



BROOKLYN MEETING NEWS

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

brooklynmeeting.org

February 2015

Thirty Friends Participate in January Meeting for Business

Property Committee Reports on Upcoming Projects

In 2015, the Property Committee reports that the windows will be replaced on the front and lower floors of the Meetinghouse. The committee is also looking for a part-time manager for maintenance in Brooklyn. A new lease has been signed with our tenant, New York Explorers, an organization that runs a day care, pre-school and after-school program for children. This past year, New York Explorers paid \$55,815 in rent. The rent goes to the New York Quarterly Meeting, which owns and maintains the building. However, Brooklyn Property Committee cares for the Meeting's gardens with its budget. The Property Committee meets on the third Tuesday of the month at 6:30 PM. The clerk is Sheila O'Hara.

Young Friend Requests Meeting Support for International Work-Study

Columbine Losa brought a request for financial aid from the Meeting to participate in the Quaker El Salvador Service and Learning Trip. Her request was forwarded to the Peace and Social Action Committee.

Meeting Retreat Committee Reports [see separate article elsewhere in this issue]

Annual Report of the Recorders Highlights Fourteen New Members

Joining Brooklyn Meeting in 2014 were: North Lennox, Caroline Harting, Morgan Harting, Alden Penn Harting and Cordelia Eyre Harting, Adam Rashid, Carl Blumenthal, Amy Whiffen, Emily Walsh, Eli Gwynn, Lakisha Grant, Jaden Allen, and, via transfer from Chicago, Beth Kelly. The Meeting lost two members who passed away this past year, Robert McMillan and Thomas Glynn. All new members were welcomed at dinners hosted by Friends. The meeting discussed developing a list

Committee Clerks in the coming year. The Assistant Clerk, Nancy Black has taken responsibility for Business Meeting minutes and publishing them. The final paragraph of Ted Ehrhardt's report is included elsewhere in this issue.

Meeting Donates to Earthcare Witness

Earthcare Witness, a Quaker organization working on environmental issues, received \$1,062 from Brooklyn Meeting for the year.

-- Molly Rusnak



Joan Malin, Brooklyn Meeting 2010

of children and their birth dates to assist the First Day School Committee in reaching more children.

Brooklyn Meeting Clerk Reports

Ted Ehrhardt summed up his first year as Clerk of the Meeting, in which he clerked eleven Meetings for Business, participated in the Ministry and Oversight Committee, reported to New York Quarterly Meeting and handled meeting correspondence. He suggested that he will be holding a workshop for

First Day School Underway

Three classes of children, grouped by age, meet every First Day a few minutes before 11 a.m. The preteens and teens meet on the third floor, while the elementary and primary age children meet in the classrooms in the basement. The children engage in conversation, crafts, drama and storytelling, which is centered around the testimonies of Quakers. They then join Meeting for Worship, hopefully sharing some silence, at 11:50. Adult Friends are encouraged to visit and/or volunteer with the young people once, or more than once. Music, crafts, stories and just participation are welcome. Committee members

are: Ben Frisch, Julie Glynn, Ella Frederick, Molly Rusnak, Mauricio Alexander and Natalie Glynn.

-- Molly Rusnak

The Joy of Clerking

During Meeting for Business, Ted Ehrhardt read his yearly report on clerking the meeting. The report ended with this reflective, celebratory paragraph:

When I agreed to serve as clerk I did so because Jim Morgan presented the job as a service. I would like to speak of

how I have come to give that meaning and appreciate what he may have meant by that. When our daughter was born I started to think of us rather than myself. And over the years I have discovered that the source of much of my joy has been working for Rebecca and Nina, thinking of the three of us rather than myself. In the past few years I have also started feeling that way about our community. I have heard myself saying in worship "It's us, not me." I knew that represented, at least for me, a deepening of my spiritual experience. Sitting as clerk and looking out at your faces, I see you all differently. I can now see your integrity and devotion shining brightly for each

other. It is as plain as day. You are radiant friends. I am happy and thankful to be of service among you.

-- Ted Ehrhardt

New York City Explorers Offers Scholarships to Meeting Children

New York City Explorers, a children's center located in the Meetinghouse, offers a 10 percent discount to Brooklyn Meeting children participating in childcare, preschool, afterschool and summer camp programs. These programs are described on their website. Parents interested can contact Kisha at kishakgandry@nycityexplorers.com, and/or visit the Meetinghouse on weekdays.

-- Molly Rusnak

A Planning Event for those Interested in Hitting the Trails

For the past several years, a wide variety of Brooklyn Monthly Meeting members and attenders have participated in day-long "Hikes with Worship" led by Robert Matson. Several of these hikes have been within Harriman State Park, while a recent

outing took place within Rockefeller State Park Preserve.

Those interested in helping to plan and coordinate hikes are invited to attend a gathering hosted by Robert, who has provided the following information:

Annual Hike with Worship Potluck and Planning

Thursday, March 5, 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

At Robert Matson's home
302 Eastern Pkwy., #1-E
Brooklyn

Located between Franklin and Classon Avenues

2/3/4/5/S to Franklin Ave.

RSVP: robert.m.s.matson@gmail.com

Bring food to share. If the weather is nice we'll plot, plan and picnic in the garden.

Meeting Hosts Faculty and Staff Dinner for Brooklyn Friends Schools

On the evening of January 15, faculty and staff of Mary McDowell Friends School and Brooklyn Friends School joined Brooklyn Meeting for worship and dinner. After worship an amateur film was shown, in which present-day Friends played the roles of notable Friends of the past while standing next to their gravestones in Prospect Park's Quaker cemetery. One of the past Friends honored was Mary McDowell, whose name is familiar to all because of Mary McDowell Friends School. The dinner took place in the Social Room of the Meetinghouse with eleven tables arranged to bring faculty and Meeting Friends together.

-- Molly Rusnak

2014's Powell House Retreat, Upon Further Review

The following report was written by the Brooklyn Monthly Meeting Retreat Committee, regarding the Meeting's weekend at Powell House this past October. Those within our Meeting may be interested to learn of the planning that was involved and the time that was had.

Brooklyn Meeting held a weekend-long retreat at Powell House on Oct. 17 -19, 2014. 39 adults and 14 children from Brooklyn Meeting attended.

Beth coordinated carpooling using a website [www.groupcarpool.com] that provides a private invite-only web page for participants in an event to use to coordinate transportation. Friends were able to sign themselves up for rides; those who did not were assigned to available spaces. Using this webpage, we assembled ten cars to take the persons who were part of households driving up plus 23 passengers. One Friend attending the retreat opted to take a combination of train and car service in both directions, and one took the train back to NYC on Sunday, but found a ride to the train station very early that day from a Friend at the retreat. All others received rides.

The theme of the weekend was Practice. The sessions organized for the retreat were designed to get us to reflect on our individual spiritual practices, and how these could be supported and developed through engagement with the Meeting community. We began Friday evening with introductions, and with a "cocktail party" exercise where we learned a few unusual things about an attendee to share with the rest of the group. We also gently touched on the weekend's theme, responding in writing to the query, "What does practice mean to you?" Our answers were written on leaf-shaped pieces of paper that were then posted for all to see.

The first Saturday session began with small group discussions exploring a few more specific queries about the place of practice in our lives. This was followed by an exploratory activity in which all were invited to wander the campus in search of an object or objects that "spoke to their practice." These were placed in the middle of the room; at the end of the session, some attendees volunteered to share and explain the object they chose. Before this however, we all reported back about our group

discussions, while the organizers recorded thoughts and ideas on paper. Between sessions, the facilitators took those ideas and narrowed them down to eight "practices," which were used to form eight options for afternoon discussion. Attendees picked the group that most appealed to them, and then spent about 45 minutes discussing the practice, and thinking about how to support that practice in the meeting community. The topics chosen were "Meditation and Prayer," "Reading Spiritual Texts," "Care for the Body," "Spiritual Friendships," "Being in Nature," "Mindfulness in Daily Life," "Creative Expression through the Arts," and "Service in the Community." When the discussion was over, each group engaged in a movement exercise where they were invited to "physicalize" their practice non-verbally. After a lovely performance of all these physicalizations, each group reported back on key themes in their discussions.

Sunday morning we had a wrap-up session, beginning with feedback about the retreat itself. We also further discussed ways we could bring the ideas (and enthusiasm) about all these practices back to the community. A sign-up sheet was distributed, where attendees could indicate their interest in continued engagement with the various themes of practice we had explored the day prior. We learned a few lessons from the verbal and written evaluations that are worth noting for next time. Regarding transportation, most Friends liked the use of the website to facilitate ride sharing and enjoyed the opportunity to get to know their drivers/passengers. However, Friends also request that for the future we provide better driving directions to Powell House; at least one car got lost on the way up. In addition, a couple of Friends wished that we (the committee) had suggested etiquette for sharing the cost of gasoline. These are issues that we can address fairly easily in the future. Childcare was an area in which there was much room for improvement. We hired two experienced childcare workers via Powell House's recommendation, and the care the children received was



disorganized and unengaging. Many of the children were on the older end of the childcare-receiving range (8-10 year olds) and were bored and left to run around without structure. We should have hired a teenager from our meeting and/or a local adult Friend with whom we could have created more of a program for the children. We suggested some group projects for the children to work on together, but this was forgotten or ignored by the child-carers. Next time, we recommend the Retreat Committee include a youth or teenager to help plan the retreat and make sure their needs get heard and accommodated. There may be ways in which they would like to be included that we can't foresee without their input.

Overall, Friends greatly enjoyed the conference, specifically praising the balance between activity and rest, movement and stillness, programmed and free time. The bonfire on Saturday night, with s'mores and singing, was a highlight for many. We enjoy each other and that was apparent. The retreat committee was also praised for how well we shared tasks during the retreat.

-- The 2014 Retreat Committee: Sarah Way, Inga Schwarzkopf, Andres Colapinto, Mauricio Alexander, Beth Kelly, and Yana Landowne

Powell House Seeks an Executive Director

Brooklyn friends may be interested in this job opportunity, which was posted on January 20 by New York Yearly Meeting:

Elsie K. Powell House (www.powellhouse.org), New York Yearly Meeting's (www.nyyym.org) retreat center and an outreach arm of New York Yearly Meeting for adult and youth spiritual nurture, seeks a full-time Executive Director to oversee its spiritual life and physical operations. Position to begin Spring 2016. Powell House's mission is to foster the spiritual growth of

Friends (Quakers) and others and to strengthen the application of Friends' testimonies in the world.

Leadership and Ministry responsibilities include understanding the spiritual needs of NYYM members and committees, creating a vision for using the entire physical and spiritual resource of Powell House to support the spiritual transformation and life-long nurture of members and attenders in the NYYM, and developing youth, adult, and intergenerational programming to address their needs. The Executive Director informs the Powell House Committee at regular intervals on the status of Powell House physical plant and activities and work with the Committee and sub-committees on specific matters related to the physical, financial, operational and spiritual aspects of Powell House. Day-to-day operational responsibilities include overseeing design, execution and hosting of spiritual nurture conferences and rentals; hiring and supervising required staff; overseeing and managing institutional finances, fundraising and buildings and grounds. Required experience: Active member of a Quaker monthly meeting and on-going service and engagement in Quaker organizations (especially Yearly Meeting organizations) and business process. Deep grounding in the Spirit.

Five years prior organizational leadership, e.g., non-profit executive director, pastor, etc. Experience supervising staff. Experience in designing Quaker programs (e.g., First Day School or Adult Education). Relevant graduate degrees a plus, e.g., MDiv, Master Retreat Center Management, MBA.

Compensation: Commensurate with experience. Benefits include health insurance, housing on-site at Powell House, participation in unemployment, disability insurance, worker's compensation and social security / Medicare.

Elsie K. Powell House is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Qualified persons are encouraged to apply

regardless of their religious affiliation beyond the Religious Society of Friends, race, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation or disability.

Elsie K. Powell House is a smoke-free workplace.

Please submit resume, references, and cover letter to searchcommittee@powellhouse.org no later than June 1, 2015.

New York Quarterly Meeting Meets in Brooklyn

On January 18, New York City Friends met for worship, lunch and business in the Brooklyn Meetinghouse. Meetings within the city include: Morningside Meeting, Fifteenth Street Meeting,

Flushing Meeting, Brooklyn Meeting and Staten Island Worship Group. Meeting for Business began with reports from these Meetings. The Audit and Budget Committee presented the new budget, including building projects at Brooklyn and Fifteenth Street Meeting which were discussed at length. This was also an opportunity for Friends throughout New York City and Friends Seminary to renew friendships.

-- *Molly Rusnak*

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 February **16th**.
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

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 calendar@brooklynmeeting.org.

*Member Kate Rapoport also maintains an
email event announcement list; send a request to brooklyn.kittens@gmail.com to join.*

February 2015

Friday, February 13, 6pm- Sunday,

February 15, 2pm:

**Clerking: Serving the Community with Joy
& Confidence**

Powell House Conference center

Send additions to Regularly Scheduled Activities or Upcoming Events to calendar@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: Eli Gnyinn (clerk), Ben Hill, Molly Rusnak, Lucy Sikes, and Anna White.

Drawings by Lucy Sikes
