



# BROOKLYN MEETING NEWS

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

*brooklynmeeeting.org*

**May 2015**

## **April Meeting for Business Hears Reports, Plans Hospitality**

### **Book Table Committee Reports Sales and Contributions**

Each First Day, in the back of the social room during hospitality, the Book Table sells Quaker books and pamphlets that Friends can add to their personal libraries. The committee welcomes suggestions from Friends. During the past year, with money raised from the book sales, the Committee donated \$200 to Brooklyn Meeting and \$200 to New York Yearly Meeting.

### **Welcoming Committee Welcomes Each First Day and Hosts Social Events**

Throughout the year, Committee members greeted one and all at the door before the 11 a.m. Meeting for Worship. Special attention and information was provided for newcomers. The committee also helped to build a warm and loving community by sponsoring events for all. These included a family game night for approximately 20 adults and children, the annual Contra Dance in April with a live band and caller for more than 30 participants and a Saturday event entitled "Where Do You Find Your Joy?"

The "Where Do You Find Your Joy?" event was an opportunity for Friends to share their special gifts and interests with the community as Friends, adults and children went from group to group

to enjoy and learn about quilting, yoga, visual arts, listening to music, storytelling, dance and movement, traditional New York street games and more. A final circle gave an opportunity to share all these experiences.

### **Peace and Social Action Committee Brings a Question to the Meeting**

The Peace and Social Action Committee reported that it was unable to reach unity on a donation request from Ella Frederick, regarding her adoption of a Chinese special needs

Meetinghouse to the public. Our clerk will manage this event. Friends are aware that the Meetinghouse, as a landmark, must be preserved in its original state as much as possible. This is one reason we are waiting a long time to replace some of our windows, as they have to be approved.

*-- Molly Rusnak*

## **First Day School Committee Collects Donations for Adoption**

The First Day School Committee announced that it is asking for donations from Meeting Friends to help Ella Frederick, a member of the committee, with the adoption of a Chinese child with special needs. The process for this kind of adoption is particularly expensive and Ella is working a second job to finance it. The First Day School has stamped, self-addressed envelopes available for contributions. We all look forward to welcoming a new child to our Meeting.

*-- Molly Rusnak*



## **Scott Barrett (1962 - 2015): An Appreciation**

Some of us remember Scott Barrett's smile. He was ravaged by multiple sclerosis, but when you asked how he was doing he'd look up at you from his little moto-buggy and flash an infectious grin. Your anguish about him, and his condition, would evaporate.

Scott first appeared at Brooklyn Meeting in the early nineties, when he was a fledgling social worker; he was

child. Friends considered the request, and decided instead to refer Ella to the Ministry and Counsel Committee to explore funding from the Quarterly Meeting.

### **Landmarks Conservancy Opens the Meetinghouse**

On May 16 and 17 the Landmarks Conservancy will visit and open the

with us for about ten years. Early on Scott and I stumbled onto our Kenyon College connection -- him Class of '84, me Class of '57 -- and we were buddies ever after. He loved our meeting for worship and joined in 1993. The next year, along with Sarah Dawson and others in the meeting, he revived our death penalty vigil. Since he lived nearby, he kept our graphics at home and, each Wednesday, faithfully brought them to our site in front of the RFK statue.

Toward the end of that decade, the meetinghouse courtyard was raised to eliminate the outer doorstep and a ramp installed in the vestibule. I recall vividly the day Scott gunned his scooter out by the street and, for the first time, roared directly up and into the building. What a dazzling response he got! In fact, it was a gift from Scott's parents, expressing their gratitude to Brooklyn Meeting for its loving care of Scott, that enabled us to purchase our present lift to the Meeting Room.

At some point, things got too difficult and his family insisted he move back to

Bethesda, Maryland, to be near them. He tried his best to keep up with his Quaker connections. I visited him there a number of times, the most memorable being the occasion of his marriage to Mary Ann Casey, also plagued by MS. Her parish church was jammed. When the priest pronounced them man and wife, the place exploded with applause, cheers and loud whistling. It was the most joyous wedding I've ever attended!

Hearing that Scott has died, I suddenly realize that more than a half dozen years have passed since I last saw him. I automatically feel a certain regret but, at the same time, a sense of relief that his suffering, so nobly borne, has ended. Then the joy of having known him at all bubbles up and I realize that, although holding back tears, I'm smiling.

-- *Jim Morgan*

## Mark Your Calendars for a March in June

On June 28, the Quakers will be marching in the New York City LGBTQ Pride March. We have marched every year since 1969 and look forward to continuing the tradition. For further details on participating in the march, please contact Emmy at [emmyaway@yahoo.com](mailto:emmyaway@yahoo.com).

## Thanks to the First Day School, Composter is Creating Soil

Over a year ago, in keeping with the Quaker tradition of caring for our environment, Barbra Mack and the children in the First Day School "Minds" group (ages 7 to 9) decided that they wanted to make a positive impact on the local environment. They noticed that although Brooklyn Meeting had been recycling for years, they didn't have a composter.

"It seemed like something Brooklyn Meeting would want and we thought it would help our planet," said Alden Harting, Brooklyn Meeting member and "Minds" participant.

Alden's mother, Caroline Harting, picked up the composter parts from the New York Botanical Garden. She delivered it to the meeting house, where the children spent a Sunday during meeting for worship assembling it.

The Social Hour committee were thrilled to have this new addition, and they've been assiduously adding to the composter ever since. Carl Blumenthal from Social Hour recently said that he thinks some soil is ready to be used from the composter -- just in time for the spring flowers.

-- *Caroline Harting*



## NY Quarterly Meeting, Friends Seminary To Work Together on Incorporating School

At the April 19 Quarterly Meeting at Fifteenth Street Meeting, Friends considered at length a proposal by Fifteenth Street for expansion that would involve the transfer of some property (air rights) from the Quarterly Meeting (New York Quarterly Meeting includes all monthly meetings in the city). The Trustees of the Quarter recommended that, since the property would be part of a settlement when the school is separated from the Quarter, the separate incorporation should take place now. Then the school could go forward with its project independently. After thoughtful discernment, the Meeting minuted that Trustees and Friends Seminary work together to resolve this issue.

— *Molly Rusrak*

## Anti-Racist Workshop at Brooklyn Monthly Meeting

Have you ever wondered what white people can do about racism? You might be surprised to learn there's actually quite a bit! On April 25, Brooklyn Monthly Meeting sponsored a workshop at the meetinghouse entitled "What White People Can Do About Racism?" The workshop was facilitated by Robin Alpern and Bonnie Cushing, trainers from the Center for the Study of White American Culture Inc. (CSWAC, [www.euroamerican.org](http://www.euroamerican.org)). While the focus is on activism, the workshop is immensely valuable for those who simply want to understand more about the ways in which racism is such an integral part of our world. How many times have you found yourself in a conversation about race, or perhaps reading a news report or editorial, grappling to comprehend or express an idea? How often have you found yourself thinking you would like to do something about racism, but feeling that it's a hopeless task? Have you ever wished you knew how to work around your feelings in order to attain a

better understanding? All of these concerns, and many others, were addressed at this workshop. The content of the workshop was so rich; it is hard to choose specifics to share with you. One 'A-ha!' moment for me was a quote from Dr. Kenneth V. Hardy of Drexel University: "Intentions are the province of the privileged; consequences are the province of the subjugated." That is such a succinct way to express some of the intricacies about how we relate to one another! Another big 'A-ha!' moment was realizing an appreciation for modest actions. Listening to Friends as they shared their contributions toward the goal of an antiracist society, I realized that we may often feel so overwhelmed by the enormity of racism that we undervalue the powers of our comparatively miniscule actions. So many 'A-ha!' moments! Space is too limited within this forum to tell you more, but I unreservedly recommend this workshop to you regardless of your personal background. If you get a chance to take this --- or any CSWAC workshops --- you will be glad that you did.

— *Linda Clarke*

## Two Accounts of April 26's Quakers and Slavery Presentation

A small notepad in front of him, Chris Densmore, historian and archivist from Friends Historical Library in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, addressed a gathering of attenders who were interested in learning more about Quakers during the era of American slavery. Densmore quickly established an informal rapport, fielding questions as he provided anecdotes and information about a wide range of antebellum figures, events and sentiments. He emphasized, up front, that the legacy of this history still exists painfully within the present. My curiosity was especially piqued by Densmore's story about a naval ship called *The Ganges*. In 1800, the *Ganges* encountered two slave ships, rescuing

the human cargo and turning them over to the Pennsylvania Abolition Society in Philadelphia. Rather than being returned to their motherland, the young Africans were educated and given apprenticeships in the United States. This fate typifies the complex experience for those in and recently out of bondage, as it is a consequence of efforts by well-meaning and courageous but often paternalistic Quakers intent on putting their 'moral imagination' to work. Perhaps because I am one of our community's few black members, a recurring question on my mind was, "Having been helped by Quakers, why did so few African-Americans ultimately (and to this day), join the Religious Society of Friends?" In what ways can we as a community build on the legacy of Quaker abolitionists, and yet open our eyes and hearts to the needs of people of color that might be going unmet despite the progressive, inclusive, and love-filled intentions of the meeting? How can we put *our* moral imagination to work as *The Light* illuminates new truths, new intersectional identities, and new challenges to peace, equality, and justice in the 21st century? Densmore's incisive presentation, and the queries it generated, were powerful and received with gratitude.

-- *Marisa Williamson*

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On April 26, Brooklyn Meeting History Committee sponsored a talk on *Quakers and Slavery*, with Christopher Densmore, Curator of the Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore College.

First Densmore made a presentation to the entire First Day School. There were lively questions from the children and Ben Frisch showed some original family letters.

Then, at 1:00, twenty-two of us gathered in the meeting room to hear about the Quakers' early actions against slavery and the slave trade. We were told about minutes showing that we have some of the earliest manifestations of anti-slavery sentiment, dating from the 1670s in Barbados. Then, in 1688, four Quakers



in Germantown, near Philadelphia, issued a public protest. After the 1750s, Quakers actively engaged in attempting to sway public opinion in Britain and America against the slave trade and slavery in general.

Some of us were concerned that we had not done as much as we were given credit for, but Densmore pointed out that Quakers were protesting slavery while other churches and institutions remained unconcerned. Over the years Quakers were actively involved in the economic, educational and political

opinions, though I know that they must have many. It is a very emotional subject, mostly unspoken in our society,

My mother and I spoke with the one black Quaker man, her long-time friend, after the meeting. His opinion is that we need to pay police a lot more and insist that they learn another language. Conversation is essential. Also, I feel that an apology to Native Americans is a way to start at the beginning. My feeling, however, is that the black community is possibly more

Safety with Dignity, a youth development, alternatives to violence training organization directed by Brooklyn Meeting member Lyn Pyle and co-director Aisha Norris, is just that. Safety with Dignity trains Bronx middle and high school students to be peer-mediators, while training their teachers how to use restorative practice in the classroom.

Once trained, mediators are assisted in developing a “talk it out” campaign that uses skits, original videos and other fun, student-led activities to encourage friends and other students to try mediating their conflicts.

What better introduction to what we do than this drawing by Lucy Sikes, which captures the spirited exchange as student mediators use skills learned in a Safety with Dignity training to mediate a conflict among their peers.

– *Lyn Pyle*



well-being of the formerly enslaved, but it was admitted that we were often less than welcoming to black people in our meetings. For the most part this has improved, but we still have work to do.

-- *Lucy Sikes*

## Thoughts on the Apology to Afro-Descendants

I went to a meeting held at the Meetinghouse regarding the apology that the Quakers are making to African descendants. Slavery, police brutality and the mass incarceration of black men were topics that were discussed. I was saddened that the two black people at that meeting did not share any

interest in moving on and living life in a just and kind way. So, maybe this dwelling on the past is not productive. A member of the meeting shared a message about her true love for an interracial new baby in the family, and how love is healing us as change is taking place naturally. We also spoke of being open, friendly and kind to all whom we encounter.

-- *Julia Provey*

## Brooklyn Meeting, Bronx Initiative

Did you know that Brooklyn Quakers have a presence in the Bronx?

## News from Mitch McEwen in Detroit

We have missed Mitch for quite a few months. Recently we received this note from her:

“I have relocated to

Detroit to teach full-time at the University of Michigan. I am still in denial that I have left Brooklyn, though. I attend Detroit Friends Meeting here fairly consistently, and I've started to be involved with some of their work on relocating within Detroit, but I have yet to transfer my membership. Also, I am serving on the Board of the Brooklyn Friends School and come back fairly often, but usually during the week. I am glad to still receive the light list and announcements.”

*If you would like to share news from a member or attender who has relocated from Brooklyn, or if you are such an individual yourself, email us:*

[newsletter@brooklynmeeting.org](mailto:newsletter@brooklynmeeting.org)

## 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](mailto: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 **April 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 [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.*

### May 2015

#### **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.*"

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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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