



# BROOKLYN MEETING NEWS

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

*brooklynmeeting.org*

**September 2015**

## **July 2015 Meeting for Business: Small and Busy**

*Jim Morgan Approved as Clerk for the Day*

### **Friends Will Send Letter Regarding FUM Funding to New York Quarterly Meeting**

Brooklyn Meeting will send a copy of the letter endorsing the Canadian Yearly Meeting protest against discrimination on the FUM Board to New York Quarterly Meeting and its constituent meetings.

### **Brooklyn Meeting Funds ARCH**

Following the recommendation of the Peace and Social Action Committee, Friends approved a grant of \$2000 to fund ARCH, the program that aids elderly and/or ailing Friends through the use of volunteers.

### **Committee Appointments Approved**

The Meeting approved the following appointments:  
Lakisha Grant, Childcare Committee  
North Lennox, Property Committee  
Dene Shottenkirk, Community Dinner Committee

*-- Molly Rusnak*

## **Irish Youth Group has O'Mazing Experience in New York**

The Irish Youth Group had a wonderful time visiting New York and were grateful for the support provided by Brooklyn Monthly Meeting. They enjoyed working on many volunteer day

projects, such as soup kitchens and community gardens in Brooklyn and Queens. They especially appreciated the volunteers who came and hosted them for perspectives on the city and fellowship. There were 13 young adults and 3 group leaders who slept each night on the meetinghouse floor. Aside from working long hours, they got a chance to walk the Brooklyn Bridge, ride the Staten Island Ferry, check out Times Square and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in Night-Time* on Broadway. All were kind, engaged, and happy for the opportunity to expand their perspective of the world and shared Quaker values.

The 13 members of the Irish Youth Group expressed their appreciation in a thank you note:

*Dear Friends of Brooklyn Monthly Meeting, Irish Young Friends and Leaders want to thank you all so very much for your love and thoughtfulness to us. We have had a wonderful time in New York, made even more special by all of those who gave of their time and energy to care for us in many ways. God bless your meeting.*

*-- Yana Landowne*

## **ARCH Extends a Helping Hand**

ARCH – Aging Resources Consultation and Help – is a New York Yearly Meeting program assisting older and ill Friends which has come to life in Brooklyn Meeting through Linda Clarke and volunteers. After surgery members of ARCH brought me home, welcomed me and provided for my needs. For the next two weeks, volunteers were there to take me to appointments, shop for and prepare food, struggle with my washing machine and keep me company. All Brooklyn Friends should know that

such help and opportunities to serve are there for all.

*-- Molly Rusnak*

## **The New York Female Association: Who We Are and What We Do**

While most Friends have most likely not aware of its existence, the New York Female Association is a Quaker organization with a long and distinguished history. The New York Female Association (NYFA) was created in 1798 to give aid to the sick and poor, especially those suffering from yellow fever. In 1800 the NYFA shifted its purpose, and began opening free schools for poor children who lacked other means to obtain an education. The NYFA created the first New York City school for girls, and by 1825 there were 750 girls attending several schools run by the Quakers. The NYFA also opened an infant school in the basement of a Lutheran church; this program continued for twenty years.

The NYFA worked closely with the Free School Society, established in 1805 by Quaker men. In 1845, Free School Society schools became co-educational and NYFA ceased to operate its schools. By 1853 the government of the City of New York assumed full responsibility for the public education system.

The NYFA then became a fund which made small gifts to public and private charities. In 1915 the Association commissioned the Lindley Murray Fund, a charity organization which provided aid to blacks and Native Americans, to manage its funds.

In the present day, the NYFA continues on as a gift-giving committee. It currently consists of six Quaker members from New York Quarterly Meeting. The committee meets once a year; it appoints its own members and the length of service is open-ended. The NYFA currently has a modest budget, ranging from \$2000 to \$2500 annually. The committee dispenses the funds equally between three or four non-Quaker women who are pursuing an education to improve the quality of their lives. In recent years funds have gone to women enrolled at the Borough of Manhattan Community College, Stony Brook University, Brooklyn College, SUNY Brooklyn Educational Opportunity Center and several nursing schools.

The committee is looking for new members, especially people who are regularly in contact with women interested in furthering their education. At present there are three members from Brooklyn Meeting, one from 15<sup>th</sup> Street Meeting, and one from Morningside Meeting. A person from Flushing Meeting would be most welcome. Please contact the clerk, Mary Doty at [mdotysykes@gail.com](mailto:mdotysykes@gail.com), if you are interested in serving on this committee.

-- Mary Doty



## Save the Date: Brooklyn Friends School Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

Brooklyn Friends School is pleased to announce a ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Upper School facility located at 116 Lawrence Street. It takes place on September 8 at 4:15 p.m. All

members and attenders within the Brooklyn Meeting community are welcome.

## Brooklyn Friends Go to Yearly Meeting: A Report

Yearly Meeting is the regular gathering of New York State Friends, held at the Silver Bay YMCA conference center at Lake



George. It is a peaceful location, with many buildings on a slope leading down to the lake with tree covered mountains across the water. Over 500 folks come from meetings all over New York State, and a few from New Jersey and Connecticut. There are a number of large urban meetings like Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, and Brooklyn, but most are small rural meetings. Some of these smaller meetings have a dozen or fewer members, who cherish this once a year chance to see old friends.

Why do we go to Silver Bay? First of all, there is the business of the Yearly Meeting and of the various committees – Spiritual Nurture, Updating Faith and Practice, Earthcare, Black Concerns, Indian Affairs, Conflict Transformation, Young Adults, Aging Concerns, Prisons Activism, and many others. A core of dedicated Friends spent much of their time dealing with the Epistle, a summation of New York Yearly Meeting actions for the whole year. Another concern was approving a

letter to be sent to Pope Francis. (Both the epistle and an article concerning the letter to Pope Francis are included elsewhere in this issue.)

There were many opportunities for worship during the day: sunrise in the boat house, 6 a.m. coffee and conversation and worship sharing groups on topics such as the Environment, Healing from Racism, LGBT concerns and Aging. There was

also a general meeting for those who want a non-programmed, non-topic worship.

Many come just for the fun of outdoor activities, such as sailing, canoeing, hiking, swimming, or relaxing in rocking chairs on the porch of the Inn.

There was music everywhere. Singing on the porch every evening after dinner (words from *Rise up Singing* - many Friends know the tunes from years of gatherings, campfires and protest marches.) Young folks rehearsed their music for the Café Night. I enjoyed hearing one teenager from our Brooklyn playing a slide trombone. A dozen white haired, long-bearded men and one woman gathered on the porch every evening, rehearsing for the contra dance. They played fiddles, guitars and a curious homemade bass instrument created out of a large drum and homemade neck; it looked like a gigantic banjo. Two of them play together regularly all year, but the rest jumped in

and, skilled musicians that they are, delightful music was made.

Every morning there was hymn singing in the tiny stone chapel. And evensong was held there after dinner, as chamber group played the works of composers such as Brahms and Debussy, alternating with a reading from Scripture.

This year 6 people from Brooklyn swam across the lake, arranging to be accompanied by a rowboat with a lifeguard. One person would swim across, then change places with the other who jumped out of the boat and swam back while the first swimmer rode. Ted Ehrhardt made the swim for the fourth time in as many years; others from Brooklyn participating in this nautical endeavor included Danielle Dybiec, Morgan Harting, and Peter Laughter.

Every year, Junior Yearly Meeting keeps the children happily occupied. But, more than that, life-long friendships grow with kids from all across the Yearly Meeting. Often they don't see each other except at the gathering; what joyful reunions there are! Junior Yearly Meeting this year was huge, accounting for 137 of the 506 total registrants. The youngsters maintain strong YM-wide bonds as well as learning a lot about Friends' testimonies and our process. This and Powell House weekends are what keep teenagers in meeting. The summer sessions at Silver Bay on Lake George are the cement that unifies the many small meetings across the state with large urban meetings in Brooklyn, Manhattan, Rochester and other cities.

-- *Lucy Sikes*

## Healing Racism at Yearly Meeting

While at Silver Bay this year, I attended the Worship Group on Healing Racism. Special guest Five Mualimm-ak, from Incarcerated Nation Corp., was a special guest of the meeting. He constructed for the gathering a model of a solitary confinement cell, giving us an idea of just how limited the space is. He elaborated that, in addition to the limited physical space, no one is allowed to talk with the inmate in solitary. Five was able to convey a vivid and appalling picture of what it must be like. His organization is sponsoring legislation to humanize the practice. You can find out more about this at [incarceratednation.org](http://incarceratednation.org). There were many meetings around healing racism, both informative and proactive. Among other actions, we focused on developing amendments following the intent of the Apology to Afro Descendants and continuing support for previously incarcerated Quakers upon release.

Before attending Yearly Meeting last year, I had the impression that Quaker social activism was overlooking equality in its focus on stewardship. Now, I am highly impressed to learn how much New York Yearly Meeting is doing to heal racism. And our Yearly Meeting's activities around equality have grown considerably since last year. Black Concerns and Prison Committee have been extremely productive in creating and participating in workshops,

increasing awareness and action among Quakers and with other communities as well. In April 2016, NYYM will cohost (with Friends General Conference) the White Privilege Conference in Philadelphia.

-- *Linda Clarke*

## Business at Yearly Meeting Summer Sessions

This summer at NYYM's meetings for business there were a number of items that were particularly relevant to Brooklyn Meeting. Our Minute about FUM hiring policy was considered on the floor of the YM, when the Nurture Coordinating Committee reported that it is leading to dialogue about recent changes in FUM and the new openings thereby arising. In short, FUM is seriously reconsidering how its hiring policy discriminates against LGBT people, and wants to engage with Friends in Brooklyn and anywhere about it.

Another is that the YM has written the Pope, who will visit America in September. The Pope has expressed deep concern for indigenous peoples, and YM is urging him to repudiate the Holy See's "Doctrine of Christian Discovery" encyclicals from the 1500s-1600s. These deemed indigenous people undeserving of equal rights and justified European conquests, colonization, and oppression.



Finally, I'd note that the YM has created a working group, including representatives in every YM Region/Quarter, to monitor how well the YM is implementing its new 2014 "Leadings and Priorities" so as to reflect the needs and preferences of the monthly meetings. That is, it seeks our help in ensuring that it becomes more relevant, now that criteria for that have been approved. Is one of us willing to serve in this work, mostly through inter-visitation within NYC?

### **LEADINGS AND PRIORITIES**

- *We envision a yearly meeting deeply grounded in the practice of our faith.*
- *We envision a yearly meeting made up of strong, vital monthly meetings.*
- *We envision a yearly meeting gathered together into one body.*
- *We envision a yearly meeting that nurtures our children, youth and young adults.*
- *We envision a yearly meeting that supports and amplifies our witness.*
- *We envision a yearly meeting that is accountable and transparent.*

-- Andy von Salis

## **New York Yearly Meeting Epistle**

To Friends everywhere:

We gathered again in this the 60th year of a re-united meeting, Hicksite and Orthodox, and the 320th since our founding. The cottonwood trees along the shores of Lake George sent the tiny clouds of their seeds like emissaries of Light through our work, play, and worship. After several years of hard but fruitful labor around our leadings and priorities, during which we "sat in the shadows in order to better see them," to quote the week's Bible study leader Mary Kay Glazer, we felt an ease and a unity.

Young Adult Friends strove to inject joy into the yearly meeting where and

when they could. They participated in community-building events with the Silver Bay staff, facilitated an intergenerational dinner conversation, served the yearly meeting by working with youth, and linked kayaks far out on the lake for corporate worship. "We couldn't tell where heaven began," one Friend recalled. "We savored the light of summer."

In the absence of our Young Adult Field Secretary, who is on leave, Young Adult Friends leaned into learning Quaker process with the general secretary and others, with particular interest in the practice of standing aside and in corporate discernment. The Young Adult Concerns Committee struggled with planning and scheduling, features felt to be all the more important because of the inherent transience of young adulthood. We were grateful for the language and spirit of a substantive revision to our Faith and Practice on the recording of gifts in the ministry. We subsequently recorded the gifts in ministry of Margaret Webb, pastor of Farmington Friends Church. We celebrated the broad and deep contributions of Barbara Spring as she looks forward to her retirement as coordinator of the Aging Resources Consultation and Help (ARCH) program and welcomed Callie Janoff as she transitions into her role as director.

The plenary speaker, our own Don Badgley of Poughkeepsie Meeting, enjoined us to live and work from our spiritual core and become again Publishers of the Truth. He posited that the very survival of the Religious Society of Friends depends on it. He called us to "return to, and share with the world, radical ministries that arise in Experiential Worship."

From our experience of worship has arisen a recognition of the suffering and injustice caused by racism and white privilege. Having been moved in the spring to become co-hosts, with Friends General Conference and other groups, of the 2016 White Privilege Conference, we nurtured the growing community of those intending to

participate in the conference. In worship sharing we are actively learning about past and present racism.

Amid the display tables at a busy thoroughfare of our gathering stood a 6x9-foot mock solitary confinement cell of the type in which thousands of incarcerated Americans live and suffer. Many of us felt a quickening to work against mass incarceration and specifically, against solitary confinement, as well as a new hopefulness in large part due to the concrete actions described by our energetic visitor, Five Mualim-Ak, himself a victim of prolonged isolation in New York State prisons. Friends wrote scores of cards and letters to New York state elected officials asking them to support the HALT Act (Humane Alternatives to Long-term Solitary Confinement), which restricts the use of solitary confinement. In the shade of a great white pine planted jointly in 1989 by Chief Jake Swamp Sr of the Onondaga nation and the American Friends Service Committee, we came to unity on a letter to Pope Francis exhorting him to repudiate the Doctrine of Christian Discovery that has caused and/or justified such suffering, destruction, and genocide in the Americas and around the world.

Our Healing Center, which has reached a decade of service, rests atop a hill overlooking Silver Bay. Through the loving touch and presence of a core of Friends committed to spiritual healing ministry, its energy emanates through all our work and worship in ways both impalpable and precious.

Among us one day after Bible study a small child was heard to sing as if to herself over and over, "Don't you see our flowers are here. Don't you see our flowers are here." Perhaps we did see. Perhaps we were, as our clerk Jeffrey L. Hitchcock had invited us to be at the start of the week, "tender with and open to one another as we [met] the openings, challenges, and struggles of the week." We feel great peace, and offer to you this bouquet, variegated yet gathered—who we are and how we

grew here.

## Rise Up and Sing!

Annie & Peter Blood-Patterson, members of Mount Toby Monthly Meeting and New England Yearly Meeting, are the creators of the songbook *Rise Up Singing*. On the evening of Friday, October 23, they will perform a concert at the 1st Unitarian Church (50 Monroe Place in Brooklyn) to celebrate the release of their long-awaited new songbook. They will be joined by several other terrific artists, all of whom share Annie & Peter's

commitment to peace and social justice: Magpie, Bev Grant & the Brooklyn Women's Chorus and Emma's Revolution! (Pat Humphries & Sandy O).

You can find details, online ticket sales and a flyer at: <https://www.riseupandsing.org/events/rise-again-brooklyn>. Please help spread the word about this important upcoming event!

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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 21st**.  
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

### 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)***

*Member Kate Rapoport also maintains an  
email event announcement list; send a request to [brooklyn.kittens@gmail.com](mailto:brooklyn.kittens@gmail.com) to join.*

### September 2015

***September 8, 4:15 PM:***

Brooklyn Friends School Ribbon Cutting at 116F  
Lawrence Street

### October 2015

***October 23:***

Rise Up singing Concert at First Unitarian  
Church. See flyer:  
<https://www.riseupandsing.org/events/rise-again-brooklyn>.

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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: Eli Gwynn (clerk), Ben Hill, Molly Rusnak, Lucy Sikes, and Anna White.*

*Drawings by Lucy Sikes*

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