



# BROOKLYN MEETING NEWS

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

*brooklymeeting.org*

**June 2015**

## Meeting for Business Considers Donation and Financial Reports

### Friend Will Attend Pendle Hill Conference

The Meeting approved a donation from the Socially Responsible Fund for Paul van Linden-Tol to attend a conference on criminal justice and prison reform at Quaker conference center Pendle Hill. Paul has been leading a vigil near Brooklyn Meetinghouse with a concern for the incarceration of African-American men. He will report to the Peace and Social Action Committee upon his return from Pendle Hill.

### Financial Reports Accepted

The Audit Committee reported that the Meeting accounts are in good order. The treasurer presented a revised report which was accepted.

### The Meetinghouse Will Open for Landmarks Tour

On Saturday and First Day, May 16 and 17, an open house sponsored by the Landmarks Commission was held in the Meetinghouse as well as other houses of worship in Brooklyn (aka "The Borough of Churches"). Friends volunteered to be present, greeting and informing visitors.

### Landmarks Conservancy Opens the Meetinghouse

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



### First Day School Picnic Held June 14

The annual year-end First Day School Picnic will be held at the Quaker Cemetery in Prospect Park after Meeting for Worship on June 14. All are invited to share in family activities and food prepared by the children. Directions to the Cemetery are available on the New York Quarterly Meeting website.

First Day School classes will resume in September. During the summer, professional childcare will be provided instead. This childcare will include stories, art and craft activities and use of the playground.

*-- Molly Ruskak*

## Survivors of the Atomic Bomb: Hibakusha at Brooklyn Meeting

Members of the public gathered in our meeting room, along with more than 40

Friends, on the First Day afternoon of May 17. They were there to hear the testimony of Kunihiko Bonkohara and Toshiko Tanaka, atom bomb survivors -- known as Hibakusha -- who had been in Hiroshima when the bombs exploded. "Second generation" Hibakusha, descendants of survivors prone to effects of the bombs' radiation, also spoke. This visit was the final event of the "Hibakusha Stories" program, which consisted of more than seven years of school visits and other

activities. The program reached over 30,000 children in and around NYC. Director Robert Croonquist spoke of the significance of holding the final gathering at Brooklyn Meeting, emphasizing that the Quaker connection was important from the beginning. Referring both to Brooklyn Meeting and to Brooklyn Friends School, he said "We began this work in gratitude, and hand-in-hand with our

Brooklyn Friends, we will close it likewise."

In his testimony, Kunihiko remembered, "I was five years old. That morning, my mother was going to take me to her workplace, but my father kept me with him instead so I wouldn't get in the way. At the moment of the bright light, my father pushed me under a desk and placed himself on top of me to protect me. My father was blown away by the blast and his body was pierced by shards of glass and wooden rubble." His father survived the blast. His mother and sister, who had gone towards the center of the city, were never found.

On her way to school, six-year-old Toshiko was blinded by a bright flash of light. This was followed by intense heat that severely burned her arm, head and neck. Both remembered seeing people dying all around them from burns, or within a few days from radiation sickness. Many of the survivors later died of cancer and leukemia, and even the next generation has fallen sick with these diseases. Two of the children of survivors also spoke to us about the illnesses caused by radiation suffered by their parents. One of them, Mitchie Takeuchi, is a Quaker who first encountered Friends in Hiroshima and is now a member of Southern Berkshire meeting in Great Barrington, Massachusetts.

The 72-year-old Toshiko said, "Until recently I never talked about my dire experience of the atomic bomb, even to my own children. I always wanted to forget about it and wanted to live cheerfully with positive spirit. I hated to make people sad when I talk about my experience. But I realized I can never get away from it."

They now are traveling around the world with the hope of persuading people to never again resort to atomic warfare. Kunihiko is also a leader of the movement to save the rain forests -- the "lungs of the earth" -- in Brazil (where he lives). He has developed a project to grow bamboo, which is fast-growing and can be used for food and other practical purposes.

Earlier that day, the group met with our First Day School, where they also talked about their experiences. Toshiko told them she remembered the Quakers as the first to come to help with healing hearts as well as bodies. When asked how she became able to forgive, she said that she had hatred at first. She realized that hate led only to more hate, and only love can overcome hate.

Kunihiko said that he had been young, and did not consider hatred. "It's time to open our eyes, and change what we are doing," he said. "No more wars. No more nuclear weapons."

Between meeting with the children and the afternoon program, the visitors joined us for refreshments. This included a special "home style" Japanese dish that our master chef Carl prepared for the occasion.

At the end of the afternoon program, our visitors gave us a colorful hanging made of a thousand tiny paper origami cranes. An ancient Japanese legend promises that anyone who folds 1000 origami will be granted a wish by a crane. "Healing" is the wish of those who are suffering from the residual effects of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

We were deeply moved by their stories, especially by Toshiko's message that we must make friends with individual people around the world. We must stop seeing them as the "other."

More information is available at <http://www.hibakushastories.org/>

-- *Lucy Sikes*

## **History and Library Committees May Combine**

On May 31, members of the History and Library Committees considered the possibility of combining their membership and resources in an effort to energize and strengthen both committees by bringing more members and activities into the mix.

This past year the History Committee has presented one program on Quakers

and Slavery for both the Meeting and the First Day School. An index of historical data about the Meeting has been provided by Friends Historical Library. The library is now in the process of transferring this information to the internet so that it will be generally available and usable by our History Committee for Meeting and First Day School educational activities.

After a major effort to organize the library and add many new titles, the Library Committee has not met recently (although one member continues to monitor the collection). The library is rarely used at present, however, except for mail, dropping off miscellaneous items and by the Collections Committee on First Days after Meeting for Worship.

The combining of the two committees would create a larger membership, with the possibility of a broader range of creative ideas. It would bring library skills to the operation of the archives on the third floor. And it would open up the use of the library as a resource for a variety of educational presentations after Meeting for Worship. For example, the Pendle Hill Pamphlet Collection on the library shelves is a rich source of material for the Spiritual Reading group that meets on the second First Day at 10 a.m. The First Day School Committee is going to consider adding the history of Quakerism to next year's curriculum.

-- *Molly Rusnak*

## **One Meeting's Answer to Incarceration**

His name was Bill Nelson. He had transferred to Scarsdale Meeting at the same time we did, in 1971. Nelson brought with him, from Seattle Meeting, the experience of bailing out minor offenders. He was determined to do the same thing in Westchester. A few of us got together with him and raised \$500 from meeting members. Then two of us went to interview the warden of Westchester County Jail for a suggestion of whom we might bail out

for \$500. We then interviewed a Vietnam veteran who had passed a bad check at a liquor store; he was set free until his trial. One of us found him a low-level job and two others went to court with him. Possibly because of us, or because he had a job, he received probation. Then we got back our \$500.

That was the beginning. After three years, a few members of Purchase and Chappaqua Meeting joined us. We had \$2000, and we had bailed out and gone to courts throughout Westchester with well over a hundred occupants of the jail. We kept to \$500 per individual, which we reused over and over again. Many of these men received probation and some were helped with their problems and with employment. After three years, with the support of other groups (including judges, Legal Aid and the League of Women Voters), we were instrumental in obtaining a federal grant to provide pre-trial release for low-level offenders in Westchester County. Soon after that I moved back to Brooklyn, so I never found out what happened to the money. But knowing those Friends, I can imagine it was well used.

-- Molly Rusnak

## **Upcoming Hikes with Worship: An Invitation**

Hikes with Worship provide an opportunity to experience the Spirit while being active in nature among Friends.

Sun. August 2: Hike with Worship and Swimming

Sun. October 25: Hike with Worship and Fall Foliage

Each hike is different, depending on the route. In general, the hikes last all day, are 7 to 10 miles long, are "moderately strenuous" due to hill climbs, unbridged river crossings and

rocky, uneven terrain, and are a heck of a lot of fun. Typically, we take short breaks at scenic view points and, halfway through the hike, we sit for about 45 minutes of silent worship before eating lunch. Usually, we hike in Harriman State Park and travel by public transit.

There is no cost for the hikes other than the approximately \$22 for round-trip travel on public transit.

RSVP required.

For more information and to RSVP, contact Robert Matson: [robert.m.s.matson@gmail.com](mailto:robert.m.s.matson@gmail.com)

## **"Quakers aren't just anti-violence. Much of our work is pro-healing."**

The above quote is courtesy of John Calvi of Putney Meeting, Vermont. Calvi is a certified massage therapist specializing in trauma, and a Quaker healer with a spiritual gift for the release of emotional and physical pain following trauma. Since 1982 he has worked with rape survivors, people with AIDS, inmates and tortured refugees.

I first encountered his healing workshop at Friends General Conference in the 1980s. Later that decade, he came for a one-day retreat at Brooklyn Meeting. There, he taught us to use healing touch on each other.

-- *Lucy Sikes*

## **Brooklyn Monthly Meeting Newsletter to go on Summer Vacation**

The Communication Committee would like to inform the Meeting that there will be no issue of the newsletter in July and August. Article submissions will be accepted throughout the summer; the deadline for inclusion in the September issue is August 24.

Meanwhile, if you have an event you wish to promote, send to [events@brooklynmeeting.org](mailto:events@brooklynmeeting.org) and it will be listed on the website.

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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.*

### July 2015

#### July 19-July 25:

Silver Bay, New York

Summer NYYM Sessions

See link for registration and information:

<http://www.nyym.org/?q=SummerSessions2015>

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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 Gnyynn (clerk), Ben Hill, Molly Rusnak, Lucy Sikes, and Anna White.*

*Drawings by Lucy Sikes*

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