



# BROOKLYN MEETING NEWS

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

*brooklynmeeting.org*

**November 2015**

## **October Meeting for Business: New Members, a Marriage, Reports and a Minute Regarding Planned Parenthood**

### **New Members**

The Meeting approved and welcomed two new members: Colleen Cruz and Nadine Baldasare. DK Holland will convene a welcoming dinner for them.

### **Marriage Approved**

As members of Brooklyn Meeting, Colleen and Nadine will be married under the care of the Meeting. The Ministry and Oversight Committee has appointed an Oversight Committee for the wedding.

### **Brooklyn Meeting Approves a Minute Supporting Planned Parenthood**

A minute composed by Jim Morgan describing the work of Planned Parenthood and supporting the organization is read and considered. Friends strongly approve the minute to be sent to our representatives as well as to NY Yearly Meeting. The text of the minute is included in this Newsletter.

### **Socially Responsible Contribution Approved**

The Meeting approved a contribution of \$3000 from the Martha Ross Leigh Bequest for the work of Inquiring Minds USA. This was at the request of DK Holland.

### **The Meeting Property Committee Reports**

The Property Committee reported on their work with tenants, the garden, maintenance and renovation plans. They requested and received an additional \$1000 for the garden. Brick pointing and repair on the side of the building has been completed, and a wall constructed next to the Child Care Room. They announced that Brooklyn Meeting now has a part-time Building Supervisor, Celon Lewis, who is a certified Fire Safety Director as well. The committee plans to replace the climbing structure on the playground. The committee continues to work on tensions with the New York Explorers, our tenants, which need to be worked out when their lease expires in December.

### **Brooklyn Meeting to Co-sponsor an Evening Celebration of Indigenous People, coordinating with Ministry and Counsel Committee, on October 27**

Tom Rothschild will provide information on the program.

### **School Care Committees Announce Tentative Plans for a Quaker Education Fair**

Parents from both Mary McDowell and Brooklyn Friends Schools are invited to

worship with the Meeting on a special First Day. Brooklyn Friends are invited to join Mary McDowell students in silent worship by contacting the school.

*-- Molly Rusnak*

## **Minute For Planned Parenthood Federation of America, and, in Particular, Its Local Affiliate, Planned Parenthood of New York City**

*From Brooklyn Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, October 11, 2015:*

Brooklyn Monthly Meeting affirms its unwavering support of Planned Parenthood. Appalled, as are many around us, by recent political attacks on this beneficent organization, we take note of its contribution to our nation's well-being, especially for low income women.

Planned Parenthood provides affordable breast and cervical cancer screening, sexual and reproductive health care, contraceptive counseling, emergency contraception, HIV counseling and testing, testing for sexually transmitted infections, assistance to women enrolling in public and private insurance (including the Affordable Care Act), as well as surgical and medical abortion. In fact, in spite of media repetition, less than 10 percent of Planned Parenthood clients receive abortions. He will be even more missed, now that he has passed away.

*-- Jim Morgan*

## Observations on Meeting Finances, and What You Can Do To Help

At our last business meeting, Paul Flint of the collections committee reported that less than half of us, attenders and members alike, give any money to Brooklyn Meeting. Aren't you surprised to hear that? I am. I had no idea. 20 some odd years ago, when I started attending meeting regularly, I gave a modest amount on a monthly basis. Six years ago I got a promotion, so I increased the amount. I am going to increase that amount again, by a little. I believe no one should give anything if they are struggling financially, but surely more of us can give something. Perhaps on a monthly basis.

If nearly all of us gave something, even a little, it would make a big difference. There are two ways to give. To the left of the doorway into the social room, you will find envelopes on a table. You can use those to give to any member of our collections committee. Or you can arrange to pay something directly to the meeting, your bank account. Paul Flint can explain to you how that would work. I encourage you to give something, so that we can raise the percentage of attenders and members who financially support our meeting. Let's lift that number to more than half. Why not 80 percent?

I am motivated to raise this subject because, at our September business meeting, it was reported that we were far behind in collecting money to meet this year's budget. We were so far behind that the meeting lacked the confidence to come to unity on increasing our covenant donation by 4.5 percent (this is usually considered at our September meeting). I believe that we should increase the amount, but I and many of us were frightened that we wouldn't be able to raise what was needed for this year (let alone collecting more for next year).

Our budget is roughly \$89,000. So far this year we have collected \$31,000. That \$89,000 sum covers four expenses. The largest, \$43,000, is the covenant donation to the New York Yearly Meeting which helps to cover their administrative expenses. \$28,000 covers what our committees spend to accomplish their goals. \$2000 we give to Powell House, and \$15,000 covers the Socially Responsible Donations/Activity (the former New York Quarterly Meeting covenant donation). These sums add up to a lot of money but they don't seem unreasonable or extravagant to me. I believe we can, and should, raise these amounts.

Friends, we're far behind and need your generous support before the end of December if we're to raise the remaining \$52,000 we need to fund our activities and break even for the year.

-- Ted Ehrhardt



## A Ministry with a Formerly Incarcerated Friend

**Illuminated via an Exchange of Emails between Callie Janoff and Lucy Sikes**

**Callie:** I had the good fortune to be called to the bedside of a Friend named Jarrod Bolden last week while he was at

Brooklyn Hospital. He is a returning citizen; his experiences with Friends in prison made him want to reach out and connect with Brooklyn Meeting.

It seems he was released a couple of years ago into the care of a nursing home. He has multiple very serious health concerns that keep him wheelchair bound. He is legally blind, on dialysis and recently diagnosed with metastatic cancer. He doesn't have any friends or family at this point in his life.

He is a truly lovely person. He has an active mind, loves people and animals, being outside and good food. He would like to become connected to Brooklyn Meeting specifically and Quakers generally. He told me that he dreams of having an advocate that could visit him, take him for walks in his wheelchair and journey with him as a Friend as he faces this new medical challenge. I told him that I think the way to start is to get to know one another. To that end, I told him that I would see if we could add him to both our Light List and our attender mailing list. Though he can't see very well, it is my hope that if he gets mail he can find someone to read it to him. I was thinking he would also benefit from receiving a copy of the Light List via postal mail, so that he could join us in holding one another in the light.

**Lucy:** I have added Jarrod Bolden's name to the Light list. Does he have an email? You could certainly print out the Light List and carry it to him if you make a visit. It seems that, for the first time, a verbal explanation might be a good idea. You or I could mail it to him if we had an address. I can put him on the Light senders if he is a regular email user.

**Callie:** His address is:

c/o Brooklyn United Methodist Church Home  
Jarrod Bolden  
1485 Dumont Ave.  
Brooklyn, NY 11208

He's legally blind, so I'm not sure he would use a computer. I'm looking for

an ARCH [Aging Resources Consultation and Help] visitor who would like to make a connection with him. He asked if there were large print versions of things, so I know he can read these. If there is only small print stuff, I just hope that he can find someone to read to him. My heart just breaks for this sweet guy. He seems very isolated to me, and I thought that getting some mail from the Meeting might help him feel more connected, even if he can't read it himself.

**Lucy:** I printed the Light List out in very large letters and sent it in a greeting card to Jarrod, at the Methodist Home.

**Callie:** Thanks. I think that will be very meaningful to him, to be able to participate this way. I have asked other ARCH Visitors in the NYC area if anyone would like to visit. I haven't gotten any takers yet, though it has only been a few days. Helen Garay Toppins is looking for a formerly incarcerated able-bodied Friend in the area who might be able to visit, which I think he would also really enjoy.

Interested in carrying on this conversation? Can you help Jarrod get to know us better? You could send him a letter or card, make a visit for worship or fellowship, or hold him in the light. Please contact Callie Janoff at arch@nym to coordinate, and for support.

## **Event Announcement: Advance or Retreat? Changes in Quakerism from 1648 to 1710 and their Echoes Today**

**What:** A talk by Rich Acceta-Evans with group discussion

**When:** Sunday, November 15, 1 p.m.

**Where:** Fifteenth Street Friends Meetinghouse, 15 Rutherford Place, Manhattan

The Early Quaker Movement arose around 1648 with the preaching of George Fox and others. The movement grew rapidly and radically challenged

the religious, political, social and cultural order of its day. It met with violent opposition as a result. Over the early decades, thousands of Quakers were fined, dispossessed of their property, beaten, whipped, imprisoned or hanged.

Less than sixty years later the persecution had largely abated. Quakers were usually tolerated and well on the way to "respectability". In America, Quakers even held political power in the colony of Pennsylvania and in much of what is now New Jersey.

How much were these developments due to changes in the wider society and how much to changes in Quakerism itself? Did the Quaker movement partially succeed in its original mission, partially retreat from it, or both? What are the implications for how Quakers relate to the world around us today?

## **Meeting Member Brings Democracy to Public School Children**

In PS 20, serving a poverty-stricken area in Fort Greene, DK Holland has created an experimental program to give children real experiences with democracy. Three classrooms of third, fourth and fifth grade students are participating in "Kids Councils", with the goal of improving their own learning. This is a pilot project in cooperation with Long Island University and the Department of Education that, if successful, will make possible the expansion of "Kids Councils" to many more classrooms next year.

-- *Molly Rusnak*

## **Event Announcement: Beautiful Daughters to be screened at the Meetinghouse**

The LGBTQ Concerns Committee invites everyone to a screening of the short documentary Beautiful Daughters, in observance of the International Transgender Day of Remembrance. The screening will be held at Brooklyn Meeting at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, November 22. Following the film, we will have a discussion and memorial meeting for the transgender and gender-nonconforming people who have lost their lives to violence or suicide in the past year.

Film description: In February, 2004, with the help of Eve Ensler and Jane Fonda, a group of transgender women put on the first all-transgender production of The Vagina Monologues. The production included a new monologue written by Ensler, drawn from their own experiences.

## **John Bowne House Celebrates Anniversary, Quaker Hero**

The John Bowne House, located in Flushing, dates back to the 1600s and was the original home of religious freedom in New York City. New York was then owned by a commercial company, the Dutch East India Company. But the governor, Peter Stuyvesant, vigorously enforced religious conformity.

In 1662, the Flushing magistrates complained that many inhabitants were "followers of the Quakers who hold their meetings at the house of John Bowne." According to his diary, John Bowne was arrested. With his wife ill and a sick baby in his arms, he asked to see the order.

"But at last I saw it," he wrote. "By which order he was to take such as he could find in unlawful meetings but found me in none. So I told him I did deny to go on foot by virtue of that



order. He said he would bind me hand and foot and carry me....[The next day], like a wicked, hard hearted man, he carried me in a boat to Manhattan, leaving my family in that condition.”

John Bowne was held in jail in Manhattan until he could be sent back to the Netherlands for trial. He refused to walk to the ship and was dragged there. After a period of time he appeared before the tribunal of the East India Company and defended himself by appealing to the company guarantee of religious liberty in its charter. He was exonerated and sent home. The governor was ordered to maintain religious liberty to all sects in New York City.

John Bowne also participated in the first Quaker tax resistance by joining in a letter refusing to pay taxes for funds to repair the fort of New York based on the Peace Testimony.

This year and next Bowne House will be celebrating the anniversary of its landmark status. It is located in Flushing.

-- Molly Rusnak

## Property Committee Considers Changes to Meetinghouse Foyer and Bathrooms

On October 13, Property Committee members and a few invited Friends reviewed an architectural plan for renovating the first floor bathrooms and foyer of the Meetinghouse. Suggested changes to the bathrooms would include meeting handicapped compliance requirements, creating more space and eliminating one toilet.

The committee also discussed a plan for enlarging the foyer area, given the large attendance (approximately 120 worshippers) on First Days. Instead of replacing the old closet doors on the women's side, they are considering removing both closets entirely and replacing them with hooks for coats

along the wall. They are also considering moving the welcoming desk and cabinet to another part of the Meetinghouse.

Friends are invited to share their questions and views with the Property Committee.

-- Molly Rusnak

## Working to Fight the Racial Divide

I often hear Friends express a wish to see more diversity in the meeting and, more specifically, to see more African Americans. I believe that this is more than lip service to a politically correct position. I believe there is a deep longing in all of us to be free of racism and to bridge the chasm that negates our spiritual unity with all fellow creatures. But we have to overcome so much history, so much social inertia. Where do we start? In the October issue of Friends Journal, in an article entitled "Waking Up In The White Garden," Scott Holmes expressed so well this desire for inclusiveness. Holmes wrote that "As a community,

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**As a community, we are not going to grow a more inclusive garden by sitting around in silence, waiting for more African Americans to walk in the door of our Meetinghouses.**

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we are not going to grow a more inclusive garden by sitting around in silence, waiting for more African Americans to walk in the door of our Meetinghouses.”

Fortunately, we can rely on experienced partners with tools and resources to help us open a way. The Center for Study of White American Culture (CSWAC), is presenting a workshop at



our

Meetinghouse on White Accountability and Organizing on December 5. Asked to describe their work, Robin Alpern, Director of Training for CSWAC said that "[M]ore and more white people are realizing we have work to do in ending structural racism....[B]ut not only do we not know how to go about this work, we sometimes make things worse

because we plunge in within a white culture framework. We approach our activism like missionaries rather than as partners with people of color.

This workshop is intended to help us break through that pattern and gain more clarity about how to work in genuine collaboration.”

The workshop welcomes white people as well as people of color who support the activism of white people. Ministry and Counsel have provided scholarships which pay more than half of the tuition. To learn more and/or

register for this workshop, go to [www.euroamerican.org](http://www.euroamerican.org). You can also contact Linda Clarke, Naceo Giles or Robin Alpern for additional information.

## A Report From the Social Room

Many people know about the Community Dinners held in the social room the last Sunday of the month, but Ken Diamondstone and Joe Kopitz host a similar gathering every Monday. The meetings are called TOUCH dinners, an acronym that stands for The Outreach Using Communal Healing, and have been offered continuously since the mid-80s for people living in the community with HIV and AIDS.

Of the 20 or so people who come every week, many have participated for over a decade. The youngest attendees are in their 30's, the eldest in their 80's. The menu on Monday, October 12th included roast chicken and sausage, pasta and sauce, bread, salad, and

dessert from Betty's bakery on Atlantic Ave. A feast magically prepared on a budget of \$90 a week, mostly self-funded (though the Peace and Social Action Committee has donated \$1,000 to their efforts this year). Perelandra, the local health food store, also donates produce for people to take home, and indeed most are on food stamps and wouldn't make it through the month without access to options such as these.

Before food was served the group gathered in a circle and held hands. They introduced themselves; then spent a moment in silence calling out names of those who were gone. Conversation over dinner though was lively. Many of the men were single, explained one diner, and the group felt like family. "Being with people makes it easier to eat, when you might not have much of an appetite," he said.

It struck me, as it has on the occasions I've attended Community Dinner, that if bare necessity were the only reason people were there, it's unlikely that Ken and Joe, and others who volunteer their time, would find the energy to sustain

such a demanding commitment. The social room isn't just a free space, but a place that allows people to come together in ways they otherwise wouldn't. A moment holding hands, or the chance to talk with people in your community that you might not meet, or even the act of putting to use what might go to waste (from Perelandra)—these are rituals of thanks that benefit everyone involved. Whatever the circumstances that bring people to the table, these dinners are occasions that lend substance and insight to all who come.

*-Catherine Despont*

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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 **November 25th**.  
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)***

### November

**November 15 1:00PM:**

**Advance or Retreat? Changes in Quakerism  
from 1648 to 1710 and their Echoes Today**

(see article)

What: A talk by Rich Acceta-Evans with group  
discussion

Where: Fifteenth Street Friends Meetinghouse,  
15 Rutherford Place, Manhattan

**November 22 1:30PM:**

**Beautiful Daughters to be screened at the  
Meetinghouse** (see article)

**November 29 1:00PM-5:00PM:**

**Thanksgiving Community Dinner**

Bring a turkey or pie to the Meetinghouse for  
this annual event!

### December

**December 5 9:00AM- 3:00PM:**

**Anti Racist Workshop**

The Center for Study of White American Culture  
(CSWAC) is presenting an anti racist workshop  
at the Meetinghouse on Saturday, Dec. 5th The  
workshop welcomes white people and people of  
color who support the activism of white  
people. M&C has provided scholarships for  
BMM members and attenders in the amount of  
\$45, more than half the total tuition of \$75.  
You can register at [www.euroamerican.org](http://www.euroamerican.org) and  
use the promocode BROOKQUAKE.

**December 5:**

Our Quarterly Meeting brings Arthur  
Larrabee back to New York to give his  
classic Quaker workshop, "Clerking with  
Joy and Confidence," at Fifteenth Street  
meetinghouse. Friends who  
do **not** already know the skills and  
philosophy needed to become an effective  
clerk of Friends' committees or meetings

will learn, discuss and practice them, and  
take home a notebook rich with resource  
material. The goal is to widen the range  
of local Friends who can serve us joyfully  
and well as clerks. Lunch is provided,  
and the cost is covered by the QM's  
Ministry & Counsel committee. But it's  
limited to 40 people – so register with the  
NYQM office at [212-777-8866](tel:212-777-8866), or e-  
mail [NewYorkQuarterlyMeeting@gmail.com](mailto:NewYorkQuarterlyMeeting@gmail.com)  
[om](http://www.brooklynmeeting.org) .

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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: Catherine Despont, Eli Gnynn (clerk), Ben Hill, Molly Rusnak, Lucy Sikes, and Anna White.*

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