



# BROOKLYN MEETING NEWS

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

*brooklynmeeting.org*

**September 2016**

## **New York Yearly Meeting Epistle, 2016**

To Friends everywhere:

New York Yearly Meeting met at Silver Bay, New York, on the seventh month, from 24<sup>th</sup> day through the 30<sup>th</sup> day, in this our 321<sup>st</sup> gathering for Summer Sessions. In attendance were 476 Friends including 106 in Junior Yearly Meeting.

We lived and reflected upon how Friends best nurture the Blessed Community at every age. We recognized that the blessed community exists among us to be faithfully discovered anew at every turn. We can nurture the blessed community with faithful listening and a readiness to grow and change, even—perhaps especially—when

growth and change are hard. We learned from our new Children and Youth Field Secretary, our Young Adult Field Secretary, our ARCH [Aging Resources Consultation & Help] Director, and our General Secretary, many ways that, by hearing deeply the needs of Friends and potential Friends, we can grow our faithful community so we welcome and learn from one another. This year we began two experiments. One was starting each day with a gathering of the whole community in worship; we found beautiful ways, in storytelling, song, play, and one-on-one responses to queries, to share the indwelling spirit with young and older friends. Several Friends remarked that they

experienced the gathered body as more inclusive this year. Another innovation was “Whisper Buddies,” the pairing of experienced Friends with those new to Meeting for Business, to explain the work of the Meeting.

Friends who attended the Friends World Committee for Consultation conference in Peru reported rich



encounters with Friends around the world, with great energy around the work of young adults.

We yearn for a more economically and racially diverse body. We actively await leadings that envision action to move toward that yearning, including discernment around the Pay as Led payment system. In Meeting for Discernment, Friends dwelt on the need for trust as leadings unfold: trust in one another and trust in The Source. We honored those who have cared for our Yearly Meeting, some of whom are stepping down after long service. As change comes to the Yearly Meeting, we consider what we wish to become.

In this year of terrible racial violence, we were especially tender about barriers to community that arise from the persistence of racism: how difficult it is to expel the legacy of white privilege, how painful it is that so many Friends and potential Friends are kept from us by mass incarceration and an unequal criminal legal system, by money and time

constraints. We marveled anew at the strength of spirit with which some Friends surmount these obstacles. Friends’ awareness of racism and privilege was amplified by more than

one hundred New York Yearly Meeting Friends’ attendance at the Seventeenth White Privilege Conference. We rededicated ourselves to advancing a more equal society that recognizes that of God in every person. Our search for Truth as individual Friends and as a body demands that we seek to create a Blessed Community that is available to all. As Jesus instructed his followers at the end of a chapter we considered in Bible Study, “love one another, as I have loved you” (John 13:34).

-- *Lucinda Antrim, Clerk NYYM*

## **A Minute of Appreciation for Joe Garren**

*Joe Garren is moving on from his position as Pendle Hill's director of operations. In recognition of his work the, the **following minute** was issued.*



Our cherished Friend Joe Garren has been an integral part of the Pendle Hill community since May 2008. Bringing skills from years of restaurant, hospitality, Quaker volunteerism, and event services, Joe has served as the Director of Operations, a core role for all that unfolds at Pendle Hill. Joe also brought with him deep and abiding spiritual gifts and experience from which we have benefitted greatly. During his tenure, Joe has helped lead the effort to establish fiscal responsibility along with increased income through improved services. He has guided and overseen an incredible number of staff members who make the food and the beds, and most especially, welcome our many guests with radical hospitality. Imbued with his Quaker faith, Joe has created a ministry of seeking and outreach to

visitors and staff. His witness has helped spread the word of the Religious Society of Friends.

Through these years, Joe has continued to serve New York Yearly Meeting to which he will return as he departs from Pendle Hill. He leaves us with memories of his ministry, hard work and long hours, exquisite flower arrangements, singing in the hallways, deep presence in daily worship, and his prompt and loving attention to our visitors and his joyful smile.

*-- Gretchen T. Hall, on behalf of the Pendle Hill Board*

## **New York Yearly Meeting General Secretary Announces Resignation**

After twelve years of leading New York Yearly Meeting, Christopher Sammond announced at Yearly Meeting Summer Sessions that he will be leaving his position.

Christopher described the ways he and his staff have

strengthened the Monthly Meetings through a spiritual nurture program ("Tending the Garden"), an improved website, workshops designed to help Meetings share their "gifts" with their communities and social witness including a well-attended "White Privilege" Conference.

Aside from maintaining and nurturing the Yearly Meeting, he has also faced the daunting prospect of a gradually decreasing membership, particularly in upstate New York, resulting in financial problems present and future. In his report to the membership this summer, he explained addressing this situation by hiring a Youth Field Secretary and building up youth and children's activities. This was an investment in future membership but, as he pointed out, it placed additional

stress on the present financial situation.

Following up on the financial and membership concerns he has raised, the Yearly Meeting, looking forward to a new General Secretary, needs to build on Christopher's efforts by finding a leader who will continue to work creatively on expanding membership. One example might be starting new Meetings or Worship groups in population centers and Universities in the state.

*-- Molly Rusnak*

## **July Meeting for Business: Committee Reports and Requests**

### **Book Table Committee Gives Annual Report**

The Committee sold basic Quaker books and pamphlets every First Day during Social Hour. This past year it held a used book sale from which \$500 was donated to the Meeting. The Committee is considering whether to continue holding book sales.

### **Peace and Social Action Committee recommends a Donation**

The Meeting approved a suggested socially responsible donation from the Peace and Social Action Committee for \$1000 to "City Voices", a publication for mental health consumers. to replace revenue from discontinued pharmaceutical advertisements.

"City Voices" sponsors conferences and workshops, publishes personal recovery stories and provides a career ladder for Peer Specialists in Mental Health.

### **Ministry and Counsel Committee Receives Additional Funds**

The Meeting approved a \$2000 increase in the budget of the Ministry and Counsel Committee to cover

scholarship for Meeting Friends to attend Friends General Conference, the White Privilege Conference sponsored by New York Yearly Meeting and Summer Sessions of New York Yearly Meeting.

### **On August 7, Special Called Meeting Welcomes New Members**

Two Friends were accepted and welcomed into membership in Brooklyn Meeting. They are Columbine Loza, who will be attending Whittier College in California and Maureen McGovern, transferring from Fifteenth Street Meeting.

-- Molly Rusnak

### **From Our Library: "An American Quaker Inside Nazi Germany"**

Hiding in our library is a treasure: the personal story of Brooklyn Meeting member Leonard Kenworthy regarding his Quaker service in Nazi Germany in 1940 and 1941. Very few Brooklyn Friends still remember Leonard Kenworthy, once an active member of our Meeting, who served on the Ministry and Counsel Committee and the Brooklyn Friends School Committee as well as giving frequent messages in Meeting for Worship.

In this little book, which is based on his diary while in Germany, Leonard asks the obvious questions: "What were Quakers doing in Germany during the holocaust?" and "Why did the Nazi regime allow them to do it?"

The Quaker International Center in Berlin was a tiny group of Friends who were helping Jewish Germans to escape from Germany before being sent to the death camps. As to why they were allowed to stay and do this, Leonard speculates that perhaps they were too small to notice, perhaps the regime simply wanted to get rid of

Jews and didn't care how or perhaps there was the memory of how Quakers had helped Germans after World War I.

Kenworthy writes that "From June, 1940 to June 1941, I worked in Nazi Germany as Director of the Quaker International Center in Berlin under the auspices of the American Friends Service Committee and a steering committee composed almost entirely of German Quakers. In that capacity I aided persons, who had been labeled 'Jewish' by the Hitler government, in emigrating from that troubled land.... It was a strenuous year for a young man in his late 20's -- the most demanding of my life. But it was also the most fascinating and rewarding."

In his account, Leonard estimates that approximately 1000 people were helped to emigrate from Germany by the Center, about 100 during the year he was there. It was difficult to find countries who would accept these immigrants. Among the countries that did were Ecuador, Cuba, Brazil, the U.S. and Japan. Obtaining passports was complicated and difficult.

The Center was supported by the Berlin Friends Meeting, which met openly at that time. It was a large Meeting with 70 or more at Meeting for Worship on First Days. Though he and other Quakers were questioned occasionally and were anxious for themselves and people they associated with, they continued their work with the emigration project and also helped allied prisoners of war with little interference from the regime.

Unfortunately, during the time I knew Leonard, I was not aware of his time in Germany and so did not share with him my summer experience as a college student serving in Berlin with the YM/YWCA in the summer of 1950 after the war. I did have contact with students working with the Friends Service Committee who spent that summer picking up bricks left from the allied bombing of Berlin.

-- Molly Rusnak

### **Recharge, Renew, Rejoice**

*On August 12-14, the Fellowship of Friends of African Descent held their annual gathering at Arch Street Friends Meeting in Philadelphia, PA. The theme of the gathering was Recharge, Renew, Rejoice. Affirming the presence of God in all people, Friends gathered for three days of worship, worship with a concern for business, presentations and fellowship. The gathering explored the concerns and crises facing the African American community, including state-sanctioned violence against men, women and children of African descent. A minute was created to express the Fellowship's testament concerning the state-sanctioned violence against people of African descent.*

*Other topics included an upcoming trip to Ghana, which grew out of the mission of the Fellowship to uplift Quakers of African Descent around the world; the finances of the Fellowship and the need for more financial support from the wider Quaker community; workshops on Black-Palestinian Solidarity and nurturing self-care for body and soul; and the plight of the children of those who have been devoured by the mass incarceration machine. For more information on the meeting, please visit [www.fofad.org/2016-gathering.html](http://www.fofad.org/2016-gathering.html).*

*During the gathering, the following minute was approved for circulation to Friends and concerned communities worldwide:*

The Fellowship of Friends of African Descent is a 25 year old Quaker organization that supports the spiritual nurture of Quakers of African descent and provides opportunities for the sharing of our concerns. As those of us in the United States witness the media portrayal of high profile police

violence and the resulting racial tensions, we are moved by our compassion for our communities to call for action that will lead to justice and respect, particularly for black men but also for black women and children in America. We stand with those who have identified bigotry, structural racism and state sanctioned violence as historical and continuing sources of senseless suffering and death among our people.

We grieve the loss of any human life, including the lives of police. However, the presence of the police too often seems like an occupying force designed to protect and serve an invisible elite instead of protecting those who reside in our communities. We also recognize that the violence and tragic killing of innocent civilians have touched so many in our communities. We believe that these evil forces cannot be overcome through retribution and retaliation, and can only be overcome through respect, resources and love. Jesus taught us that the love of God and our neighbor is the greatest commandment.

The problems of racism, militarism and violence that we face are rooted in a deeper, less recognized sicknesses of materialism and greed. From the slave trade and plantation economies of the American south to the terroristic subjugation of Jim Crow to the modern-day profits of miseducation and mass incarceration, racial stereotypes have been used to mask and justify the exploitation and denial of economic human rights to people of African descent. As a result, these communities are under-resourced as is evidenced by the lack of jobs, healthcare, quality education and decent housing. In the absence of real opportunities for employment and economic self-sufficiency underground economies rise up in our communities to fill the gap. People in these economies are criminalized and

prosecuted even though they are only seeking to provide enough resources to support their families. We realize that we cannot have a meaningful conversation about ending racial oppression without also addressing classism, joblessness and wealth inequality.

In response to these realities, we, as Quakers and as people of African descent call for the following:

1. PEACEFORCE. The training, support and employment of a “peaceforce” consisting of police officers and community based peacekeepers, none of whom are armed. The peacekeepers will be local residents who have the community relationships and street credibility (especially with young people) to cultivate the capacity and inclination for the use of non-violent methods for de-escalating conflict. [Returning citizens are an important resource for this work.]

2. PEACE CENTERS. The development and support of ‘peace centers’ in our communities which will provide safe havens, educational, cultural and recreational opportunities for young people in our communities. Quaker Alternatives to Violence trainings can be redesigned to be rooted in the cultural experience of African people. These centers will also function as spaces where Quaker worship and values can be modelled and developed.

3. COMMUNITY TRAINING. Police training will be ongoing and consistent including sub-conscious bias training that is not just academic but rather is community based. Police departments need to revamp their training so its members are trained to deescalate potentially dangerous situations and are not expected to “shoot to kill” in every situation they consider dangerous.

4. DISARMAMENT. Promoting the disarming of our communities (including segments of the police force responsible for minor offenses) through the elimination of handguns, rifles and automatic weapons. We realize that this goal is long term and will require a cultural shift from our current reliance on violence to solve social problems. However, we believe that we are all safer without guns than with them.

In the words of the poet, Nikki Giovanni, “Black love is Black wealth.” We as Quakers of African descent are making a personal commitment to these ends and invite others to join us in this effort. We call on Friends’ organizations to use some part of our substantial corporate investments to support this work.

### ***“I Am a White Racist”***

My neck twisted past my left shoulder to see who had just made this jaw-dropping statement. It was July, 2014, at a Prisons Committee Meeting at Silver Bay. It was a white woman, well past middle aged, who had spoken. Here was an individual taking ownership of her racism. Making it conscious and therefore changeable. I was flabbergasted, intrigued and had to know more. I soon discovered the steadfast labors of some NYYM Friends, working to heal racism which has been going on for many years.

European American Quakers Working to End Racism (EQWER) and NYYM's Task Group on Racism have been quietly and persistently educating for many years now to create an equitable society. One organization that has grown out of these concerns is the Center for Study of White American Culture (CSWAC). CSWAC workshops provide a safe and nurturing place to examine how racism has been inbred and continuous in our culture without our permission -- perhaps even against our will.

I must tell you that I have experienced an amazing healing around my own racism as a result of these workshops. This is all the more amazing because I had previously thought myself to be free of racism! I don't have words to tell you how much difference this healing has made in my life or how eager I am to share this life-enhancing experience with others.

On October 1, 2016, there will be a workshop at Brooklyn Meetinghouse: "What White People Can Do About Racism: Fundamentals 1." Scholarships are available. For more information and registration visit [www.euroamerican.org](http://www.euroamerican.org)

-- Linda Clarke

## **New York Quarterly Meeting and Friends Seminary Reach Agreement for Separate Incorporation of Friends Seminary**

After long and detailed discussions, an agreement has been reached which will provide the structure for a new relationship between Quarterly Meeting and Friends Seminary. The agreement includes ownership and use of buildings and finances. Some



### **Pancake Breakfast**

*First Day School will resume at 11:00 on September 11 after a summer break. To celebrate, the new session will kick off with a pancake breakfast at 10:00 that morning. All are welcome.*

school buildings on 16<sup>th</sup> Street will be owned by the school, some will be on long leases. The Meetinghouse complex will be owned by the Meeting, with shared use and maintenance of particular spaces covered by the school. Friends Seminary will pay an annual maintenance to the Quarter for these spaces and also into a joint fund for capital expenses. The Quarterly Meeting will give Friends Seminary \$20,500 worth of development, or "air" rights, which they need for their current expansion project on 16<sup>th</sup> Street.

This agreement and separate incorporation means that, though the Quarterly Meeting will no longer be legally and financially responsible for Friends Seminary, Quarterly Meeting Friends will continue to serve on the

Board of Trustees of the school who will report annually to the Quarter. Other requirements are included in an Essential Principles, Practices and Procedures Agreement.

Brooklyn Friends know from experience that the separately incorporated Quaker schools in Brooklyn are able remain connected to the Monthly Meeting through our Care Relationship Committee, our annual dinner together and school families attending worship every year. It is hoped that 15<sup>th</sup> Street Meeting and Friends Seminary can do the same.

-- Molly Rusnak

## **Event Announcement: FUN in the Great Outdoors**

The New York Friends in Unity with Nature (FUN) committee invites you to attend our meeting at 15th Street Monthly Meeting on Sunday, September 25 at 12:30 p.m. (after the 11 a.m. Meeting for Worship). FUN, based in New York City, welcomes Friends from all New York City Meetings.

FUN is re-envisioning its mission in light of the deteriorating conditions of our planetary home. One important new focus is changing our perspective from a human-centered consciousness to one that is rooted in the Sacred Earth Community. What kind of work will this new perspective call for? Come join us to share ideas and learn what projects we are planning.

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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 September 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!

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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  
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

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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)***

#### **September**

***Sunday, September 11 at 10:00 AM: Brooklyn  
Meeting Pancake Breakfast***

***Sunday, September 25: 15<sup>th</sup> st Meetinghouse  
FUN in the Great Outdoors (see article)***

***Thursdays in September at 6:00 PM:***  
Outdoor meeting for worship downtown at the  
Labyrinth in Battery Park. Weather permitting.

#### **October**

***Saturday, October 1: Brooklyn Meetinghouse  
“What White People Can Do About Racism:  
Fundamentals 1.”***

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

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