mural that has been painted in Bushwick, Brooklyn. We drove over to see it and were amazed at the neighborhood. Murals were everywhere, beautiful ones and also walls of graffiti. There were blocks of



garages and small businesses, where many of the floats and banners we saw in the March had been manufactured. The creativity everywhere reminded me of Greenwich Village 60 years ago – an exciting artists' neighborhood.

-- *Lucy Sikes*

## **Social Hour Etiquette**

We, like members of other committees, are hard-working volunteers. Our mission is to serve your stomachs as well as your souls. Here are guidelines which will not only make our jobs easier but also enable you to participate in social hour as if it were a form of worship (requiring some discipline to see the Light):

1. Please do not return for seconds until the initial line of hungry First Day-ers have served themselves. This usually takes 20 minutes. Parents: Restrain your children as much as possible from overeating sweets when they are available.
2. Return your dirty dishes, cups and cutlery to the kitchen window as soon as you've finished eating -- if you're a slow eater, no later than 1 p.m. There is a labeled bowl for compost. Please scrape leftover food and white napkins into it. We use the composter in the yard which the First Day School Committee bought. On the rare occasions when we use paper cups and plates, deposit them in the proper recycling bin by the window.
3. We repeat: Do not leave partially used dishes, cups and cutlery lying around, especially on serving tables. If you notice these forgotten items, even if they are not yours, please turn them in. Parents: Clean up after your kids by stacking cups and serving bowls on the serving tray. Return these for washing.
4. Avoid coming into the kitchen

because it impedes our efforts to serve you. Parents: This particularly applies to children, who can get in the way and potentially hurt themselves. If you need something, please ask one of us. We wear aprons or committee name tags.

We appreciate donations of food and money as well as any suggestions for improvement. Please realize that we are not waitresses and waiters but, like you, participants in our Quaker community!

Thanking you for your cooperation,  
The Social Hour Committee

## **After YAF Mini-Retreat, Most Quakers Still Young, Adult and Friends**

If you've attended meeting in the last year or so, you've probably heard Elena and Mauricio stand up and make an announcement about "a lot of exciting stuff happening" with the Young Adult Friend (YAF) community. One Sunday they even sang their announcement, upon which it briefly seemed like social hour might be renamed happy hour. Were they really pulling off some kind of strategic broadening and deepening of Brooklyn Friends' next generation? Was this a river rising? Or just pregnant possibility and potlucks?

After experiencing September's YAF mini-retreat, it seems safe to say that it's a little bit of both. Around 30 YAFs came together in fellowship and pizza, in order to enjoy learning and community under Gabi Savory Bailey's thoughtful facilitation. In a series of well-sequenced and well-paced dialogues, the dynamic group explored discernment, identity, relationships and God. We focused on how we can collaborate and support each other in enacting more peaceful, fulfilling, and sustainable lives amidst a hectic capitalistic world. Friends came away with deeper connections as well as specific skills related to how to

participate in worship, queries and in the process of a clearness meeting. A bonus to the day was the children of attendees who wandered in and out of the activities, bringing smiles and keeping us on our toes.

Thanks to Columbine for helping with the childcare and to Callie for serving as the retreat's "yelder" (young elder). And congratulations to Mauricio and Elena for indeed helping to usher in a lively and fruitful time for the YAF community -- now it's up to the rest of us to step in and join them in the leadership and fun. Hope to see you at the next YAF event!

--*Chris Fish Shephard*

## **Book Review: A Memoir Written by an Atheist with Grave Misgivings about Her Lack of Belief**

Forget my three Quaker girlfriends! A one-time practicing Jew, I was attracted to my first Meeting for Worship in 1991 because of Friends' history of fighting social injustice. I simply thought Quakers were super-Jews.

Being a "non-practicing" atheist, then and now, it's no wonder I apprenticed for 23 years as an attender before becoming a member of Brooklyn Meeting this past July.

So what should fall into my lap no sooner than the crawdads were consumed at my welcoming party? Barbara Ehrenreich's *Living with a Wild God: A Nonbeliever's Search for the Truth about Everything* (Twelve/Hachette Book Group, 237 pages, 2014).

In the 1980s, I served with Ehrenreich on the board of Manhattan's Health Policy Advisory Center. A nationally-known feminist and political journalist (e.g. *Nickle and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America*), she is also an avowed atheist with a PhD in biology.

The book begins with her re-discovery, 40 years later, of the journal she kept as a teenager in which she chronicled her



encounters with an ineffable OTHER. The ultimate sceptic—she called herself a “solipsist,” assuming we can know nothing outside ourselves—the young Ehrenreich nonetheless endured involuntary experiences of what psychiatrists define as “dissociation,” when her mind and body dissolved in a world she perceived to be alight, and, during one epiphany, on fire.

Unfortunately or not, no God explained to her through a burning bush the meaning of what was happening.

Ehrenreich went on to deliver a different sort of 10 Commandments as a political activist, beginning in the 1960s with the anti-war movement. Being a committed empiricist, she periodically “re-questioned” the adolescent Barbara about her search for the meaning of the universe. Her marriages, divorces, children, cancer, depression and career as a freelance writer -- not to mention her atheism – interfered with any such pursuit.

I would have named this combination of memoir and “search for the truth about everything” -- a characteristically Quaker undertaking -- *Dancing About a Wild God*, because Ehrenreich is a master story-teller who weaves enthralling plots for and against herself without giving the denouement away until the last dependent clause. (Hint: Google “animism” and “SETI.”)

I believe with this nonbeliever when she rejoices that witnessing creativity in nature and being creative ourselves, whether called evolution or continuing revelation, is as close as many of us get to the divine.

If you need proof that Ehrenreich’s knowledge is encyclopedic and her prose inspirational, here’s just one example: she clearly explains why angels and atoms can cavort so well on the head of the same pin. And she’s among my pantheon of political writers with a sense of humor, which is revolutionary.

But don’t take my word in favor of

Barbara Ehrenreich. According to her, we were all made flesh in the beginning whether we like it or not.

-- Carl Blumenthal

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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 by **October 20th**.

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 - 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.*

### October 2014

*Friday, October 17 – Sunday, October 19:*  
2014 Powell House Retreat! RSVP required.  
Contact [retreat@brooklynmeeting.org](mailto:retreat@brooklynmeeting.org)  
At Powell House.

### November 2014

*Sunday, November 2:*  
Hike with Worship  
For this Hike with Worship we plan to visit  
Rockefeller State Park Preserve, a lovely,  
hilly nature preserve criss-crossed by  
carriage roads. We plan to have two routes,

possibly three: one that is moderately easy  
(4-6 miles) and a second that is moderately  
strenuous (7-10 miles). If there's a third it  
will be moderate (6-7 miles). Typically,  
during hikes, we enjoy a day-long hike in  
one another's company and have silent  
worship and lunch at a scenic location.  
Transit by Metro North and taxi.  
RSVP required to receive hike description,  
gear list, train times, and last minute  
updates.

Eml: [robert.m.s.matson@gmail.com](mailto:robert.m.s.matson@gmail.com)

*Friday, November 14:*  
15<sup>th</sup> Street Meetinghouse.  
NY Yearly Meeting's Fall Sessions, hosted  
by NYC Quarterly Meeting. But Brooklyn  
Friends are especially asked to offer  
overnight hospitality to traveling Friends,  
and to bring a dish to the potluck lunch  
NYQM is hosting that Sunday.

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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 Gnynn (clerk), Ben Hill, Molly Rusnak, and Anna White.*

*Photo on page one taken by DK Holland, photo on page two taken by Lucy Sikes*

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