



BROOKLYN MEETING NEWS

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

brooklynmeeting.org

January 2017

A Call to Communicators

The Communications Committee, which produces this monthly newsletter, is looking for new members. Are you a writer, interested in chronicling Quaker events and profiling members and attenders? A layout and design whiz? A database expert? We'd love to hear from you.

Contact Molly Rusnak at mcrusnak@aol.com

Christmas Parties in Brooklyn Meeting

The Social Room in Brooklyn Meetinghouse welcomed Christmas parties on December 16 and 17.

On the evening of Friday the 16th, our tenants, New York Explorers, filled the space with children and families enjoying a celebration. Festivities included a dramatic presentation and a potluck dinner. Attending from Brooklyn Meeting were Adrienne, Ed and Neva Oliver and Molly Rusnak.

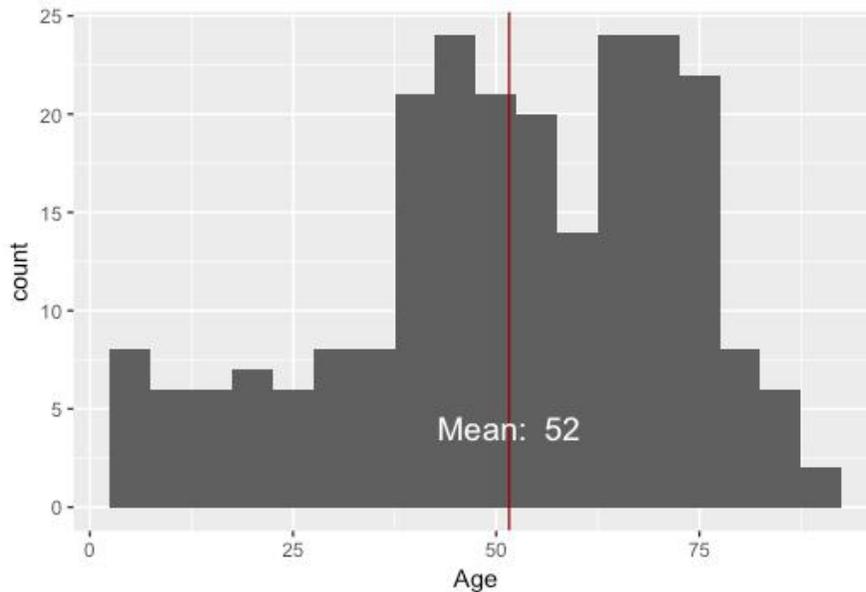
On Saturday, Brooklyn Meeting's youngest Friends and their families decorated Christmas cookies with lots of gooey frosting and sprinkles, followed by a potluck supper and a surprise visit from Santa Claus bearing gifts. A highlight of the

evening was the wonderful music of our own Brooklyn Meeting instrumental duo which inspired carol singing and original dance by the little ones. The families and children were joined by some Meeting Friends.

-- Molly Rusnak

Infographic: How Old Are Our Members?

Our members range in age from 3 to 89, with an average age of 52. Here's how it breaks down:



December Meeting for Business, Committee Reports and Social Action

Nominating Committee Reports on Filling Meeting Positions

The Meeting Nominating Committee has reached out to new members as well as seasoned Friends to staff the committees that serve our Meeting. At present we have 132 positions to fill

from 142 local members and attenders. In addition, Brooklyn Meeting provides volunteers for New York Quarterly Meeting and New York Yearly Meeting committees. First Day School and Social Hour, two important committees in Brooklyn, still need members. Those who serve have not only the satisfaction of contributing but also deepen their relationships within the Meeting.

Meeting Makes Use of Socially Responsible Activities/Donations Fund

The Peace and Social Action Committee reports that the Socially Responsible Activities/Donations Fund is now fully utilized. The most recent contributions have gone to the African Education Committee of New York Quarterly Meeting for the Kisangura Friends School in Tanzania and to The Cove, a learning center for teens in the Bronx.

Brooklyn Meeting Friends are involved in both programs.

Emmy Gay Reports on the Standing Rock Protest Against the Dakota Access Pipeline

Participants in the protest need better access to communication. Based on her experience there, Emmy Gay suggests that Brooklyn Meeting contribute to increased Wi-Fi capacity in the local school and camp.

Clerk Gives Annual Report

Ted Ehrhardt shared his experience as Clerk of Brooklyn in a brief report, expressing appreciation for the services of Nancy Black as Assistant Clerk in preparing and sharing the Meeting Minutes and Jim Morgan for substituting. This Friends has found Brooklyn Meeting Meetings for Business this past year to be a model of Quaker practice, building a spiritual community as well as making intelligent decisions.

-- Molly Rusnak

Food for Thought

At the conclusion of December Meeting for Business, Ted Ehrhardt read this paragraph from Parker Palmer:

“God comes to us in the midst of human need, and the most pressing needs of our time demand community in response. How can I participate in a fairer distribution of resources unless I live in a community which makes it possible to consume less? How can I learn accountability unless I live in a community where my acts and their consequences are visible to all? How can I learn to share power unless I live in a community where hierarchy is unnatural? How can I take the risks which right action demands unless I belong to a community which gives support? How can I learn the sanctity of each life unless I live in a community where we can be persons not roles to one another?”

-- Parker F. Palmer, 1977
Quaker faith & Practice, 5th ed.
Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers in Britain)

Book Review: Margaret Fisher's *Enlarging Our Circle of Love*

Margaret Fisher loves to sing. With *Enlarging Our Circle of Love* she hits the right notes in her hymn to veganism. And she speaks to my condition because, unlike die-hard vegans who have no doubts about their cause, she struggles with her leading.

Although my ministry is preparing vegetarian and vegan meals for Meeting, at home I'm a sinner -- consuming meat, fish, and dairy. To do Margaret Fisher justice I became a vegan, finding my way open to her message: Eating animals is cruel, unhealthy, wasteful, expensive and harmful to the planet.

Compared to some vegans who condemn everything from hunting to zoo-keeping, Fisher stops with questions about animal experiments. (Thankfully she leaves my cats alone.)

After her revulsion at dissecting a frog in biology class she became a vegetarian without difficulty. But converting to veganism was like joining a cult. She remained in the plants-only closet until her meat-eating husband outed her by turning vegan himself.

Between these epiphanies, Fisher sinned by eating turkey on Thanksgiving and keeping the benefits of plant-eating to herself. She fed her children meat to “normalize” them and remained silent with Friends about her beliefs. Following approval as a traveling minister Fisher remains more penitent than evangelist.

Except for an epigraph by John Woolman showing respect for the “least creatures,” Fisher doesn't confront the controversy of whether Judaeo-Christianity is to blame for our environmental mess. She is vague about the theological basis of her practice and how to improve animal welfare policy.

For example, to set free and care for the millions of animals destined for slaughterhouses would require taxpayer subsidies dwarfing those farmers get for not planting crops. Or do we believe greater demand for tofu will transform “free enterprise?”

However, Fisher mixes testimony and argument well in her moral call to action. At her most vocal, she shocks us by asking how we would feel as victims of the farm-to-table pipeline.

My two months as a vegan is hardly a test compared to Margaret Fisher's 40 years of seeking right relations with animals. Yet I would love to proclaim with her: “Animals of the world unite; you have everything to lose if WE don't change.”

(*Enlarging the Circle of Love*, Pendle Hill pamphlet #440, was published in 2016)

-- Carl Blumenthal

Quakers' Message to President-elect Trump

New York Yearly Meeting recently wrote a letter to President-elect Trump, expressing to him “concern for the ways your campaign rhetoric has impacted, and is still impacting, our nation.”

The letter included with the following observation: “For over three hundred years, it has been our experience that if we listen inwardly, that we can hear that “still small voice” of God, which can lead each of us to just and humane actions, guiding our lives and decisions. We will be praying for you, that you are able to hear that same voice, and to act from it.”

To read the letter in full, visit:

<http://www.nyym.org/sites/default/files/Letter-NYYM-Pres-electTrump-Nov2016.pdf>

effect they have had on our beliefs and practices today. We were reminded that, in the 1960s, Brooklyn Meeting absorbed Quakers from the Lafayette Avenue Meeting, a conservative group. This led to differences regarding the centrality of Christ and the Inner Light in our faith.

-- Molly Rusnak



Quaker History: Taking a Stand Against Japanese Internment

The internment camps established in the U.S. to imprison Japanese-Americans during World War II mark a dark and ugly time in our nation's history. During that time, Friends worked in a number of ways to bring light in that darkness. Their courage and dedication are a shining example for all of us, 75 years later.

Soon after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, the United States government began a program of relocating people of Japanese ancestry who lived on the West Coast. Some 110,000 people--citizens and non-citizens--were interned. After the evacuation, the American Friends Service Committee, under the signature of Clarence Pickett, its executive secretary, released a statement to members of the Religious Society of Friends stating, "...we should share in such ways as our limited resources permit in breaking the force of this calamity which has come upon the Japanese population."

Two programs were established to help get people out of internment

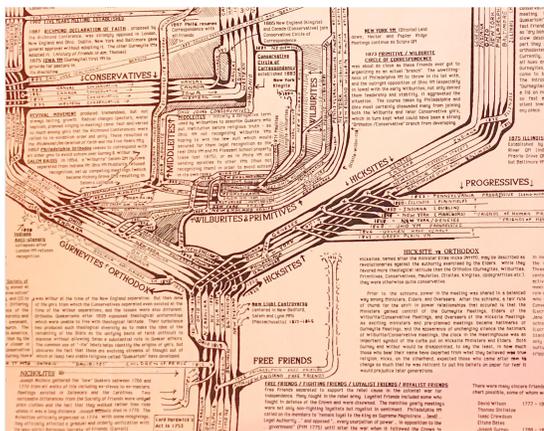
camp. The first, which started almost immediately, was an effort to find colleges and universities in Midwest and Eastern states that would be willing to receive evacuees who were already students or were eligible to enter schools of higher education. The other program was geared to the release of those who could find

jobs in the same areas of the United States where college opportunities were being sought. The AFSC, sometimes in cooperation with other groups and sometimes alone, established hostels in various cities where individuals who were released from camps could live while looking for work. Once they found jobs, they were assisted in locating places to live for themselves and their families, who sometimes joined them later.

Approximately 4,000 students were assisted in resuming or beginning their college careers through the National Japanese American Student Relocation Council, of which the AFSC was a member agency. In addition to the help students received, hundreds of other Japanese Americans found help through the hostels projects, upon being released from the internment camps and seeking jobs.

The end of the war terminated these programs. The AFSC then provided a considerable amount of the material aids sent to Japan through the Licensed Agencies for Relief in Asia. Much support for the relief effort came from Japanese-Americans who had received aid from the AFSC during the wartime period.

Adapted from "American Refugees: The Japanese-American Relocation," American Friends Service Committee, 2010:



Quaker 101 Continues

On First Day, December 18, Friends gathered after Meeting for Worship and Social Hour to consider further the history of Quakerism, particularly as it has influenced New York Yearly Meeting. The reading and discussion was led by Joan Malin and Ben Frisch, whose family lived some of this history, and focused on the divisions that developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries among Quakers. Here in New York State, Quakers divided between Hicksite and Orthodox Meetings. The Hicksites emphasized the light within and the Orthodox focused on the life and work of Christ. Later the Orthodox Quakers divided again. Some of these Meetings had pastors, and some had programmed worship.

The group considered the meaning of these variations in Quakerism and the

<https://www.afsc.org/story/american-refugeesthe-japanese-american-relocation>

Brooklyn Quaker Schools Appreciation Dinner scheduled for January 24th

Brooklyn Meeting has invited the faculty and staff from Brooklyn Friends School and Mary McDowell Friends School to come to the Meeting House on Tuesday, January 24 from 5:00 - 7:30 p.m. There will be Meeting for Worship at 5:00 and a gourmet dinner starting at 6:00.

BFS Chef Tom Buckley will provide wonderful meats, roasted vegetables and salads. Meeting members and attenders are asked to provide desserts. Please plan to come for worship and the meal. If you are not able to attend, please consider dropping off a dessert at the Meeting House any time before 6 p.m.

The Appreciation Dinner celebrates the dedication and talent of the teachers and staff of the Quaker schools in Brooklyn. Faculty and staff not only impart knowledge and support student learning, they also incorporate the values of our Quaker testimonies into the daily lives of the students and their communities. Sharing worship and a meal together is a good opportunity for the people of the Meeting and the people of the schools to learn more about each other.

Two Generations of an Interracial Family

My husband and I had no particular mission when we, a white couple, adopted an African-American baby. In fact, it was to some extent an accident. We had just joined Brooklyn Meeting, also partly by accident because New York State at that time required that adoptive parents have a religious affiliation. And fortunately this was the one we chose.

When we applied to adopt a baby from New York City we were given a form to fill out. It asked what sex we preferred and what race we preferred. We wrote that we had no preference for either choice, as we already had a daughter and a son. After home visits, we were offered a baby with interracial birth parents. The social worker told us that these babies were difficult to place because many prospective parents of either race didn't want them.

Fortunately our Brooklyn neighborhood accepted us -- in fact, hardly noticed us -- and Brooklyn Meeting welcomed us as a family. Our new son was also dedicated at an African-American storefront church, then on State Street in Boerum Hill, in the hope that he would absorb that part of his heritage!

When our son was two years old we had to move to White Plains because of a job change. We contacted the NAACP there about finding us a house in a neighborhood where our family would fit in. It was only after we moved that we discovered that the block we were living on was all white, though the wider area had some African Americans living several blocks away. I asked the realtor why the block was white and she said, "Well it's integrated now." Quite a big responsibility for a two-year old!

White Plains turned out to be a good choice. It had a school integration plan that really worked and we were also able to place our son in a kindergarten with an African-American teacher. A family with a similar adoption attended Scarsdale Friends Meeting with us and lived nearby.

There was an organization that brought together families with mixed race adoptions throughout Westchester for a picnic every year and a large number of families attended.

By age five our son became interested in African culture and asked for a dashiki which he wore over and over again.

The only racist encounter I can remember from that time was with a gentleman who was visiting our block, probably to consider buying a house. He observed a black four-year old riding a tricycle and asked "Who is that?" I said, "That is my son." And he walked away without a word.

-- *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 January 23rd.

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

January

January 23, 6 pm- 7 pm: Action in Brooklyn to Halt Solitary Between the entrance to Barclays Center & the entrance to the 2,3,4 & 5 subways Pacific street and Flatbush Avenue .
January 27-29 : “NYYM Coordinating Weekend” Powell House

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, Ben Frisch, Ben Hill, Molly Rusnak, and Lucy Sikes.

Drawings by Lucy Sikes, Chart by Ben Frisch
