

## Trenton Friends Monthly Meeting Newsletter 2018

### *Recorder's Report, from Sandra Johnson*

As of Dec. 31, 2018 TMM had 43 members, 5 of whom are "children" (under 21). Maia and Jules Simon transferred their membership to Makefield Meeting, Pa. Pam and Dave LeBeaux moved back to Silver Spring, Maryland, but Pam remains a member here in Trenton.

### *Peace and Social Concerns, from Sandra Johnson for the committee*



The Peace and Social Concerns Committee was active, as usual, in 2018.

We drafted and sent a letter to Senator Robert Menendez opposing his support of penalizing those supporting boycott, divestment, and sanctions against Israel. This stems from our concern for the Palestinian peoples.

On April 29 we had a PowerPoint presentation of the work of the Golden Rule boat, currently sailing to promote a nuclear-weapons-free world. Find details at <http://www.vfpgoldenruleproject.org/>. Rev. Bob Moore from the Coalition for Peace Action was a speaker for this event also.

We supported the SURJ-NJ (Showing up for Racial Justice, NJ) group and Black Lives Matter in their books and breakfast program and facilitated the moving of the books and breakfast program to a different site.

We urged Friends to contact the Friends Committee on National Legislation to oppose a proposed Department of Homeland Security rule that would change the meaning of a "public charge" and thus be punitive for immigrant families.

We facilitated hospitality at the meetinghouse for several activists participating in Climate Fast NJ, a two week long fast and protest on climate issues in front of the statehouse and the governor's office.

## *Property and Funds, from Jim Harford for the Committee*

After years of steady improvements to the building and the surrounding landscape led by Maia and Jules Simon, the Meetinghouse presents the corner of Montgomery and Hanover with a brighter beacon of light for downtown Trenton. The walls of the Worship space are clean and evenly bright, the benches



now sit in a more circular balance for those who gather in silence or to make a message heard underneath the new acoustically finished ceiling. On the outside, the parking lot buffers the street with a freshly rebuilt and painted wall. The bushes and new planting along the periphery are defined by a crisp and deep mulching that give our attenders, neighbors and the teachers that use the parking lot during the week a greater sense of order and security.

The signboard at the corner of Hanover and Montgomery was washed this spring by Communications Committee members, Shan Holt and Charles Hardy.



The Committee is working on the basic maintenance issues and sustaining the new level of care the building has been given. We are also evaluating the ongoing and past proposed improvements including

computer access, audio equipment, landscaping and ease of access in order for the building to meet the community needs for the future.

Financial management continues to be led by Fred Millner as we make investments in the community, the environment, events and the building. Most of the funds which have been entrusted to our Meeting in stewardship are managed by Friends Fiduciary. We have made a commitment to partially use The Green Fund to help deal with climate change. We are grateful for Fred's expertise and dedication as we move through changes in membership and attendance.

*Community Investment Committee, from John Vadnais for the Committee*

The Community Investment Committee was formed to give back a pre-set amount of funds that were generated through endowment stock market increases, focusing on Trenton and on the community surrounding the Meeting House.

The CIC has been in operation for a year, and has so far has committed over \$25,000 in funds to organizations that are in some way pivotal to the community and which do not receive much funding from traditional sources such as government and grants. For example, the Meeting through CIC has provided funds for books for a number of Trenton-based students at Mercer County Community College, where perhaps \$250 can make a difference between continuing or leaving school. The Meeting through CIC has supported Capital City Farm, an amazing and underfunded project in Trenton



(see [www.designingthewe.com/capital-farm](http://www.designingthewe.com/capital-farm) ). The CIC committed \$5,000 to The Delaware Greenway Trust in order to maintain and support their investment in the Farm, a natural "Greenway" within an urban environment and a source of locally grown produce and employment for those providing relief to the poor through the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen. Finally, CIC has helped a social outreach organization that serves the working poor with improvements to its building that will allow it to ramp up additional services. CIC currently is looking carefully at how to help with literacy in Trenton. We look forward to continuing this year.

*Hanover Creative community project,*

*from Roland Pott, Elijah Dixon and Christien Nicole Brown*

Elijah Dixon and Christien Nicole Brown, who both attend at Trenton Friends, have teamed up with Member Roland Pott (and his company, Trenton Makes Inc.) to purchase and renovate 219 East Hanover Street, a 9000 SF commercial building located a block away from the meetinghouse. The project is called "Hanover Creative" and intends to serve artists, entrepreneurs and the community by facilitating creative work, innovative opportunities and inspired connections for the region. Upon completion, Hanover Creative will feature gallery space, studio space for artists, office space for creative non-profits and small businesses, co-working space, a retail store, conference rooms and classrooms, and offer educational workshops and training opportunities. The development team formed an LLC and purchased the building from Trenton Downtown Association in August, 2018. Renovation is being financed by a combination of the purchaser's own capital, a grant from Isles, Inc., a forgivable job creation loan from the City of Trenton, support from the Trenton Downtown Association and a bank loan. The historic building was formerly called the Law Building and was owned by the Linowitz family for decades until it was transferred to Trenton Downtown Association who operated it as artist studios for some years. The new partners are all local as well as connected to Trenton Monthly

Meeting. Dixon and Brown live on the same block of East Hanover street as the Meetinghouse and Pott lives two blocks away on South Montgomery Street. For more information, or to stay tuned on the project, please visit [Hanovercreates.com](http://Hanovercreates.com).

### *Orchid House News, from Elijah Dixon*

The Orchid House has been very busy lately with making improvements to its commercial storefront.

An integral part of this initiative includes working with neighborhood youth to design and build new seating and table arrangements using an assortment of donated hardwoods. Our goal is to teach them new skills while cultivating a sense of ownership in the development and fruition of our Café.

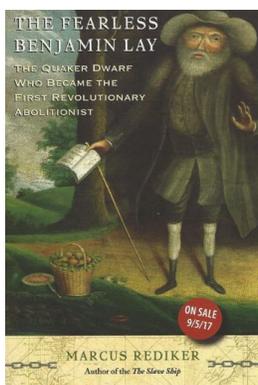


We are actively working to raise capital for additional equipment purchases and have recently acquired an espresso machine.

Renovations are expected to be complete by late spring of 2019.

### *Education/First Day School*

The religious education committee has had an active end of 2018. We are pleased to now be offering first day school on the first and third Sundays of the month. On all other Sundays, we have childcare available for children of all ages. We take great joy in welcoming children and families to our meeting. Finally, the religious education committee organized an art day for the community on Feb 23, 2019, which was very successful.



### *Adult Forum, from Dina Boero*

In the final months of 2018 and early 2019, Shan Holt facilitated a moving group discussion of *The Fearless Benjamin Lay*, which has challenged members of our community to reflect on the courage involved in doing works of social justice. Participants have begun looking at another book to anchor discussions, called *Fit for Freedom, but not for Friendship*.

### *Counsel, Ministry and Worship, from Joan Ordille for the Committee*

Over the past several years, the committee worked to nurture spirituality within the meeting and in our individual and corporate witness. When PYM challenged Quakers to look at racism within our Meetings, particularly concerning “the intersection of privilege and race in our culture and spiritual community.” TMM engaged the skillful support of two facilitators to support this work. Donna Melhe facilitated discussion of the queries and Shannon Mason, Ph.D, facilitated our 2018 annual retreat. Dr. Mason utilized a cultural self-awareness inventory that asked each

participant to rate themselves on cultural awareness, empathy, cultural intersection, tolerance of

ambiguity, stereotypes and intercultural communication. We aim to return to the queries and the cultural awareness inventory as we continue exploration, discussion and witness.

Shannon M. Mason, MEd, PhD  
*Mission Strategist, Speaker, Author, Pastor & Counseling Psychologist*

Speaker Information

Dr. Shannon speaks on various topics related to individual and organizational capacity building. Whether you are equipping individuals to fulfill their personal missions, structuring an organization to fulfill its corporate mission, or galvanizing your community around a common mission, she is the speaker for you.

Topics include, but are not limited to:



Additionally, we held a ½ day retreat in February 2019, facilitated by George Schaefer, LCSW, PYM's Care and Aging Coordinator, to address how the

Meeting handles internal conflict. We were reminded that all communities encounter conflict and will continue exploring personal and collective ways of dealing with conflict through a lens of love and healing. Our further conversations about conflict will be supported by looking into the Pendle Hill Pamphlet "Matthew 18: Wisdom for Living in Community" during our upcoming adult education forums.

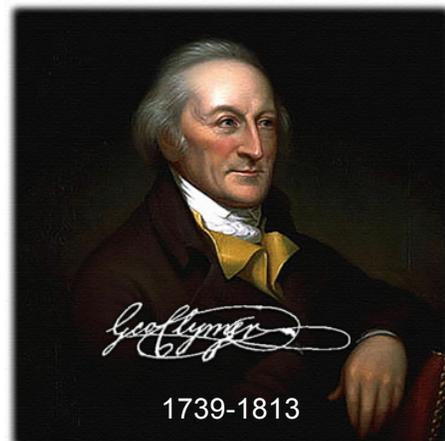
The committee would like to thank meeting members and attenders for their attention to stewardship. Member and attender commitments, donations of concrete resources, time and talent helps keeps the meeting vital.

### *Patriots Week, 2018, from Barbara Vadnais*

Trenton Monthly Meeting took part again in Patriots Week, held in the City of Trenton between Christmas and New Year's to bring the historical experience of the American Revolution to thousands of folks. We had over 100 visitors in our Meeting House during the week long event. Many of the events around the City focus on battles and military details, whereas our focus is on the civilian sector and arts and culture. The *Practitioners of Musick* presented an English Flute and harpischord



concert on the musical world of George Clymer, who is buried



in our graveyard. Dr. Friederike Baer, Associate Professor of History at Penn State, Abington, spoke on how the Hessian soldiers experienced America. The sun came out for a lovely 90 minute walking tour of the neighborhood with Dr. Shan Holt, a member of our meeting, starting at St. Michael's Episcopal Church and exploring how the people of Trenton lived when the Revolution found them. We closed the week at the Meeting house with a peace vigil on New Year's Eve.

Sandra Johnson, who inherited organizing the vigil from the late Hal Fleming, helped usher in the New Year on a gentle note.

And so our year came to a close, with much to look forward to and some accomplishments to cherish. Please know how grateful we are for your continued support of and interest in our work at Trenton Monthly Meeting. We wish you, as ever, peace, joy, and the very best of 2019.