



# BROOKLYN MEETING NEWS

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

*brooklynmeeting.org*

**June 2016**

## **Brooklyn Meeting: Stages in My Understanding of Our Sacred Space**

### **Reflections on the Visions Meeting, regarding the Future of NYQM**

When I was a young attender at Brooklyn Meeting, I was amazed at how well run it was. I enjoyed the beautiful meeting room. I felt taken care of. My spiritual life was nurtured by many elders, who gradually introduced me to the ways of Quakerism. Little did I know how much organization was accomplished by the numerous committees in the meeting. The work done by Ministry & Oversight (renamed Ministry & Counsel) and Property Committee; the care and education of children; tending the garden; the bouquet of flowers (our only decoration in a simple and peaceful meeting room).

About 15 years in to my Quaker journey, I joined the Property committee. Through this, I came to understand how much effort and time went into decisions centered on keeping the building as beautiful as it could be. Later, I joined the Trustees and found a higher level of organization. There was long-term planning for major expenses such as painting the bricks, replacing the huge windows that we enjoy in the meeting space, repaving the playground and redoing the roof. Now retired from

these efforts, I watch a new generation of members and attenders dealing with the architectural implications of having such a large and growing meeting.

The final stage of my growth comes in understanding that the responsibility of the meeting is stewardship. We must maintain the building in harmony with the environment, finding ways to be a “beacon on the hill” and an exemplar of sustainable living.

The testimonies by which we live are Simplicity, Peace, Integrity,



Community, Equality and our newest testimony comes full circle back to “S”: Stewardship.

-- Lucy Sikes

## **May Meeting for Business Welcomes a New Member, Oversees a Marriage, Hears Reports, Approves Memorial Minute**

### **Transfer of Membership and Marriage Are Approved**

The transfer of Morgan Wajda-Levie from the Austin, Texas Monthly Meeting was approved. His marriage to Josephine Wheelright under the care of Brooklyn Monthly Meeting has been cleared by the the Ministry and Counsel Committee and Austin Monthly Meeting and will take place in Austin in June.

### **Memorial Minute for Larry Jaeger**

The Assistant Clerk read a Memorial Minute for Larry Jaeger, long time member of Brooklyn Meeting. It was considered in silence and approved.

### **Audit Committee Report**

The Audit Committee Annual Report was presented by Helen Mullin. The report covered restricted funds from the Book Table, the Flower Fund and the Community Dinner Fund and

unrestricted funds from collections. The report made several suggestions. It encouraged committees to report deposits to the treasurer in triplicate. It also encouraged flexibility and developing imaginative ways to use restricted funds for meeting needs, rather than simply holding them.

### **Treasurer Reports**

The Meeting Treasurer reported that the meeting had, on April 23,

\$3,680.38 in a savings account and \$64,548.60 in a checking account.

### **Welcoming Committee Report**

The Welcoming Committee sponsored three events this past year to help Friends and Attenders become better acquainted and communicate with each other. Those events were the annual Contra Dance, a Family Game Night and a potluck for Committee Clerks. The committee greeted at the front entrance each First Day and kept a record of attendance at Meeting for Worship, which was slightly higher than last year. The average attendance was 111 adults and 14 children.

### **Peace and Social Action Report**

The main activity of the Peace and Social Action Committee was to recommend to the Meeting how the Socially Responsible Donation Fund should be distributed. Recipients this year included the following:

- Columbine Loza, to participate in a Central American Friend's work experience project.
- Paul van Linden Tol, to attend a Pendle Hill conference on Criminal Justice Reform.
- The ARCH Transition campaign to serve older adults.
- Lyn Pyle's organization DREAM! Safety with Dignity program, providing conflict resolution activities for high school students
- Funding for the "Waking Up From the Nuclear Nightmare" forum.
- Ken Diamondstone and Joe Kopitz for their monthly Touch Dinner for people living with AIDs.

Any funds left over are automatically given to Powell House, American Friends Service Committee, Friends Committee on Legislation and the Yearly Meeting Alternative to Violence Project.

-- Molly Rusnak

### **Brooklyn Meeting Remembers Larry Jaeger**

Lawrence Jaeger, a longtime and much-beloved member of Brooklyn Monthly Meeting, was born on January 2, 1925 and died on July 29, 2015 at home in Foxdale Village in State College, Pennsylvania. He and his wife, Ina, who survives him, had lived there since December 2000. At Foxdale Village he served as a member of the Board of Directors of the State College Friends School. He was preceded in death by his first wife Ann and is survived by his children Lisa, Peter and Lucas and numerous grandchildren.

Larry was born and grew up in Brooklyn. He graduated from Brooklyn College and received a Master's degree from the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. He worked in book publishing and advertising copywriting and as a specialist in the writing, design and production of space advertising and direct mail promotion and later as a freelance writer and consultant. Before moving back to Brooklyn in 1968, he taught writing and American literature at the Oakwood School and headed the publication program there.

Larry became a member of the Religious Society of Friends in 1959 at the Stamford Greenwich Monthly Meeting (Connecticut). He transferred his membership to Brooklyn when he moved there with his family. He served as clerk in Brooklyn for five years. He also served three years as the clerk of the New York Quarterly Meeting and served as a member of the Board of Trustees there. He taught at Brooklyn Friends School, originating and teaching a course on "Moral Values, Moral Choices." He served on numerous committees at Brooklyn Meeting including the Powell House retreat and the discussion group committees. At Brooklyn Meeting he is especially remembered for the Bible stories he dramatized for many years in First Day School. The children would sit in rapt attention in a circle with Larry. He would get to a pivotal point and

say that the story would break to be continued the next week. Everyone, long-timers and newcomers, were amazed by his ability to greet Friends and attenders by their names. He welcomed newcomers into social hour, made them feel at home and was mentor to many. Throughout his life he was on a spiritual quest for self-knowledge. And he exemplified a degree of integrity and humility rarely seen.

Before Larry and Ina left for Foxdale Village, Brooklyn Meeting celebrated their transition to Pennsylvania with a wonderfully moving farewell Meeting for Worship that focused on their lives in Brooklyn. The Meeting was thus able to share with them their great love and respect while he was still alive.

### **Quarterly Meeting Friends Consider Future of Quakers and Quaker Properties in New York City**

On Saturday, May 14, Brooklyn Meetinghouse was filled with Friends from around the Quarterly Meeting. They came together for a day of worship and shared their vision of what Quakers' presence in New York should be and how their buildings could support that vision. The format was a combination of all group participation and small groups meeting and reporting back. The workshop was presented by the "Urban Projects Collaborative/Stone House Group" and sponsored by Quarterly Meeting Trustees.

The workshop was organized around queries based on the testimonies of Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality and Stewardship. They suggested ways that these testimonies can be implemented through planning, decisions, actions and use of spaces with reference to the history of the Meetings.

Ideas and suggestions in both large and small groups centered on the concern that Quakers be more involved with the larger New York City community and that our buildings serve as a means of doing this. Friends brought up activities such as the Newgate Project in Brooklyn Meeting, the homeless shelter at Fifteenth Street, space use by YSOP, the Touch Aids Dinner, the Community Dinner and Peace and Civil Rights witness. It was pointed out that Quakers try to “seed” projects in a small way so that they become larger public or private programs. The Meetings also use their properties to provide space for socially active groups.

The consensus reached by the larger group is that we Quakers implement whatever changes are practical in our properties to expand our community involvement and social action.

Brooklyn Meeting will have a follow-up worship sharing on the future of Brooklyn Meetinghouse on June 15 at 6:00 PM.

-- Molly Rusnak

## News from the Property Committee

Much-needed new chairs and tables have been purchased for the social room. The old chairs and tables are available for donation. If you know of an organization that might be able to use them, please let someone on the property committee know the name of the organization and who to contact.

We are also working to improve conditions in the kitchen. If your committee has any food stored in the refrigerator, freezer or cupboards, please be sure the food is labeled so that it doesn't accidentally get thrown out.

-- Linda Clarke

## Notes from the Property Committee

**Kitchen:** In order to help us manage the intensive multiple uses of our kitchen we ask the following:

- Please label everything stored in the refrigerator and freezer. Tape and pen have been hung on the refrigerator for this purpose.
- Please check with the committee before contributing any equipment to the kitchen.

Discussion of how best to renovate the kitchen will begin soon. If you have any ideas of suggestions, please contact the committee.

**Tables and chairs:** In the near future, we will be receiving new tables and chairs for the Social Hour Room. Some of the existing tables and chairs are suitable for reuse. If you would be interested in taking any of them or know of an organization that would, please contact the committee.

**Personal Property:** The committee wishes to remind you that everyone is responsible for his or her own belongings while in the Meeting House. The Library Committee requests that things not be left in the library.

**Second Visioning Meeting:** All are urged to attend on Tuesday evening, June 15, in the meeting room (exact time TBD). This meeting solely concerns Brooklyn Monthly Meeting; we want to discuss our ideas for how we want to develop as a meeting and the implications for how we want to use our properties.

## Attention New Members

Powell House, the retreat center for the New York Yearly Meeting in Old Chatham, NY, joyfully offers new members one free weekend conference. This was approved by the Powell House Committee in January 2014. Please go to the Powell House

website [www.powellhouse.org](http://www.powellhouse.org) to find a conference to which you are led and then contact Sharon Koomler at [info@powellhouse.org](mailto:info@powellhouse.org) or [518-794-8811](tel:518-794-8811) to register for your free new member conference.

## Brooklyn Monthly Meeting Friends Discuss Between the World and Me

On Sunday, April 24<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. approximately twenty Brooklyn Monthly Meeting members and attenders met in a discussion group co-sponsored by the Adult Education Subcommittee and the Peace and Social Action Committee. We discussed Ta-Nehisi Coates' most recent book, *Between the World and Me*.

Discussion was started with reading Query 12:

*Do we acknowledge the oneness of humanity and foster a loving spirit toward all people? Do we honor Friends' traditional testimony that men and women are equal?*

*How do we work to make these ideals a reality?*

Most of the participants had read the book and a few had felt uncertain about choosing to read it, having been warned that it was too depressing. Almost all felt that the tone of the book was bleak. Coates writes to his son about his experience as a black man in our country, recalling his earliest experiences growing up in Baltimore and then moving on to manhood.

Throughout the book there is an ongoing theme of how to protect his body from harm, a constant and all-pervading concern, which begins with his earliest memories and persists throughout his life. Needless to say, he has the same concerns for his son. The persistent threat of physical violence

that afflicts black males in our society comes through vividly, as does the consequent mental and emotional violence. Coates appears pessimistic about the prospect of change in the situation. Among the many facets of our discussion, the question about the apparent hopelessness was prominent, leading us to consider the topics of hope and faith and overcoming the weight of despair. While we might have walked away feeling overwhelmed by the enormity of the task of creating change, somehow many left with a feeling of rededication to the struggle for equality. If you weren't there, you missed something special.

-- Linda Clarke

## **Book Review: The Firebrand and the First Lady**

This book, written by Patricia Bell-Scott, resonates with Quaker testimonies. It illuminates the lives of two American heroes: First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and Anna Pauline "Pauli" Murray, an African-American activist. They forged a friendship that lasted from the 1930s until the early 1960s.

It began when Pauli Murray wrote Eleanor Roosevelt a letter expressing disagreement with President Franklin Roosevelt's domestic policy.

Ms. Murray demanded the President address the violence directed at African-Americans in the South. Eleanor Roosevelt would eventually respond that her husband faced huge unwillingness by members of Congress to draft legislation aimed at protecting African-Americans.

Ms. Murray and Ms. Roosevelt eventually met one another at a social event. Ms. Murray was an activist who pushed for the constitutional rights of an African-American man wrongfully condemned for murder. She was also poet and author who graduated from Howard University Law School in the

1940s. She subsequently practiced law.

Mrs. Roosevelt lobbied her husband to expand the rights of African-Americans who had served the United States during World War II. She flew with a black pilot who was a Tuskegee Airman to demonstrate African-Americans were competent to defend the United States.

Although Mrs. Roosevelt and Pauli Murray did not always agree about how to achieve racial equality, they spent time together with family and fellow social activists. Pauli Murray graduated from the University of California Berkley Law School with an LLM degree. She later graduated from Yale University with a Science of Law degree in 1965. Pauli subsequently attended the General Theological Seminary in New York City, where she was ordained. She described her seminary experience as "the hardest thing" she had ever done.

Eleanor Roosevelt continued to champion human rights worldwide and women's rights; she was appointed by President John F. Kennedy to serve at the United Nations to further these causes. Mrs. Roosevelt was active with the Wiltwyck School for Boys in upstate New York.

--- Gary Greene

## **Former BMM Attender and Award-Winning Actor Advocates for Syrian Refugees**

F. Murray Abraham, who attended Brooklyn Meeting in the past, is now a respected television, movie and stage actor. Abraham spoke on May 17 at a Congressional briefing, advocating help and a home for victims of the Syrian civil war. He himself was the child of a Syrian refugee who found a new home in the United States.

-- Molly Rusnak

## **Meeting Library Re-examined**

Paul von Linden Tol, professional librarian and Meeting member, reviewed the library and provided several suggestions to the committee to encourage more use of the library by making our collection more relevant and attractive. He has had experience at the library at Union Theological Seminary and shared with us their current thinking about organizing a religious library. Instead of focusing narrowly on Quakerism, he suggested we expand the range of books we provide to other religions, philosophy, religious history, moral and social issues and the work of Quakers and others to bring our testimonies and witness to the world.

We can also organize the library shelves around themes or subject matter areas rather than the limited Dewey decimal system. We can display books, especially children's books, in a more friendly way and add adult books of current interest to keep Friends up to date. Whether these efforts will increase circulation -- which last year was three books -- remains to be seen.

The History/Library Committee thanks the volunteers who recently carded and recorded new books.

-- Molly Rusnak

## **Outdoor Meeting for Worship**

For a refreshing break during the week, all are invited to join Downtown Manhattan Meeting's outdoor worship every Thursday at 6:00 pm. We have benches at the Labyrinth in Battery Park, which is between the huge Castle Clinton and the intersection of Battery Place and West Street. If it's raining, we don't meet, but if the weather is iffy we

show up and see how it goes. Through September, you'll bask in Harbor

breezes, surrounded by greenery among a few local and visiting

Friends. Details: ask Andy von Salis, Barbara Kuesell or Beth Kelly.

---

## Submission Guidelines

---

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 June 20<sup>th</sup>.

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!

---

## Regularly Scheduled Activities

---

### 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  
6:00 PM, every Thursday, weather permitting  
through September, outdoor worship under  
the Quarterly Meeting's care in Battery Park  
(Manhattan) at the Labyrinth just north of  
Castle Clinton

### 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

---

## Upcoming Events

---

*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)***

### June

***Friday, June 17 to Sunday, June 19 NYC:***  
Regional Young Adult Concerns Party: For all  
Friends who graduated from High School after  
1990. For updates contact: Emily Provance .

### July

***Sunday, July 24, 2016 - 6:00pm - Saturday, July  
30, 2016 - 6:00pm:***  
Summer Sessions at Silverbay. This year's  
Summer Sessions theme, based on the NYYM

Leadings & Priorities, is "Nurturing the Blessed  
Community at Every Age."

---

*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: Melissa Cavanaugh, Catherine Despont, Ben Hill, Molly Rusnak, Lucy Sikes, and Anna White.*

*Drawing by Lucy Sikes*

---