



BROOKLYN MEETING NEWS

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

brooklynmeeting.org

SEPTEMBER, 2017

Education and Inspiration at the Quaker Activism Teach-In

-- By Mahaya Landowne

Quaker Activism is a group that formed the Sunday after the November election to explore how we as a community can better confront oppression, engage politically and infuse light and love into the resistance of systemic injustice. The group co-sponsored the Quaker Activism Teach-In with the Welcoming Committee, gathering more than thirty people, life-long Quakers, newer members and attendees, and interfaith visitors.

Sessions included:

-- Jim Morgan led a workshop about his Experiences in Activism, bridging his professional skills and municipal causes and transforming into his work in Tanzania.

-- The New Sanctuary Coalition led a workshop about the steps faith groups can take to support immigrants in our community, including accompanying people to routinely schedule ICE visits to show that they are supported by the community. Reach out to Quaker Activism (quakeractivism@protonmail.com) if you are interested in this volunteer opportunity!

-- Yana Landowne led "Artistic Activism," speaking to art's power and ability to cut through communication issues that underlie political difference and to clarify messages. Attendees in this workshop practiced brainstorming an action with imagery.

-- Andy von Salis led a workshop on conscientious objector laws and how to resist the draft.

-- Patricia Glynn and Ben Frisch, from Ministry & Council, led a workshop on Quaker Process that was well attended by Quakers and non-Quakers alike.

-- Richard White led a workshop on Quaker history. He spoke about how so few have empowered so many, and how Friends have let their lives speak so that others may have a voice.

-- Nadine & Barbra led a workshop examining how privacy issues have changed as technology has changed, and how these changes should inform our communication decisions as activist.

On Saturday, May 6th we shared ideas and learned Quaker testimonies. At the Teach In, we felt proud of the knowledge and supportive love present in our community and look forward to the next one.



Quaker Light Action Illuminates Our Shared Values

-- By Mahaya Landowne

The phrase "Being The Light" was taken literally recently by a group of artists and activists, all attendees or members of Brooklyn Friends Meeting. After the presidential election we came together to form a group - Quaker Activism -- with the goal of taking part in the growing resistance movement while holding true to Quaker values. Blending the Quaker concept of seeking the light within with light-up protest signs, we invited the community to make and use their own battery-powered LED signs to promote Quaker-valued messages.

First we hosted a workshop at Beam Center, attended by over 20 adults and children. Each participant was shown how to

turn a black foam core board and a string of battery-powered LED lights into an illuminated sign.

Assisted by QA group members, they designed their own message or symbol. Next, after making evenly-spaced holes, they inserted 40 small lights so that they showed on the front of the board. These were then hot glue gunned into place. "The hardest part of this project was to learn to keep the lights close together and to keep the design simple to allow for it to be read correctly once it was lit," said organizer and group member Todd Drake.

Participants were invited to join a silent light vigil held weeks later at Grand Army Plaza, organized by the Quaker Activist Group. Over 20 people showed up on a beautiful June evening. Coordinated by Yana Landowne, we stood together holding lighted signs along with painted cloth banners designed by Quaker

Activist group member Wayne Moseley. We stood facing the evening traffic coming through the plaza. Approving waves and honking horns echoed back to us and pedestrians stopped to admire the vigil and to speak to the participants. A few like-minded people simply walked up and joined in holding banners and signs. As the daylight faded our lighted signs became easily readable from some distance. Hundreds of Brooklyn residents experienced something positive that evening; friends old and young inviting them to be the light and to be the love the world is in so much need of today.

Further "light actions" along with other activities are being planned by the Quaker Activism Group. To join us send an e-mail to QuakerActivism@protonmail.com You can also follow us on Twitter: @QuakerActivism

July Meeting for Business: A Marriage, Membership Matters and the Community Dinner

--By Molly Rusnak

We hear a letter requesting membership from Cassel Kroll and his daughter, Beatrice Ruth Kroll. The letter, forwarded from Ministry and Oversight, will be read a second time next month.

We approve the transfer of Daniel Holton-Roth and daughters to Mountain View Friends Meeting in Denver, Colorado

Benjamin Warnke reports on the Welcoming Dinner for John Major. As his gift, he will select a book from the Book Table.

Marriage Report

The Oversight Committee for the Marriage of Andres Colapinto and Emily Sandusky as part of First Day Worship is received. A letter of appreciation from the couple is read.

A Visiting Friend from Scotland

Janet Fenton from Northern Friends Peace Board in Scotland brought with her a Minute Regarding Nuclear Disarmament. She is part of a group working on a Nuclear Treaty, now signed by 130 members, which has been approved by the United Nations. She shared her message and some materials on the subject for our library.

The Community Dinner Gives Its Annual Report

Morgan Harting, Clerk, reported

that the Committee has a number of new members and is redefining responsibilities. The dinner serves approximately 60 to 80 guests from the community on the last First Day of the Month. It also distributes clothing donated by Meeting members, which is much appreciated.

The Property Committee Reports on Planned Improvements

Because of increased use, additional hooks will be installed in the foyer next to the Meeting Room. The installation of a new boiler has been postponed. If needed this winter, a second heat source will be provided.

Interested in promoting a Quaker event? Then email
events@brooklynmeeting.org

How Brooklyn Meeting Gardens Grew

-- By Molly Rusnak

A recent concern about lead in the soil in front of the Meetinghouse focused attention on the Meeting gardens. These gardens, in front of and alongside the Meetinghouse, did not always exist. They actually grew out of two disasters which befell the Meetinghouse in the past.

The beauty of the entrance to the Meetinghouse was for many years enhanced by a magnificent tree which rose up over the building.



Plants for the Boerum Street garden selected for density and colorful display during all seasons of the year

First Phase of Garden Replanting, Sept 10 (Today) and Sept 17 1-3 pm

The Property Committee and attender/horticulturalist Rebecca McMackin invite you to join us to restore the long garden next to the fence along Boerum Place. The bed will be dug up and restored with compost and new soil. There will be a free giveaway for plants we don't repurpose.

On September 17, the next First Day, we will replant the area with a collection of shrubs which have been selected to block the view to the street and to provide colorful foliage and blooms at each season. For info contact: elizbgilmore@gmail.com or dkh@dkholland.com.

Sadly this tree became unsafe and had to be taken down. There was much concern about what could possibly replace it. Friends soon learned that the huge root system which had supported the tree was still in the ground. So another tree was impossible. In fact any planting would be challenging. Eventually, two Friends proposed to the Property Committee that they donate a garden of native plants to be installed by a community garden club located at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. Native plants are plants that existed naturally in the area before the Europeans settled here. They are valued for their environmental benefits to the soil and for attracting worms, butterflies and bees. The long history of these plants also symbolizes the long history of Quakers in New York City. Care of the garden is now provided by the Property Committee.

Another disaster preceded the playground and garden on the Boerum Place side of the Meetinghouse. A major leak appeared under the rear of the building. This turned out to be caused by waste water from the Meetinghouse which had been draining onto a garage parking lot next door. When that property was sold and developed into an apartment building, the water backed up into the foundation of the Meetinghouse. A drainage system that complied with city regulations had to be constructed. And that construction in turn created the playground and garden beds. We were again fortunate to have a dedicated and professional volunteer in long-time Attender Susan Palm, who donated plantings and her time to create the border gardens that have withstood the wear and tear of the playground and provided a pleasing frame for viewing the Meetinghouse from the street.

YSOP Bridges Gap Between Young Volunteers and Organizations That Need Them

Did you know there's an easy way to get middle school, high school and college students involved in Quaker-inspired service learning in New York City? The Youth Service Opportunities Project (YSOP), headquartered in the 15th Street Meeting House in Manhattan, is a Quaker organization dedicated to engaging youth in meaningful service to homeless and hungry people. Since 1983, YSOP has been bridging the gap between youth who want to get involved with service and service agencies that are happy to welcome the vibrancy and enthusiasm of young volunteers.

You can reserve YSOP daylong, overnight and weeklong programs for religious and community groups, schools, clubs, university organizations and cor-

porate groups. All of our programs begin with an orientation to homelessness and hunger. Students are then sent out, in small teams with adult supervision, to help at soup kitchens, food pantries, urban gardens and other opportunities to contribute to the hands-on needs of homeless and hungry New Yorkers. The program concludes with a reflective discussion led by trained YSOP staff on the various service experiences.

YSOP Executive Director and member of Purchase Meeting Ed Doty explained, "I founded YSOP with a small group of like-minded Quakers in 1983, because I wanted my teenage children to have meaningful, experiential Workcamps like I participated in."

For more information on how to get a school, club, youth group or other organization involved in YSOP service, check out the YSOP website at www.ysop.org or call 212-598-0973 to reserve a program.

Friends Plan for Improvements in Brooklyn Meetinghouse

-- By Molly Rusnak

Beginning in October of 2016, Members and Attenders of Brooklyn Meeting, in meetings sponsored by New York Quarterly Meeting, considered together how Brooklyn Meetinghouse can be improved and used to better serve ourselves and the community around us. Brooklyn and Fifteenth Street Meetinghouses and adjoining buildings are owned and operated by the New York Quarterly Meeting, which meets four times a year and is incorporated.

On these occasions, Brooklyn Friends met in small groups and

one large group to share their ideas about ways in which the Meetinghouse can be used to express and share our values. These values were identified as:

- Design spaces to nurture the inner light
- Spirituality and connection with the divine
- Community service, meeting the needs of Quakers and the community
- Social Justice, practicing the testimonies of peace and equality
- Stewardship, appropriate use of resources and properties

Friends agreed on some of the ways these values should guide

planned improvements to the Meetinghouse.

Spirituality: simplicity, light, harmony

Community: accessibility, acoustics, flexibility of spaces, multifunctional uses and sharing, open and welcoming to our neighborhood.

Social Justice: space for community gatherings that support action, shelter

Stewardship: reduce environmental impact, promote health of occupants, continuous upkeep, inspect for safety

More information about the ongoing planning process will appear in future newsletters.

Poetry Corner

— By Dan Bodah

Quaker messages form in silence, then sound out in the meeting room for careful consideration. We note the tone of voice, accent, turns of phrase, and other particularities of the speaker, as well as the contents of the message. Messages in this way are much like poetry. It is thus no surprise that many in our community write poetry, and sometimes deliver messages in a distinctly poetic manner. This space in the newsletter will be for sharing poetry each month. Members and attenders are encouraged to share their poems regardless of style or genre, either alone or accompanied by a brief written discussion. Please share at newsletter@brooklyn-meeting.org

Haiku is a type of Japanese short poem usually thought

of as having three lines of five, seven, and five syllables. This is not quite right. Weight is measured differently in Japanese, and most haiku writers now agree that 12 English syllables (rather than 17) better captures the “lightness” of haiku. This lightness is reflected not only in length, but also word choice and emotional tone. Preferred are simple descriptions without metaphor, with a gentle atmosphere. English-language haiku poets usually do not focus on syllables, instead attending to other aspects of this deceptively simple form.

*the first cold shower
even the monkey seems to want
a little coat of straw*

— Basho

*Oh snail,
climb Mt. Fuji,
but slowly, slowly*

— Issa

Haiku contain two or three images juxtaposed in a startling or surprising way. The moment of surprise, or “cutting,” captures an insight connecting nature and the seasons to inner human experience. Cutting has been called the essence of haiku. In Japanese, certain cutting words signal this moment, but in English a hyphen or line break is used instead. One of the images in a haiku is a seasonal reference (“kigo”), chosen from a conventional set. Kigo are found in an encyclopedia of seasonal words, which haiku poets keep close by. In Basho’s haiku above, the kigo is “first cold shower,” and the line break before the image of the monkey in a straw coat signals the cutting.



Quaker Group Visits Palestine

--By Jonathan Fluck

My trip to Palestine with Max Carter and a group of nine other Quakers last June was an eye-opener. Every day we met with people, from many different life situations, and listened to their stories and asked them questions about their everyday life and hopes for the future.

I will give a presentation at the Meetinghouse on Sunday, September 24 from 1 to 2:30 p.m. (at the very latest, I promise) that will include my observations and photos documenting where we were and who we spoke with. We will conclude with a question and answer session and a discussion of the situation in Palestine today.

The optimism that the older among us felt with the 1990s Oslo accords has vaporized with the realities of what is happening in the area now, but that will be part and parcel of what I cover on September 24.

But that reality has not changed the warmth and welcoming spirit of the Palestinian people! Because we were housed for a majority of the 15 days of our stay at the Friends School in Ramallah, we saw a lot of that city and the people who live there. Whenever we went out the people were friendly and inquisitive. I can never forget one of our first days, when we had a few hours of unprogrammed (pun intended) time. Steve, who was raised in an Orthodox Jewish home, decided he wanted a haircut. So he and I went looking for a barbershop. "Why?" I asked him. Because if you really want to know the pulse of the people, where better to go than a barbershop!

Max and Jane Carter have been organizing these trips for 25 years or so, and they have developed a broad array of contacts from many, many differing points of view. Throughout our 15 days we met with an official of the Palestinian Authority, a representative of the PLO (yes,

they're different organizations), two different Israeli settlers and an ex-IDF member who is with Breaking the Silence. We toured hospitals, small towns, a kibbutz and met with church leaders and Imams. The most heart-rending meeting was with two members, one Israeli and one Palestinian, of the Bereaved Parents Circle. Both had lost children to the senseless violence. We were in refugee camps and in people's living rooms; we toured holy sites and archeological digs. We worshiped with Friends and with Muslims. We heard tales of horror and tales of joy.

Whether you can make my presentation or not, I encourage everyone to deeply consider joining Max & Jane next year for the trip. There is a lot of walking, so be prepared for that. But the greater preparation is to be open to the many people and viewpoints that you will hear.

Max & Jane can be contacted at: mcarter@guilford.edu



Powerful mural in a hospital in Palestine

Jonathan enjoying a sunny day and a beautiful work of art in Galilee

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

Outdoor Worship

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, Sep-
tember 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, 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

Prayer Healing Meeting 10:00 AM, fourth Sundays in the meeting room

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 wish-
es a free hot meal. Children encour-
aged to volunteer. Contact: Andres
Colapinto, acolabus@gmail.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

*Interested in promoting a
Quaker event? Then email
events@brooklynmeeting.org*

Upcoming Meeting Activities

can also be found on the meeting web site at

<http://www.brooklynmeeting.org/calendar.html>

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

The Communications Committee
welcomes Brooklyn Meeting News
contributions from all Meeting mem-
bers 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 time-
liness, appropriateness, and length.

General Guidelines:

- Please send an email to
newsletter@brooklynmeeting.org

Contributions should generally be
brief, between 150-450 words in
length.

Please send your newsletter submis-
sion 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!

To submit an event, email: events@brooklynmeeting.org.

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, Dan Bodah, Heather Loza Drawings by Lucy Sikes