



# BROOKLYN MEETING NEWS

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

*brooklynmeeting.org*

**March 2015**

## **February Meeting for Business Well Attended**

More than 35 members and attenders gathered in a chilly Meeting room for the February Meeting for Business. The agenda included reports from the Treasurer, the Finance and Collections Committee, the Communications Committee and the final draft of the State of the Meeting Report which was approved and is included in this Newsletter.

## **2016 Powell House Retreat Scheduled**

The Retreat Committee announced that the 2016 Meeting Retreat will take place in the spring -- April 29 through May 1.

## **Ministry and Counsel Committee Recommendation to New York Yearly Meeting Regarding Friends United Meeting Policy toward LGBTQ Personnel Is Approved**

The following minute will be sent on to New York Yearly Meeting: "Brooklyn Meeting urges New York Yearly Meeting to follow the example of Canada Yearly Meeting and draft a letter to Friends United Meeting expressing our displeasure at its current discriminatory policy against LGBT Quakers in paid or unpaid positions of service or leadership." The letter further states that "until such time as such policies are laid aside and equality embraced for all Quakers, it will only designate its payments to Friends United Meeting for specific projects

which, in the opinion of New York Yearly Meeting, are worthy."

## **Finance and Collections Committee Reports**

The Finance and Collections Committee reported that, for the period April 1 to December 31, 2014, the Meeting budgeted \$77,318.10 and spent \$75,108.16.

## **Meeting Treasurer Reports; Her Requests Are Approved**

Treasurer Danielle Dybiec recommended, and the Meeting approved, two financial requests to be carried over into 2015 from 2014: \$2,500 for a Teen Documentary Project and \$843.00 (unspent from the Child Care Committee budget) for new toys.

## **Communications Committee Reports on Newsletters and Website**

The Committee published a three-five page newsletter every month except August of this year. The newsletter included a calendar of events, a summary of monthly Meeting for Business and news of Meeting activities and other local Quaker entities. It also provided guidelines for Friends to contribute their own news or articles. The committee maintains the Meeting website and on-line calendar which are open to items from Friends. (Just email "[events@BrooklynMeeting.org](mailto:events@BrooklynMeeting.org).)

## **Amy Whiffen Welcomed into Membership**

Friends welcomed Amy Whiffen at a dinner held in the home of Michael and Nancy Black.

## **Group Considers Early Quaker Writings**

The first of a series of sessions on Early Quaker Writings, which will continue to meet on the second First Day of the month, took place in the Meeting room at 1 p.m. on February 8. The selections were based on the book, "Truth of the Heart" by Rex Ambler and from the writings of George Fox.

In these passages, George Fox shares his struggles, loneliness and inner conflicts. He is sometimes critical and even harsh. He uses images of the turmoil of the sea. At the same time there is faith that he will figure it out. He experiences God as an anchor and a comfort in spiritual crisis. The transformation is through light. This is a democratic process in that any individual can experience it in their own unique way. And the revelation is not fixed but can grow and change.

-- *Molly Rusnak*



## First Day School Underway

Three classes of children, grouped by age, meet every First Day a few minutes before 11 a.m. The preteens and teens meet on the third floor, while the elementary and primary age children meet in the classrooms in the basement. The children engage in conversation, crafts, drama and storytelling, which is centered around the testimonies of Quakers. They then join Meeting for Worship, hopefully sharing some silence, at 11:50. Adult Friends are encouraged to visit and/or volunteer with the young people once, or more than once. Music, crafts, stories and just participation are welcome. Committee members are: Ben Frisch, Julie Glynn, Ella Frederick, Molly Rusnak, Mauricio Alexander and Natalie Glynn.

-- Molly Rusnak

## The Loving Richness of the Meeting, as Seen Through the Eyes of Our Treasurer

I'm often thanked for the service I provide as Brooklyn Meeting's treasurer, and receive many comments regarding how much effort I must have to put into it. I think numbers scare some people, but I find solace in math because there are 'right' and 'wrong' answers in a world otherwise filled with ambiguity and endless possibility. I like office administrative work and organization for similar reasons. It's comforting to know you can be in control and find a right place for things, when everything else in life can feel beyond control. Charts, files and forms make sense of a messy world. Those are the impersonal reasons I enjoy being treasurer, but there are other, sweeter reasons. As treasurer, I have a window into the work of each committee, regarding each endeavor that needs to be funded.

I see you.

I see every gallon of milk and loaf of bread that the Social Hour Committee buys for us to share. I see the long, long receipt from COSTCO each month, and envision the generosity of time and energy of the Community Dinner members as they cart all that food in a

buggy, through checkout and into a car. I see the books bought by Book Table and Library to enlighten our Meeting. I see the scholarships we award that make it feasible for people to join us in community at Powell House and Silver Bay. I see the newsletters you pay to copy, the Friends Journal subscription we renew, the gifts you give new Members at their welcoming dinners, the flowers you choose, the school dinners you sponsor, the mailings you send, the contra dance musicians and child care workers you pay and the much needed financial support we provide to Powell House and New York Yearly Meeting each fiscal year. I see you.

I see the work and dedication and time and service that is given to this Meeting by so many people here. It's impressive and admirable, and I'm blessed to facilitate it for you. We're an amazing community. And I see you, in every check I write.

-- Danielle Dybiec

## STATE OF THE MEETING REPORT FOR 2014

The King James Bible states, in Micah 6:8:

*...and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*

Brooklyn Meeting is a spiritual and physical place in which we come together to honor these directives. We do not always achieve them because we are imperfect creations. But in our ever-evolving practices individually and as a body we continue to hold them foremost.

Humility regarding our place in Creation and toward our planet and its inhabitants was manifested by the meeting's growing concerns around climate change issues:

- 1) A minute requesting top priority for matters of climate change was sent to New York Yearly Meeting and New York Quarterly Meeting.
- 2) We requested NYQM to address the issue of converting utilities to solar power.
- 3) We held a discussion on offshore energy issues.

- 4) There was a called meeting on climate change, prior to our participation in the New York City climate change march (and our hosting of out-of-town marchers overnight in the meetinghouse).

There are ways in which the larger community affects us on issues of justice. Peace and Social Action Committee has focused on anti-fracking and food justice activism. We note the increasing amount of racial diversity in Meeting. We seek a way toward a discussion on racism, especially in response to the New York Yearly Meeting's "Apology to Afro-Descendants." As in the days of John Woolman, we continue to discern the proper response to the painful, unjust relationship that has existed between European-Americans and African-Americans since the founding of our country.

This year saw the need for wisdom in dealing with some fiscal challenges. Because of a change in our fiscal year to correspond with the calendar year, we are working with a nine-month budget but less time to raise funds. And there is a continual need to encourage members and attenders to donate on a monthly basis, not just at the end of the fiscal year. A new responsibility for our Meeting is the distribution of \$13,000 formerly given to New York Quarterly Meeting and now available to us on an annual basis for BMM/Quaker projects. We funded six projects: a Two Row Wampum campaign teach-in; anti-fracking events; donations to Quaker Earthcare Witness; Ramallah Friends School; the African Great Lakes Education Committee of NYQM; and enhancement of our own monthly community dinner. We have tried to use our monies to reflect our commitment to justice, mercy, and humility.

Spiritual needs of members and attenders continue to be met by ongoing and one-off events:

- Ministry and Counsel Committee sponsored spiritual education in the form of Quakerism 101 and other adult

education programs, such as monthly “sacred texts” and worship-sharing sessions. We continued to hold weekly smaller, quieter meetings for worship at 9am on Sundays and on Tuesdays at 6:30pm. Communications Committee began a “My Journey” series in the meeting newsletter in which people share their paths to Quakerism and our meeting. Out of our annual retreat on the theme of “Practice,” emerged a longing for the Meeting to find ways for deep conversations on spiritual matters.

The LBGTQ Subcommittee of Ministry and Counsel has been resurrected and has recently sponsored a number of events.

Good relationships continue between the Meeting and the two Friends schools located in Brooklyn. Unfortunately, weather caused the cancellation of the annual faculty and staff appreciation dinner, but this tradition will continue in 2015. In February a panel discussion on Quaker education was held.

Humbly recognizing the diverse backgrounds of our members and attenders, we honor their varying philosophies and backgrounds (Buddhist, yoga, nature, mixed religion – Islam/Quaker and Jewish/Quaker). We seek to integrate people from varying age groups in our activities. Young Adult Friends continue their many activities, including a newsletter, potlucks and hikes with worship. We are fortunate in having this growing presence and look forward to exploring ways of promoting more integration with the rest of the meeting. Young families are another growing presence. First Day School consists of three classes. Childcare is provided for children under three years of age. In addition, a special bequest permitted hiring of a teen coordinator. We look for ways to help these busy families

become more involved with committee work. We also seek to honor the contributions of our older members. The History Committee has interviewed eight of our oldest members and published five of those interviews. For our departed Friends, we have held memorial meetings and created memorial minutes. The Pastoral Care Subcommittee of Ministry and Counsel has provided support for caregivers, and has worked with the NYYM ARCH (Aging Resources Consultation and Help) initiative to help those in need.

There is a vibrancy even in the frequent silences of our 11 a.m. Meetings for Worship, which attests to the way that inner contemplation coexists and is mutually nurtured by the principle-driven activities of our Meeting. Justice, mercy, and humility are intertwined ideals that can be seen in our interactions within our community and in our relationships outside our Meeting.

For the State of the Meeting Report Committee,  
*Michael Black*  
*Naceo Giles*  
*Iris Lee Stoler*  
*Nancy Black – co-opted*

### **Brooklyn Friends Consider New York Yearly Meeting Apology to Afro-American Descendants**

On the afternoon of February 15, Friends gathered to share their thoughts and feelings about the Apology approved by New York Yearly Meeting Fall Sessions. They learned more about the practice of institutional apology and how the decision was made in Yearly Meeting. Friends expressed concerns about the history of racism in this country and the presence of so many African-Americans in prison and in the criminal justice system. They spoke of the importance of examining their own lives and attitudes and how comfortable African-American members and attenders feel in Brooklyn Meeting.

Friends agreed that the Meeting needs to give life to the Apology in the community and continue the search for justice without and loving relationships within.

-- *Molly Rusnak*

### **Financial Assistance for Students in Quaker Schools**

The 2015-16 New York Quarterly Meeting Education Fund application for financial assistance for Quaker children (K-12) attending Quaker schools is now online at <http://nyqm.org/edfund>

If you know of families with children attending Quaker schools, particularly Brooklyn Friends and Friends Seminary, please be sure to let them know they can apply for financial support from the New York Quarterly Meeting's designated trust funds for education.

-- *Dave Britton, clerk, New York Quarterly Meeting*

### **Want to Share Your Upcoming Event with the Brooklyn Meeting Community?**

If you answered “Yes!” to the above question, then simply email the details of your event to [events@brooklynmeeting.org](mailto:events@brooklynmeeting.org) Messages sent to this address will be received by the Meeting webmaster, Newsletter editor, Young Adult Friends leaders and Kate Rappaport (who sends out regular Quaker event listings). Live it, love it, learn it: [events@brooklynmeeting.com](http://events@brooklynmeeting.com) is your one-stop shop for all your Quaker event promotion needs.

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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 **March 23rd**.

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 [events@brooklynmeeting.org](mailto:events@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.

### March 2015

#### Thursday, March 5, 6:30pm-8:30pm:

Annual Potluck and Planning Meeting for Hikes  
with Worship

At Robert Matson's home  
302 Eastern Pkwy., #1-E  
Brooklyn

between Franklin and Classon aves.  
2/3/4/5/S to Franklin Ave.

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

Bring food to share. If it's nice weather we'll plot,  
plan and picnic in the garden.

nuclear weapons abolition, move the money  
(cutting military spending to prevent wars and fund  
essential human needs), climate change and  
environmental justice, the new era of global  
military tensions and wars, and racism and  
militarism.

*Interfaith service rally, march, festival and petition  
presentations, Sunday the 26<sup>th</sup>*

For additional information about these events and  
to become involved, see [peaceandplanet.org](http://peaceandplanet.org). To  
volunteer contact Stephen Polk, AFSC  
Disarmament Associate, at [SPolk@afsc.org](mailto:SPolk@afsc.org).

#### Sunday, May 17 1pm-3pm:

Brooklyn Meetinghouse

A group of Hibakusha (survivors of the atomic  
blasts in Hiroshima and Nagasaki) will visit  
Brooklyn Meeting, joined by several other people.  
This is the last ever of the visits by Hibakusha  
which have sponsored over the last seven years by  
the educational organization Hibakusha Stories.

The program director Robert Croonquist said, "*We  
began this work in gratitude, and hand in hand with our  
Brooklyn Friends, we will close it likewise.*"

### April 2015

#### Sunday, April 5, 1:30pm:

The 15<sup>th</sup> Street Arts Committee will perform four  
Charles Sirey plays at the Meeting House, 15  
Rutherford Place, please come. All are welcomed.

#### April 24-26:

Peace & Planet NPT Mobilization & March

**International conference April 24-25** - The conference  
is being organized on the basis of five themes:

### May 2015

#### May 1-3:

Powell House Retreat Center

Earthcare, Eco-Justice, and Inner Transition

Retreat Weekend Retreat Program Tuition: \$108  
w/scholarships available and plenty of work study  
opportunities for discounts leading up to May

#### 1. Powell House lodging

fees: [www.powellhouse.org](http://www.powellhouse.org) or by calling 518-794-  
8811. (Meeting for worship on site is part of the schedule.)

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*Send additions to Regularly Scheduled Activities or Upcoming Events to [events@brooklynmeeting.org](mailto:events@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, Lucy Sikes, and Anna White.  
Drawings by Lucy Sikes*

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