



BROOKLYN MEETING NEWS

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

brooklynmeeting.org

October 2016

A Marriage Between Members and Meetings

A marriage creates a special bond between two people, and often between two families. But this summer, a marriage created a bond between two meetings when the Brooklyn Monthly Meeting and the Austin Monthly Meeting came together to hold under their care the marriage of Morgan Wajda-Levie and Josephine Wheelwright. Because Morgan had been a longtime member of the Austin Meeting, he felt it was important for that meeting to be represented in the process.

The oversight committee for the marriage brought together four members of Brooklyn Meeting (Ben Frisch, Callie Janoff, Tom Rothschild and Amy Whiffen) as well as Liz Yeats from Austin. The committee met twice in person and also kept in touch via e-mail and phone prior to the marriage, which was held in yet another location – the Wheelwright farm in Gallatin, Columbia County. The four Brooklyn members traveled to the rehearsal on the night before the marriage, where they had the opportunity to share some of the customs and practices of a Quaker marriage with members of the wedding party who were not familiar. They spent the night at Powell House and returned the next day for the

gathering, which the committee describes as “overwhelmingly embraced with warmth and gratitude.”

Making a Marriage

Although Morgan and Josephine’s marriage was somewhat unusual in that it was under the care of two meetings, in many ways it was representative of how Quaker marriages work. Typically, the couple who wishes to get married under the care of the meeting writes a letter to the meeting, which will form a clearness committee to determine if they are “clear to be married.” This

takes one or two meetings for the clearness to be finished and for the clearness committee to return to Ministry and Counsel. At that point, the meeting will set up an oversight committee to work on the details of the marriage. This committee works with the couple to learn about their wishes for the day of the marriage, ensures that the proper legal forms are filled out and discerns how the meeting can help to support the marriage.

The marriage ceremony itself arises out of a meeting for worship, often with the oversight committee providing the facing bench. In a typical ceremony, the couple rises to say vows to each other after a period of silence. Some might exchange rings, though it is not required. After the vows, the marriage certificate is brought in by a member of the committee or by a friend or relative. The couple signs the certificate, with



has two aspects. First, are the two people ready to marry each other? Are they loving and communicative, and have they thought through the long-term nature of the commitment? Second, is the meeting comfortable with them marrying each other? Has the couple recognized that the meeting is there to support the marriage?

The clearness committee may ask a few questions of the couple and have them return the following month, but in Brooklyn Meeting it generally only

members of the oversight committee as witnesses. Afterward, the meeting returns to worship. The oversight committee will generally work with the couple to find ways to accommodate their wishes. For instance, if the bride and groom want to enter in a procession, or have a wedding party join the oversight committee near the facing bench, or have pre-planned messages or readings after the marriage certificate is signed.

A Point of Welcome

Marriages can be an opportunity to introduce Quaker practice to new people. People who come to meeting for worship for a marriage will often find something that resonates with them or find that the silence enriches them, and may choose to return and explore further. For the meeting, a marriage is a way to support two of its members as they embark on a lifelong meeting together. And for the couple, of course, it is a solemn but joyous occasion to affirm their commitment to each other with the support of the meeting around them.

--Melissa Cavanaugh

Correction

In our previous issue, the report on the recent agreement between Friends Seminary and New York Quarterly Meeting provided a number for the value of air rights in the 15th Street complex, which was actually a number for their square feet. Despite our efforts we are unable to report on the present value of those air rights, which went to Friends Seminary as part of this agreement.

-- Molly Rusnak

September Meeting for Business: A Full Plate

Membership Matters

A letter from Emily Sandusky was read for the first time. The transfer of Jon Miller to Phoenix, Arizona Friends Meeting was approved.

Brooklyn's Covenant Contribution to New York Yearly Meeting Increased

New York Yearly Meeting requested of all Monthly Meetings a 3.75% increase in their contributions. This increase will help fund new youth activities of the Yearly Meeting and ARCH, a program for the elderly. Brooklyn Meeting is requesting a five year financial projection from the Yearly Meeting. Friends ask that, when announcements requesting



contributions are made after Meeting for Worship, we be transparent in reminding Friends that a large part of their contribution goes to other Quaker organizations including Yearly Meeting.

Report on Quaker Marriage

The oversight committee for the marriage of Morgan Wajda-Levie and Josephine Wheelright took place under the care of Brooklyn and Austin Meetings in Gallatin, New York.

Meeting Approves Minute to Orlando Florida Monthly Meeting

A minute expressing condolences to Friends in Orlando, Florida included this statement: "We call on Friends everywhere to support appropriate gun policy, oppose racism and homophobia and continue engaging in peace-making through constructive dialogue."

Programs Supported by the Socially Responsible Donations and Activities Fund

-- Indigenous Peoples Day
Brooklyn Friends School and Brooklyn Meeting cooperated in a series of events celebrating the indigenous people of New York State. Evening activities in the Meetinghouse included a discussion of Native Ways of Peace, traditional music and social dancing.

-- Emmy Gay attended the Fellowship of Friends of African Descent

-- Brooklyn for Peace sponsored a forum on NATO with Joseph Gerson of AFSC.

-- ARCH, serving elderly and/or ill Friends in Brooklyn Meeting

Friends Hear About the "Prayer Project"

Volunteers from the Meeting have agreed to be photographed at worship in the Meeting Room as part of a citywide photography project.

Meeting Approves Minute supporting the Standing Rock Sioux in opposition to the Dakota Access Pipeline.

(The full minute is included elsewhere in this issue)

Nominations Approved

-- Elizabeth Powers and Molly Rusnak to New York Quarterly Meeting Nominating Committee
-- Jill Waldman to the Winter Holiday Festival Committee
-- Jonathan Edmonds to the Welcoming Committee

-- Molly Rusnak

Habits We Need in Response to 21st Century Conditions

“If I were asked for two words to summarize the habits of the heart American citizens need in response to twenty-first-century conditions, I would chose chutzpah and humility. By chutzpah I mean knowing that I have a voice that needs to be heard and the right to speak it. By humility I mean accepting the fact that my truth is always partial and may not be true at all, so I need to listen with openness and respect, especially to "the other," as much as I need to speak my own voice with clarity and conviction.”

-- Parker Palmer

Minute of the Indian Affairs Committee of New York Yearly Meeting, Opposing the Dakota Access Pipeline

(This minute was approved 8/30/16; approved by Earthcare Working Group of NYYM 8/31/2016)

Our two Committees strongly support the Standing Rock Sioux in their actions opposing construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline. This 1100-mile pipeline would create the same dangers as other projects, such as the XL Keystone Pipeline, and should be rejected for the same reasons. The proposal should properly have been subjected to the same thorough review prior to approval as the XL Pipeline, so that the Standing Rock Sioux could have their voices heard and their historic rights respected, including the

right of access to clean water, the foundation of all life, and the protection of their burial sites and other sacred sites as the 1978 Native American Religious Freedom Act guarantees. This includes honoring and respecting the promises of the United States to the Great Sioux Nation in the 1851, 1859 and 1868 Treaties of Fort Laramie which this project would violate.

All the others affected by the project ate also entitled to be heard. Anything less, particularly for a project of this scope, is a failure of the democratic process and is a lack of transparency. It is a deliberate avoidance of the environmental review process and undermines the laws intended to ensure that all environmental effects are considered and properly weighed before an undertaking of this magnitude.

As Friends, we bear witness to the equality and to the sacred nature of every person, since every person carries the same Spark of Divine Light. The principle of equality is also a fundamental principle of a democratic society. When we shut out voices and ignore the rights of the people of Native Nations within the U.S., we deny that principle.

Friends also have had a particular concern for the relations between the European settlers on this continent and its First Nations, beginning with our founder George Fox's encounters with Native inhabitants during his North American travels in the 1680s and the founding of Pennsylvania. New York Yearly Meeting has had a standing Indian Affairs Committee since the 1790s and maintains warm relations with Native Nations and Peoples of this region up to this day. Thus we stand beside our First Nation brothers and sisters in insisting that the legal and treaty rights of the Standing Rock Sioux must be honored and must not be violated by the construction of this pipeline. Too often, Native Nations have paid the price for projects intended to benefit American society by actions that

violate treaties and Native rights, such as taking land or constructing dams.

As Friends, we also hold sacred our responsibility, the responsibility of all humanity, to care for the Earth, our home, and preserve it for the future generations of humans and of all life. Out Native sisters and brothers have long led the way in showing the importance of taking into consideration not only our own desires, but also the needs of the future generations, before we act. Projects such as the Dakota Access Pipeline imperil the waters of the earth, vital to the Standing Rock Sioux and to all life. Pursuing the use of fossil fuel rather than finding renewable and sustainable alternatives imperils the atmosphere, the air we breathe and the climate necessary for the continued existence of humanity and of the many forms of life that we know and claim to cherish. We must move quickly to implement environmentally sound practices to preserve our Earth-home and all life on it.

Indigenous Peoples Program Scheduled for October 25

Dear Friends,

Once again I am pleased to announce that Brooklyn Meeting, together with Brooklyn Friends School, is co-sponsoring an Indigenous Peoples Program. It will take place at our meetinghouse Tuesday, October 25 at approximately 6:30 p.m..

The theme of this year's program is *Ways of Peace in Algonquin and Haudenosaunee Traditions*. The concepts of Ways of Peace are much broader in scope than simply averting or ending war. They encompass every aspect of society and way of life, which are in harmony not just internally and with other human societies but with all of Nature. They

bring this message -- in accordance with the Original Instructions given to them by the creator -- in words, Wampum, music and dance.

The program is open to the entire BFS community as well as the meeting and the general public. It will include refreshments, presentations relating to the theme, and Haudenosaunee social dancing. It will end no later than 9 p.m. There is no charge to attend.

Peace,

-- Tom Rothschild, on behalf of
Brooklyn Friends School and Quaker
Witness and Outreach

Sacred and Spiritual: A Visit with Artist Randy Stoltzfus

Lucy Sikes and I visited the Studio of Randall Stoltzfus one hot and humid afternoon in August. We are the perfect pair for this as Lucy is a professional artist with a career spanning more than fifty years and I am, um, intuitive. (Lucy kindly refers to this as “the poetic view.”) Together we embody both ends of the spectrum of viewer sophistication.

For the few who haven't met him, Randy is the spouse of Friend Callie Janoff and is a frequent attendee at Brooklyn Monthly Meeting. Having seen some of his artwork on his website, I knew that it was highly creative and skillful. And very original! I also had seen some of his paintings in reality, and was impressed with the way the light and the physical depth of the work spoke to my feelings. Nonetheless, I found myself ill-prepared for the visual cornucopia we encountered in his studio. The two

(www.sloweye.net) conveys quite a bit about the quality and creativity but, naturally, fails to deliver the effect that accompanies the depth and light of the originals. In addition to the abundance of human feelings raised by his works (such as tenderness, playfulness, joy and serenity), there exists a richness of quality I think of as pertaining to the sacred (or, in a word, spiritual). The light presented in some paintings vaguely recalled in me some mostly forgotten place, while evoking memories of a rare silence.

The two artists talked about skills and technique and I was very interested to learn about some of them. It takes a lot of layers to create the complexity of Stoltzfus' work and this translates into a lot of time and effort. One painting of a night sky, which is unique for its faithful depiction of the actual light of the stars, was accomplished via the incorporation of gold leaf. (There was some other talk about the use of red pigment which I couldn't follow because I was still employed in walking back and forth



to test the effect at different distances.) And though they may have explained some things to me about another work in shades of black and silver, I don't expect to ever understand how it was able to evoke feelings of tenderness.

Stoltzfus embodies his awe and wonder of our universe in his work and invites us to explore visual experiences in a completely new way. I would not be surprised to see him recognized as a paradigm changer among artists characterized as sacred or spiritual painters.

-- Linda Clarke

Brooklyn Heights Interfaith 9/11 Memorial Service Offers Opportunity for Reflection

I was pleased to represent Brooklyn Monthly Meeting at the fourteenth annual 9/11 memorial service, sponsored by the Brooklyn Heights Clergy Association and held on the promenade at the foot of Montague Street on Sunday, September 11, 2016. A number of people contributed to a “Litany of Remembrance,” and I was assigned the following passage to read aloud:

*You alone
know what
hurts remain
among us.
Send us your
healing Spirit.
Comfort those
who mourn.
Break down
the walls that
separate us.
Inspire in us
the bonds of
community
and friendship.*

*Remind us that the whole
human family is your beloved
creation. Bring us all to the
fullness of health and joy that
comes only from your divine
love. O God, make us
instruments of your peace.*

-- Nancy Black, Assistant Clerk

An Update from the Brooklyn Friends School Care Relations Committee

I'm happy to report that several projects are underway. A request was made of this committee to change the traditional date that we invite all families of Brooklyn Friends School students to experience Quaker Worship. This will give families who may not be familiar with our practice to experience some of what their children experience in school. We have invited them to worship on Sunday, October 16th at 11:00 a.m. We are certain that all will be welcoming to these newcomers, and would appreciate donations for Social Hour. We are also working with the Care Relations Committee for Mary McDowell Friends School to sponsor and participate in a panel discussion about the value of a Quaker Education. This will take place in the Meeting Room of Brooklyn Monthly Meeting on Wednesday, October 19th at 6:00 p.m. Child Care will be provided.

We will continue to provide information to the Meeting regarding projects at BFS we feel are of interest to its members.

-- *Leslie McCarthy*

Brooklyn Meeting Hosts "Beyond the Bars" on October 29

The full title of this day-long conference is "Beyond the Bars, From Re-entry to Reconciliation". Organizations taking part include the American Friends Service Committee, the Innocence Project, Books Through Bars, Brooklyn for Peace, the Doe Fund, New York State Council of Churches and Project Renewal.

Friends had suggested ways in which Quakers have been and can now be directly involved supporting persons who are or have been incarcerated. This has been a historical concern for Quakers, as early Quakers themselves were incarcerated as they organized their revolutionary faith community in England. And John Bowne, an early New York Quaker, was imprisoned and forced to leave the country in pre-Revolutionary New York for holding Quaker Meetings in his home. This free day-long event will focus on mass incarceration, community organizing, and political advocacy around issues of racial profiling, educating attendees about our country's prison industrial complex and equipping them with the tools to advocate and organize at all political levels in Brooklyn and beyond.



Our day will begin with an opening keynote by Staff Attorney Karen Thompson of the Innocence Project, followed by three breakout sessions on a variety of social justice topics. Participants include The Doe Fund, Project Renewal, Books Through Bars, American Friends Service Committee, and New York State Council of Churches, among others. A continental breakfast (9-10am) and lunch will be provided. Bring a friend, bring a dictionary to send to an inmate, and most importantly, bring an open mind. Come join the discussion!

To register, go to <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/beyond-the-bars-from-reentry-to-reconciliation-tickets-27675276497> For more information or to register, contact Melissa Minnich at mjminnich@gmail.com or 412-592-1671.

-- *Molly Rusnak and Melissa Minnich*

Even More Events!

Save the Date!

On Saturday, November 19 at the Brooklyn Meetinghouse, come hear about the work and join with the concerns of the ad-hoc group that has been meeting on aging in community and keeping our elders in New York City. We will meet in retreat for discussion and a lunch meal to talk about housing, socialization and fun, services for aging and building intergenerational community.

QUAKERISM 101

“And this is the word of the Lord God to you all, and a charge to you all in the presence of the Living God, be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come; that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people and to them. That you may come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone and make the witness in God in them to bless you.”

George Fox, 1694

“Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness; and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another, and not lay-ing accusations one against another; but praying one for another, and helping one another up with a tender hand.”

Issac Pennington, 1667

Want to learn more about the Quakers who wrote these words and their ideas? Learn more about Quakerism – their history, process and faith, and Quakers in the world. Join us for monthly sessions, each third Sunday of the month, from 1:00 to 2:30, October 2016 through May 2017.

Session 1, October - Quaker worship, led by Andrea Colapinto, and Patricia Glynn

Session 2, November - Quaker history, led by Joan Malin, and Ben Frisch

Session 3, December - Exploration of selected Quaker writers, led by Joan and Ben

Session 4, January - Varieties of belief in Quakerism, led by Naceo Giles and Nate Silver

Session 5, February - Living life in the Spirit, led by Patricia Glynn

Session 6, March - TBD

Session 7, April - Social Witness, led by Tom Rothchild

Session 8, May – Leading a Quaker life, led by an individual TBD

Please let us know if you are coming so that we can estimate copying of materials. Contact Patricia Glynn patriciaglynn@earthlink.net , Joan

Malin joanmal53@gmail.com or Andres Colapinto andrescolapinto@gmail.com.

What is the Value of a Quaker Education?

Come to an evening panel co-hosted by Brooklyn Friends School and Mary McDowell Friends School. It takes place at 6 p.m., Wednesday, October 19 at the Brooklyn Meetinghouse.

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 October 25th.

General Guidelines:

- Please send an email to 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

October

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

Wednesday, October 19 @ 6 PM: Brooklyn
Meetinghouse, “What is the Value of a Quaker
Education?”

October 29 @ 9 AM: “Beyond the Bars” see
article

October 25 @ 6:30 PM: Brooklyn
Meetinghouse, “Ways of Peace in Algonquin and
Haudenosaunee Traditions”

November

Saturday, November 12 10 AM- 4 PM: “Fall
Cemetery Work and Visiting Day” with Brooklyn
Friends School

Send additions to Regularly Scheduled Activities or Upcoming Events to events@brooklynmeeting.org.

Send inquiries or suggestions about the newsletter to 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*
