



# BROOKLYN MEETING NEWS

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

*brooklynmeeting.org*

**FEBRUARY 2017**



Brooklyn Monthly Meeting was represented as well, with Ted Ehrhardt, Jonathan Fluck, Kate Moon Matlack, and Lucy Sikes' family, among others, joining in.

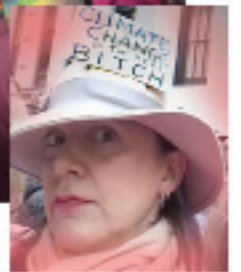
adhered to Martin Luther King Jr.'s principles of nonviolence. The first of those principles is: "Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people. It is a positive force confronting the forces of injustice and utilizes the righteous indignation and spiritual, emotional, and intellectual capabil-

## MARCHING WITH FRIENDS

The combined Women's Marches that took place in Washington, D.C., and across the United States on January 21 are estimated to be one of the largest demonstrations in American history. The intention of the march was to declare the marchers' support for women's rights that may be threatened under the new presidential administration – including LGBTQIA rights, workers' rights, reproductive rights, civil rights, disability rights and immigrants' rights. And as always when people rise up against injustice, Quakers were there.

Quaker House, located near the United Nations and close to the kickoff point for the New York Women's March, was a gathering point for Friends from all of the NYC meetings to meet up or take a break.

"There were at least 40 to 50 Quakers, and that doesn't count the large contingent of Friends Seminary Families who were also using Quaker House as a meeting spot," said Sarah Way, communications director for the New York Yearly Meeting. "Folks from the Quaker UN Office also marched."



*Our signs and banners showed our identity as Quakers and our concerns for freedom, justice and the environment.*

More than 3 million people around the country flooded our streets. The logistics were impressive but the outpouring of feeling was spontaneous. Emotions were running high in the wake of the January 20 inauguration, but it was a peaceful march that

ities of people as the vital force for change and reconciliation." That positive force was certainly felt in the packed streets of New York and elsewhere.

*--Melissa Cavanaugh*

## Don't Get Mad: Get Organized

In recent months, as daily political discourse in the U.S. increasingly runs counter to the Quaker values of peace, integrity, and stewardship, many Friends have begun looking for ways to get more involved. An amazing network of grassroots groups, both existing and new, is flourishing in Brooklyn. I wanted to share my experience with one local community group that is looking for volunteers.

Get Organized BK is a movement that formed in the immediate aftermath of the election, when hundreds of Brooklyn residents gathered at

Temple Beth Elohim in Park Slope to express their dismay at the results. Since then, the group has hosted monthly meetings that have spun off more than a dozen subgroups devoted to issues including women's health, racial justice, and free speech.

I have been working since early December with a subgroup called Indivisible Nation BK, devoted to opposing Trump's Cabinet appointments and more generally keeping extremism out of our government.

We have hand-delivered thousands of letters to Senators Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand, after hosting signing events around Brooklyn. We

also organize calling campaigns to our elected officials via e-mail and social media, and regularly attend rallies at their offices and homes.

I would encourage anyone who is interested in getting more politically involved at the community level to explore local resources or attend the Get Organized BK meetings. Like our Meeting, I have found them to be a bright spot of hope in our tempestuous political climate.

For more information: [facebook.com/oneindivisiblenation](https://facebook.com/oneindivisiblenation)

[oneindivisiblenation@gmail.com](mailto:oneindivisiblenation@gmail.com)

-- *Melissa Cavanaugh*

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## 15th Street Happenings

15th Street Meeting (15 Rutherford Place, Manhattan) will host a "QuEd" (Quaker Education and Discourse) Day on Saturday, February 11. The focus is on Young Adult Friends, though other members and attendees are welcome, too.

QuED Days are designed as a series of opportunities for the sharing of Spirit-led ministry, along with the chance for informal connection, conversation, and fellowship.

**How it works:** Each month in 2017, there will be one Saturday QuED event, each hosted by a monthly meeting in a different part of New York Yearly Meeting. The morning will include breakfast, worship and several 20-minute talks given by invited speakers. The afternoon will include lunch, very lightly structured conversation opportunities and sometimes other things—workshops, spiritual direction, games, music, and so forth. The morning talks will be

streamed live (when WiFi is available) and recorded for later posting online.

Christine Ashley and Angi York Crane will be speaking. Light breakfast is scheduled to begin at 9 a.m., and the day is scheduled to run until 4 p.m.

More information is available at the 15th Street Meeting Facebook page and at the Yearly Meeting website, which includes an approximate schedule for the day.

### LOOK UP! Visions from Under the Canopy

How would you like to lay on the carpet (or a bench) at 15th Street Meetinghouse and look up into a canopy of linden trees in all seasons? You'll have the opportunity to do so on February 18, between 1:30 and 8 p.m.

This is a contemplative installation of photographs and videos of Linden trees as seen from under their jewel-like canopies. Created over the course of one and a half years in Fort Tryon Park's Linden Terrace,

I hope to create a meditative atmosphere where you feel in touch with nature, the cycles of the seasons, yourself and others. Hopefully you'll leave restored, renewed and ready to face anything!

### Sponsored by the 15th Street Friends Arts Committee and Friends in Unity with Nature (FUN).

-- Two events for the (donation-based) price of one: The installation as well as a screening of the accompanying documentary featuring naturalist and author. Leslie Day. The documentary screens on the half hour.

-- Suggested donation: \$10 but no one turned away. Proceeds go to 15th Street Friends Arts Committee

-- Photography by Amala Lane with Steven Soblick. Documentary directed and produced by Amala Lane with cinematography and original music by Gabriel Richards

## Personal Story: An Interracial Adoption, Continued

In last month's Brooklyn Meeting Newsletter, I described my family's interracial adoption of our son, Earl (named after my late father, who would have been delighted with this grandson). There are two incidents I remember, while I was still pushing him around in a stroller. One was meeting an older African-American woman on the street. She stopped and looked at us both and said "He looks just like my grandson!"

The other was the day after the assassination of Martin Luther King. I had planned to go to Bedford Stuyvesant to the Salvation Army Store to find a mirror for my daughter's bedroom. But I hesitated, thinking I might be caught up in violence because I was white. Then I realized I could take Earl in his stroller and he would keep me safe! As it happened, I went and there was no violence of any kind to be afraid of.

Earl attended Brooklyn Friends School, which we hoped would be a positive environment for him. He was particularly happy in middle school. The head of middle school was Rudy, also African-American, an educator I'm sure many BFS graduates fondly remember. However, upper school was harder. He had some learning problems that showed up and the white friends he had when he was younger no longer associated with him. However the two Haring boys, from a Quaker family and also with white parents, became friends. Earl got to know young African-Americans in the neighborhood as well. He went in for "break dancing," which was a bit trying as my bedroom was under his!

Meeting of the Earl has spent most of his adult life in Orlando, Florida, where his wife's large family lives. She is Puerto Rican and his children are a marvelous mixture -- as is Orlando. Fortunately they have not inherited his academic challenges. His son, Chris, graduated with honors from Rutgers and is now complet-

ing his MA in Statistics at Columbia University. His daughter is studying engineering in high school.

Last summer when Earl and his family were here for his daughter's dance competition, he and I were sitting on the back porch, waiting for the fireflies to come out. "You know I can talk to you more easily than anyone," he told me.

-- Molly Rusnak



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## January Meeting for Business: Membership Changes, Financial Matters, New Committee Members

### Membership Changes

Seth Phillips, son of member Michael Phillips, read his first letter applying for membership in Brooklyn Meeting. Wayne Williams and the Mack family transferred to Catskill Monthly Meeting and Chestnut Hill Meeting in Pennsylvania.

### Next Year's Budget Approved

The new budget for 2017, presented by Treasurer Paul Flint, provides

\$31,100 for Committees, \$44,411 for New York Yearly Meeting and \$2000 for Powell House. The Socially Responsible Activity Fund is \$13,000.

### Appreciation from ARCH

ARCH -- Aging Resources, Consultation and Help for the elderly -- thanks the Meeting for its financial contribution

### Nominations to Committees

Friends agree to serve on committees: Morgan Wajda-Levie to First Day School; Maria Arias to Ministry and Counsel; Randy Frankel and Dianne de la Veaux to Social Hour. The Communications Committee is looking for a new member to help lay out the newsletter.

### Reading from the Clerk of the Meeting:

"Friends agree to serve on commitment, even when you are angry, depressed, tired or spiritually cold. In the silence, ask for and accept the prayerful support of others joined with you in worship. Try to find a spiritual wholeness which encompasses suffering as well as thankfulness and joy. Prayer springing from a deep place in the heart may bring healing and unity as nothing else can. Let Meeting for Worship nourish your whole life."

-- from *Advices and Queries: The Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain*,

-- Molly Rusnak

## Sharing and Renting Brooklyn Meetinghouse, Through the Years

Brooklyn Friends School was the first entity to share the Brooklyn Meetinghouse. The building next door -- 112 Schermerhorn Street -- housed Brooklyn Friends School (BFS), but the two buildings were joined and shared. The school building provided classrooms for First Day School and the present Brooklyn Meeting social room was the school cafeteria. In the early 1970s BFS bought the building on Pearl Street and the Meetinghouse was renovated to create a First Day School area in the basement and close off the adjoining building, which is now rented to the Department of Education for a special high school.

In 1984, a Quaker school for children with learning disabilities, Mary McDowell Friends School, was founded in the Meetinghouse. A member of the Meeting, Violet Longobardi, was one of the founders. This caused considerable crowding for the First Day School area. Custodians moved

desks and chairs in and out of the classrooms. The Social Hour room was used as an office. Eventually the school also built a new building on Bergen Street in Boerum Hill. But they would return. In the intervening years, BFS used the Meetinghouse for additional classroom space during the week as well as for Meeting for Worship.

After BFS moved out and rented additional space near the Pearl Street building, Mary McDowell Friends School overenrolled and was unable to provide space for the additional children in their building. So the Meeting agreed to share space with them for three years, until they found another building.

This change left the Meetinghouse empty during the week. However, it is the policy of New York Quarterly Meeting, as owner of the meetinghouses, to ask Fifteenth Street Meeting and Brooklyn Meeting to assist in covering the maintenance costs of the buildings by renting space in them during the week when they are empty. Fifteenth Street Meeting has

continued to rent and share space with Friends Seminary.

This, Brooklyn Property Committee set out to find a new tenant from Boerum Hill, the neighborhood in which we are located, using a realtor who had family connections with the Meeting. It was felt that this might benefit the Meeting by connecting more with our neighbors. The Committee visited and interviewed three preschools, all of which appeared to be good programs. They selected The New York Explorers, partly because of the quality of the program but also because they are minority-owned and serve a diverse group of children. The Explorers have been in the Meetinghouse for several years and we and they have had to make adjustments to share space in the building, as was also the case with the Quaker schools. Preschools in New York City are strictly inspected as to the space they use, the number of children they serve, the number of staff provided and the safety of the building. This means that our own children, here on First Day, are safe as well.

-- Molly Rusnak

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## Two Books That Have Helped Me Regain Hope

At some point during the past eighteen-plus months of constant political turmoil, I began to feel as though I was drowning in a sea of toxic emotion. Anger. Fear. Impotence. Hatred. Anxiety. I was -- and still am -- living in a social atmosphere of constant negative emotion and I know I have a lot of company in this misery. In the aftermath of the election, I needed spiritual sustenance desperately. Since childhood, my first step in such times is Christian bible study. It is familiar; it is comforting.

“Wait on the Lord, be of good courage and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait I say on the Lord. (Psalm 27:14) will come to me in times of crisis. “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1) is another favorite.

Casting around my environment I notice first that the Meeting is still here; there's hope for today and tomorrow. And, as always during crisis, it provides solace to a larger community in its suffering. Many who rarely attend know of the Meeting as a spiritually nourishing place. Why and how does this happen? Can it be anything other than faith and hope? By looking at the larger community for faith, and “the

substance of things hoped for,” I encountered two small books that have encouraged me.

The first book, which I found while at Pendle Hill, pertains to healing racism. Say the Wrong Thing is authored by Dr. Amanda Kemp, a Pendle Hill scholar who has acquired advanced degrees from Stanford and Northwestern University. (Kemp is leading a workshop at Pendle Hill February 24-27 on the topic contained in her book. For more information visit [www.pendlehill.org](http://www.pendlehill.org))

Kemp outlines methods for having conversations across racial lines, which may help lift us out of the

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false beliefs and resulting fears that frustrate our desires to be together in an authentic way. It gives me hope for future progress around racial healing as she defines goals, how to get there and, at last, provides enticements to move past misplaced political correctness. Most inspiring to me, she has the audacity to take the healing to personal levels instead of remaining safely at the level of social

criticism and remedies. It takes a lot of heart, but it can be done.

The second book that has inspired me in these dark times came as a great surprise, since I had written the author off of my list of regulars some time ago. This is *Water*, by David Foster Wallace, was actually written as a commencement speech for Kenyon College in 2005 and published posthumously in 2009. The speech was a mere 23 minutes long. In it, Wallace encourages us to cultivate awareness of both our

inner and outer beings and to do so individually as well as socially. We are urged to strive for consciousness and to continue to seek growth in our capacity for compassion.

While reading *This is Water*, I began to think I'd found a Wallace work that wasn't going to deliver a sudden shock to my psyche. Not so, as he makes the assertion that there are no atheists. Oh, my! I wonder if you will agree.

*-- Linda Clarke*

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## **Learning The Lingo: Guide To Quaker Terminology Available Now**

Ministry and Counsel recently had a charming old booklet reprinted, and it's now for sale at the book table. *The Guide to Quaker Terminology* (as it is Generally Understood

in Brooklyn Monthly Meeting) was written by our late beloved member Larry Jaeger in 1996. In it, he explains many of our arcane words and phrases, including what Quakers mean when we say we are "easy" with something; what we're referring to when we

talk about "advices"; what the "sense of the meeting" is; and who would be considered a "weighty Friend." Useful and entertaining for experienced Friends and incredibly helpful for new attenders, this 15-page booklet is for sale at the book table for a nominal fee.

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## **Book Review: The Back Bench Explores A Contentious Time In Quaker History**

Margaret Hope Bacon's *The Back Bench* (Quaker Press, 2007) is an engaging novella about a white Quaker woman's coming-of-age during the Hicksite-Orthodox split of the 1830s in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. This was the most enduring of many schisms in Friends' history. (Brooklyn's two branches didn't reunite until the 1960s.)

Elias Hicks' followers were farmers and radical abolitionists focused on the Inner Light. The Orthodox were Christ-centric business people who believed in gradual emancipation. Bacon mirrors these differences in a family whose members are brought together by tragedy.

After the death of their parents, Myra and Tom Harlan leave the from *Advices and Queries: The Yearly Meeting of the*

Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, in farm for relatives' homes in the city. Myra boards with a social-climbing aunt, Mathilda, and her uncle, Peter, an ornithologist. Aunt Mathilda enrolls Myra in an Orthodox girls' school. While intellectually superior to her classmates, she is ostracized due to her lower-class, Hicksite upbringing.

Lo and behold, on her way home from school Myra runs into abolitionist Lucretia Mott and attends a meeting of the Female Anti-Slavery Society. Sarah Douglass, an African-American Friend barely tolerated by Myra's Philadelphia Meeting, is a member of the group. Mathilda declares Mott a "Hicksite infidel" who gets her comeuppance when a mob burns down the new Anti-Slavery Society headquarters.

Myra is a self-aware 14-year-old. She chafes against her aunt's discipline, the snobbery of her peers and the Orthodox timidity concerning race. Often on the

verge of losing her cool, she withholds criticism, fearful that she too will be branded an infidel. At last Myra rebels by sitting with Sarah on the Meeting's "back bench" reserved for "colored people." These conflicts make for a fully-rounded character. Aunt Mathilda and Uncle Peter are also well-developed.

Considering Bacon's many books on Quaker history, her stereotypes of the contending religious forces are disappointing. Thus Hicksites are hard-working and cooperative. Rural life is simple compared to the ostentation and pettiness of the idyll Orthodox. She barely explains the theological differences between the two groups.

Bacon's sympathies become more evident when, in the end, she has Myra and her brother return to the intimate, honest life of farming. Finally, Bacon prefers Mott's and Douglass' heroic bit parts to the fuller treatment she gives elsewhere -- in her biographies of the women

*-- Carl Blumenthal*

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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 December 19th, so that we may briefly discuss your contribution, as regards its timeliness, appropriateness, and length.

General Guidelines:

- Please send an email to [newsletter@brooklynmeeting.org](mailto:newsletter@brooklynmeeting.org)

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 spring 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 (age 4-6), Minds (age 7-9) and Spirits (age 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](mailto: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).***

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 Heather Loza  
Drawings by Lucy Sikes