



# BROOKLYN MEETING NEWS

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

*brooklynmeeting.org*

**November 2016**

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## **Brooklyn Meeting Member Linea Capps: Bringing Light to Global Health**

*This article is part of the "Meet the Meeting" series, in which we get to know Brooklyn Meeting members and attenders while highlighting the myriad ways in which they apply their Quaker values to the outside world. Would you – or someone you know -- like to be featured in an upcoming article? Then get in touch! (Talk to one of the communications committee members, or email [newsletter@brooklynmeeting.org](mailto:newsletter@brooklynmeeting.org).)*

Linnea Capps came to Quakerism in medical school, when she was a member of a meeting in Columbia, Missouri, that was so small it met in a building on campus rather than a meetinghouse. When she graduated, she wanted to work in a poor, underserved community. She did her internship and residency in Harlem, and then realized that she could do more good working at the community level rather than seeing patients one at a time. With this insight, she launched a 40-year career that improved access to medical care for countless people all over the world.

Linnea went back to school for a Master's Degree in public health from Columbia University. She finished in

1985 and left for El Salvador, which was embroiled in a civil war. She planned to spend six months volunteering in a rural village, training local health workers in preventive care. Instead, she stayed for two years.

At that point, she decided it was time to come back to the U.S. and get involved in global programs that could do the most good for the most people. She spent the next several decades doing global health work as a volunteer while working in clinics, mostly in Harlem, and teaching at Columbia. Since the mid-1990s, she has been working with the nonprofit Doctors for Global Health (DGH), serving for a time as its president and sitting on the board of directors.

Now in semi-retirement, having given up her work in clinics, Linnea spends three to four months out of the year in Mexico and Uganda on DGH projects. In October, she left for Chiapas, Mexico, where the Zapatista community is fighting to preserve its indigenous Mayan heritage in the face of government oppression. Since the local populace is reluctant to go to government hospitals, DGH works with a small hospital run by Catholic nuns, training members of the community to provide health care.

## **Finding time to give back**

Semi-retirement has also freed up more of Linnea's time to be involved with Brooklyn Monthly Meeting. She had transferred her membership to the 15<sup>th</sup> Street meeting in 1980, when she moved from Missouri to New York, but drifted away during her years of 80-hour workweeks. She began attending Brooklyn Meeting regularly after 9/11 and cites the impact that Quakerism has had on her choices.

"It comes down to being part of a community that's supportive," she said. "That helps me think about spiritual issues and what I should be doing with my life, in a way that I wouldn't have if I weren't regularly attending Friends meeting."

Linnea serves on the Cemetery and Social Action Committees for Brooklyn Monthly Meeting. Besides those commitments, Linnea keeps busy with her work with DGH and a faculty position at Montefiore Hospital. While it is a rewarding retirement, it is certainly not restful.

"I semi-retired at the end of June," she said. "I still haven't had the chance to sit all day and read a novel!"

*--Melissa Cavanaugh*



## **Membership Changes and Financial Issues at October Meeting for Business**

Emily Sandusky was welcomed into membership by the clerks. Wayne Williams and David Whitlock transferred to other meetings.

### **Parents from Friends Schools will visit Meeting for Worship**

Brooklyn Friends School families were welcomed to Meeting on October 16. Mary McDowell Friends School families will join Meeting for Worship on December 11. This is an opportunity for them to deepen their understanding of the Quaker experience that their children are having in our schools.

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

By providing scholarships to Brooklyn Friends to attend Summer Sessions of New York Yearly Meeting at Silver Bay and other Quaker conferences, Ministry and Counsel has spent its budget and asks for additional money to continue its work. Questions were raised about the financial situation of the Meeting as a

whole and the issue was put over to next Meeting for Business when the Treasurer will report.

As of First Day, October 23, the Finance and Collections Committee reports that 63 members and attenders have made contributions. Approximately one half of these funds are donated to New York Yearly Meeting every year.

-- Molly Rusnak

## **Contributing to the Life of our Meeting**

I am increasing my monthly contribution to Brooklyn Meeting. I recently attended Monthly Meeting for Business, where we heard about new financial needs and, informally, heard that we are behind in our collections for this calendar year. Friends often wonder how much they should give to the meeting. Not surprisingly, it depends. I work full time and earn a solid middle class salary. I still have one child in a private college, but I own my home and I can use home equity to pay for college. These are the kind of factors that affect my budget decisions. Everyone will have their own considerations.

What do my contributions to Brooklyn Meeting pay for? A significant percentage is used to support the Yearly Meeting staff and programs. They provide inspiration, support and connection to the wider Society of Friends. A meeting like Brooklyn cannot thrive in a vacuum. We are particularly fortunate that our property costs are

covered by the New York Quarterly Meeting. We contribute to Powell House and our meeting has received a special request from Powell House to contribute to the replacement of their dishwasher in Pitt Hall. Several years ago, our meeting replaced the dishwasher in the Anna Curtis Center. Our meeting's funds also cover the costs of our committees and purposeful giving. Ministry and Counsel awards numerous grants of financial aid to allow members and attenders to participate in activities such as Yearly Meeting sessions and attendance at White Privilege conferences. It may be helpful for Friends to consider that even if we cannot attend some of these events, our meeting is enriched by having others attend. I urge all who receive grants to find ways to report back to our meeting.

I encourage all members of our meeting to give something more to collections and I especially encourage our many faithful attenders to join with us in sustaining the spiritually rich life of our meeting!

-- Ben Frisch

## **Mark Your Calendar: Quaker Cemetery Workday Coming Soon**



Please join together for our Fall Visiting and Workday at our Quaker Cemetery in Prospect Park.

**Saturday, November 12**  
**10 a.m. – 4 p.m.**

Enjoy fellowship, work and fun. Help rake leaves and remove invasive plants. Bring rakes or gloves if you have them. Visit the gravesites of family and friends. Cider and cookies will be provided.

The cemetery is on the Transverse Road in Prospect Park. For more information contact cemetery sexton Robert Wilber at 718-938-1800.

## **Keeping Our Elders: Intergenerational Living in New York City**

**Saturday, November 19**  
**Brooklyn Meetinghouse**  
**10 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

Come hear about the work and join in exploring the concerns of the ad hoc group that has been reflecting on aging in community and keeping our elders in NYC. We will meet in retreat for discussion and lunch to talk about housing, socialization, services for aging and building intergenerational community.

## **New York City Quaker Honored at the Museum of African American History**

Walter Naegle, a long-time staff member of New York Yearly Meeting and the partner of the late Bayard Rustin, made a formal presentation to the new Museum of African-American History. He presented the museum with a gold watch inscribed and given by Martin Luther King to Bayard Rustin in appreciation for organizing the “March on Washington” in 1963. Brooklyn Friends who attended the recent workshop on “Quakers and Slavery”

in the Meetinghouse may remember Walter Naegle joining us at that event.

Bayard Rustin spent the latter part of his life in Penn South, now the Mutual Redevelopment Houses in New York City. He was also director of the Phillip Randolph Institute which published “A Freedom Budget for All Americans,” a plan for eliminating poverty in the U.S. with a federal job guarantee.

I met Bayard Rustin years earlier in Chicago when he was organizing peace demonstrations at the time of the Korean War as director of the Fellowship of Reconciliation.

Groups are invited to host a showing of the film about Bayard Rustin through [info@rustin.org](mailto:info@rustin.org).

-- Molly Rusnak

## **Quaker 101: Discussing the Ways in Which We Worship**

On the third first day in October approximately thirty of us met in the afternoon around the topic of Quaker Worship, led by Andres Colapinto and Linda Clarke. We began with a short quote from *Interpretation of Friends Worship*, by Jean Toomer, copies of which had been sent to those who had signed up for them. (Toomer as a writer is associated with the Harlem Renaissance. This particular work was from 1947. )

Panelists Nancy Black, William Carr and Peter Laughter each talked about their personal experiences with worship, focusing on the mystical

aspects, vocal ministry and centering down.

Nancy handed out copies of an etching which appeared in a pamphlet by Edward Hoare, entitled *Deepening the Spiritual Life of the Meeting*, and recommended the pamphlet to us. She also described how a larger print had been prominently displayed at our Meetinghouse for many years. It shows a Quaker Meeting from olden times, when the men and the women sat in different sections and all were attired in “plain Quaker garb.” In their midst is a very large ghostly figure of Christ (easily recognizable as a typical portrait of Jesus). Distinguishing between individual and corporate experiences of the divine, she pointed out that Quaker Meeting for Worship provides the possibility of a mystical experience, or direct experience of the divine. She recommended “Quaker Speak” videos on worship for more information on mystical experiences.

William's focus concerned vocal



ministry. He mentioned that over the many years he has been present at Meeting for Worship, he has rarely spoken. He discussed the process of ascertaining for oneself whether a message is meant to be shared during Meeting, sorting through various questions and steps to determine whether the message is coming from the individual stream of consciousness or a spiritual source. Acknowledging

that this process may be different for all of us, his begins with examining personal concerns, if any, around the substance of the message. The last step in the process is concerned with a sense of urgency or pressure to speak. Receiving a message conveys a strong feeling that he cannot restrain the message from coming forth and once the message is delivered, he feels shaken.

Peter's focus was about making ourselves available for worship, amplifying what we call "centering down." In preparation for Meeting, he will think ahead about problems that concern him, and will focus his attention on one for worship. Sometimes, the same problem will have been prominent for weeks or even months. He begins worship with a meditative breathing exercise, releasing attention to distractions.

All of our panelists generously and openly shared their experiences with worship both during meeting and in their private concerns, revealing how meeting for worship informed their daily lives and how their daily lives affected their corporate worship. This depth of generosity and honesty was carried forward into the discussion which followed and resulted in an especially worshipful meeting.

Session 2 of Quaker 101, Quaker History, is scheduled for November 20<sup>th</sup>.

-- Linda Clarke

## **Friends Seek Perspective, Fellowship**

On October 4<sup>th</sup>, Brooklyn Monthly Meeting hosted a potluck dinner and discussion titled "Quaker Perspectives on Political Unrest: Hope in the Face of Rage." More than a dozen friends came together to share a meal and talk about ways to gain perspective during this tumultuous election cycle.

Peter Laughter opened the discussion, asking, "How do we view political turmoil through a Quaker lens? In general but particularly in this acrimonious time? How do we find hope in despair?" He then turned the discussion over to Mahayana (Yana) Landowne, who led the group through an "open space conversation." Everyone wrote down a thought or question that they would like to discuss, then came together to group them into themes. These themes were posted around the room, and friends congregated around the themes that inspired them to contribute or learn.

The questions and statements included:

- 1) How do we create unified community after the election?
- 2) Finding a respectful way to discuss differences
- 3) What is the role of fear in our political discussions?
- 4) On what spiritual grounds can one justify choosing the lesser of two evils?
- 5) Moving beyond soundbites

All of the themes generated intense discussion, with some friends staying in one group throughout the 45-minute discussion, and others contributing to several. It was an evening of thoughtful discussion that was in marked contrast to much of the rhetoric around the 2016 presidential election.

--Melissa Cavanaugh



## **The Place and Places of Quakers in New York City: A Vision for the Future**

The above headline is the title of a planning process focused on the buildings and properties of the Quaker Meetings in New York. This process is being led by the consulting group Urban Projects Collaborative, which is holding meetings with Friends to share their findings after visiting the buildings and evaluating them professionally. (Copies of this document are available in the Meeting Library)

One of a series of meetings was held at 15<sup>th</sup> Street Meetinghouse on October 8 to share and discuss a preliminary plan. The plan has five



sections: Guiding Principles, Condition of the Properties, Priorities Based on Principles, Goals Based on Priorities and Budget and Governance.

### **Where We Are Now:**

Status of the properties of the Quarter:

-- Schools separately incorporated, linked to the Meetings by Care Committees.

-- There has been a recent agreement between 15<sup>th</sup> Street Meeting and Friends Seminary about the responsibility of each; the possible transfer of Flushing Meetinghouse and the Cemetery to the Quarter (these are significant historically); maintenance of Quaker Cemetery in Prospect Park; 112 Schermerhorn St next to Brooklyn Meetinghouse rental, providing essential financing for the Quarterly Meeting and the financial situation of the Quarter.



### What We Need to Do:

The condition of the properties of the Quarter:

-- 15<sup>th</sup> Street Meetinghouse needs masonry repairs, changes in the use of rooms, acoustic improvements in the Meeting room, and completion of kitchen renovation.

-- Brooklyn Meetinghouse needs new windows, acoustic improvements in Meeting room, kitchen and bathroom upgrades and resolution of water infiltration. There is also a plan for installing an elevator. -- --- Flushing Meeting needs to continue foundation and exterior entry improvements, shutter replacement and addressing moisture in the outer wall. The historic Flushing Meetinghouse is not currently owned by the Quarterly Meeting but may become so.

-- The Cemetery will be improving its roadway.

-- Quarterly Meeting administration will be reorganizing its internal and

external communications to increase efficiency.



### Our Goals:

-- Spirituality: simplicity and nurturing worship.

-- Community: accessibility, acoustics, multi-use of spaces, flexibility and sharing, openness to outside community.

-- Stewardship: reducing our environmental footprint.

These plans are dependent on Friends Seminary signing the agreement they and we have made. At the time of this report, they have not yet signed. Though they have undertaken construction based on this agreement in order to meet their schedule.

-- *Molly Rusnak*

### Brooklyn Property Committee: Tenant Must Go

Brooklyn Property Committee has requested of the Quarterly Meeting Trustees that the lease for New York Explorers, a minority owned and operated preschool and daycare program, not be renewed. The Explorers has been our tenant for a number of years. This came as a surprise to members of the First Day School Committee, who have worked out issues involving storage and wall space. The two groups were also

working together on plans to improve the playground before this decision was made.

During the recent Quarterly Meeting discussions on the future of the properties, Friends expressed a strong desire to have the Meeting Houses used by the community. This rental was the primary way that Brooklyn Meeting fulfilled that goal, as well as contributing to the expenses of maintaining our Meetinghouse, as

Fifteenth Street Meeting does.

-- *Molly Rusnak*

### Quakers and Anger

During the coverage of this presidential campaign, a commentator on television pointed out that angry people are politically effective because they are completely committed and have more energy and passion than the rest of us. The recent agreement between the Quarterly Meeting and Friends Seminary comes after the Quarterly Meeting has experienced years of anger on the part of some Friends who did exert influence. The majority of Quarterly Meeting members, who were not angry, appeared somewhat weak and helpless and were sometimes unable to conduct business effectively and peacefully. There are still scars left from the pain of this experience, as we attempt to recover and move on.

At that time and now I wonder why we, as a Quaker group, were unable to deal with this anger and overcome and defuse it and also why Quaker property issues often become a source of anger. Perhaps, in the present, as peace begins to heal, we can look back and see in what ways we can make property decisions more peacefully.

-- *Molly Rusnak*

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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 November **21<sup>st</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)***

### November

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

**Saturday, November 19 10AM-3PM:** “Keeping Our Elders: Intergenerational Living in New York City.” Brooklyn Meetinghouse.

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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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