

The Canadian Friend

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Canadian Yearly Meeting – Kemptville, Ontario
Reflections & Meditations

The Canadian Friend

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Editorial:

Days before Canadian Yearly Meeting I came upon *The Guest House*. Reeling from various insistent and unwelcome visitors, I was glad to receive some direction and insight. I carried the poem with me to Kemptville, into Parish Hall, where just as I arrived on campus Sunday evening, Caroline Balderston Perry began to speak and echo a similar message. I always get goose bumps when the Spirit patiently repeats the message I need to hear.



As the week progressed it appeared that our Society is reeling. Recently, after years of research and discussion; recommendations by Consultation and Renewal; decisions discerned; plans made; we celebrated the creation of the Youth Secretary and Education Program Director positions.

Not too long later where are we? It seems we are broken down in the wilderness, dismayed and disheartened. We learned of our Youth Secretary's resignation; our Education Director's stress and concerns; our flawed practices as employers; our lack of funds to sustain such programs. It appears the Society is in the difficult place of "unknowing".

Caroline's words echoed in our minds and hearts as the week unfolded. At such a time we most need to find that holy place where the Light resides and invite the guest of Holy Spirit to illuminate our path forward.

Blessings to all in doing this Holy work.

Sherryll Harris

The Guest House

*This being human is a guesthouse.
Every Morning a new arrival:
a joy, a depression, a meanness
some momentary awareness
comes as an unexpected visitor.
Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house empty of its furniture.
Still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out for some new delight.
The dark thought, the shame, the malice.
Meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.
Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent as a guide from beyond.*

Jelaluddin Rumi – translation by Coleman Barks



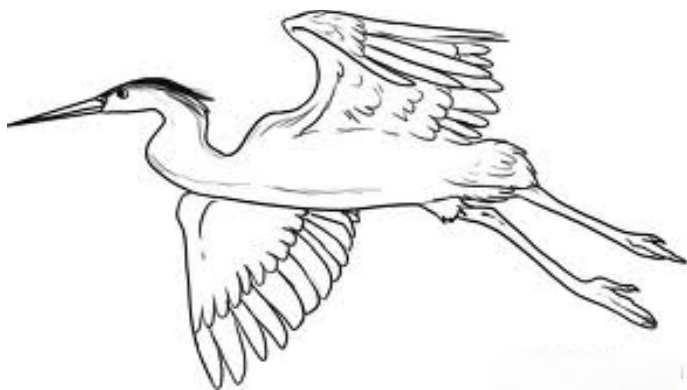
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Photo Credits: Cover – the labyrinth taken by John Dixon. Rideau river above, David Millar. Other photos throughout taken by David Millar, Bruce Dienes, Rosemarie Cipryk and Kenna Manos.

[Correction and apologies: Camille Murdock, Mavis Dixon’s daughter, is incorrectly identified as Harmony Morris, in the cover photo and on pg. 3 of the Summer issue. I received the wrong name. Sjh]

Response to the Sunderland P. Gardner Lecture given by Caroline Balderston Parry



A Holy Place Indeed!

Can a place of confusion and uncertainty be transformed into a holy place? Caroline Balderston Parry thinks so. For the *Sunderland P. Gardner* lecture of 2013 we were treated to a stimulating interactive presentation on this theme – in three parts.

First we were introduced to the *I-don't-know place*. We entered this place by sharing our experiences of uncertainty with the Friend beside us. Next we were reminded of the vital role of *prayer* in this place of uncertainty. We also shared what prayer means to us. Finally, Caroline invited us to enter that *holy place*: to speak of times when the darkness could be transformed into light.

Thank you Caroline for introducing us to these holy places, and setting the tone for much that proceeded from these thoughts during Yearly Meeting of 2013.

Eric J. Schiller
Ottawa Monthly Meeting

Transformation

Holy Spirit with me always,
dancing, playing,
stirring up haiku or herons.

Holy Spirit, with me always
as I attune to love and trust;
to my life purpose,
seeking way opening.

Held by Holy spirit, with me always
through rain storms of words,
books still to write,
maypoles to circle,
fences to cross,
tears to cry,
collages to assemble,
days to compose.

Holy Spirit with me, always grounding,
surrounding, singing, storytelling.
inspiring, up swelling,
bringing creativity to my relationships,
in conflict and community.

A quiet sea of clarity to undergird all:
Holy spirit with me always.

Caroline Balderston Parry
Ottawa Monthly Meeting

“Friends are reflecting on the *I-don't-know place* and how, with the help of the Spirit, it is transformed from a barren place of self-doubt and uncertainty to one of spiritual renewal and growth.”

Nancy McInnis
Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting

Quaker Study: Radical Interpretation

Ben Pink Dandelion

Reclaiming a Prophetic Voice

I want to thank Canadian Friends for such a warm and generous welcome. For those of you I didn't meet, here is a very brief overview of some of what I was trying to communicate through the *Quaker Study* at Yearly Meeting.

I started with the idea, undisputed I believe, that Christianity is a religion founded on frustrated anticipation, or, as Albert Schweitzer put it, the delay of the second coming of Christ. The Apostle Paul draws a picture of God's plan for the world, in which humanity is separated from God after the Fall, and needs to live by the law, in constant struggle with temptation. The life, death, and resurrection of Christ – the first coming – offer humanity a glimpse of what will soon come for everybody, with the second coming of Christ. At that time, heaven and earth will again be reunited, humanity will be in intimate relationship with the Divine, living by faith rather than the law, able to resist sin, and the world will be transformed. Indeed it will be the end of the world and the beginning of the new Jerusalem, as foretold in the book of Revelation. The challenge for Christianity was to help humanity wait faithfully for this global transformation, in the 'meantime', before the end time. To do this, priests, sacraments, church buildings, and a Christian calendar were all put in place as temporary, but necessary aids to remembrance and spiritual authenticity.

I then argued that early Friends of the 1650s saw, and felt themselves to be, God's vanguard for the unfolding of the *inward second coming* of Christ. 'Christ is come and is coming'. As such, they rejected all the anachronistic forms of Christianity, such as a separated priesthood, outward sacraments, special buildings, and the Christian calendar, as anachronistic and no longer necessary. For example, it says in 1 Corinthians 11:26, to break the bread until the Lord comes again. If the Lord *had* come again – as Friends experienced in their personal transformations – they need not break the bread. Essentially they fulfilled Pauline prophecy. Out of this experience of inward end-time, came a particular and peculiar lifestyle that denoted Quakers as a separated community.

However, after twenty years or so, Friends moved away from framing their experience in these 'end time' terms and settled into their own version of the end time. They didn't change the liturgical form, as it still nurtured spiritual experience so effectively. Rather, Quaker testimony, or lifestyle, became managed and policed, as Friends sought to live up to the spiritual legacy of their forbears, and many waited for their own conviction experience. Talk of the second coming became relegated to, or forgotten, as Friends concentrated on living a pure life, away from the temptations of the world.

Today we are less anxious about 'the world', and rarely talk of the second coming. Yet, we still have a prophetic voice, and a legacy of structures and processes born out of those beginnings, that nurture and test our concerns. We may need to be aware of the influences of a secular society, but as Quakers, we still experience personal transformation in order to act as agents of transforming the world, with God's help. Our worship remains powerful, and our sense of needing to campaign for peace and justice is as strong as it ever has been. Speaking truth to power, and being faithful to our call as Quakers, may mean being uncomfortable. But faith is not a private matter, and our ministries are not ours to quell. Rather, as we act as vessels for God's love acting through us, let us pray and trust that we remain faithful people. When we are in that place, we can act with the joy that comes with taking our spirituality seriously.

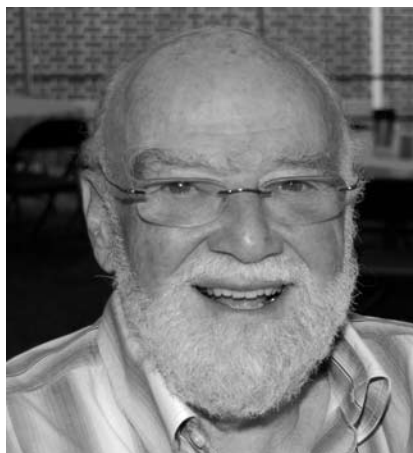
Ben Pink Dandelion

*Sawley Quaker Meeting near Pendle Hill
England*



From The Absolute “for sure” to The Absolute “perhaps”

Bert Horwood



This is a reflection on the *Quaker Study* given by Ben Pink Dandelion, of Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre in England, to Canadian Yearly Meeting.

The Quaker movement erupted out of the Christian tradition, with the white heat of absolute certainty at a time of extreme political and religious unrest. From their spiritual experiences, early Friends were sure that the second coming of Christ, for which all other Christian groups were waiting in vain, had already occurred. They were convinced (i.e. convicted) that they were the vanguard of the end-times church. Such overpowering certainty, combined with an effective method of worship, was infectious and large numbers of people became Friends of Truth. These discoveries led to the body of literature, the faith, and the practices out of which our present liberal branch of the Quaker family evolved.

The evolution of Quaker faith is a 350 plus-year story of beliefs retained and lost. Such evolution is an inescapable consequence of accepting the reality of continuing revelation. Friends' early zeal could not be sustained because, despite the inward experience of Christ in the here and now, the end-times promise of the New Jerusalem was not happening. Besides, Friends began to recognize that not everyone had equal measures of Light, and that those of other faiths had valid spiritual leadings.

The early Friends' experiences of the inward Christ were so strong that although they knew the Bible well, they were sure that inward experience came before

Bible teachings. The Bible could only be understood rightly, in light of the inward teacher. This dedication to spiritual experience as the prime authority, stated first by Fox, and continued two hundred years later by great preachers like Elias Hicks, continues to be a hallmark of our present liberal tradition. It accords with our persistent acceptance of continuing revelation.

We have also retained devotion to unprogrammed silent worship, which the early Friends found critical to focus attention to the inward guide. Belief in the second coming meant that all the trappings of Christianity-in-waiting – sacraments, creeds, ordination, and liturgy for examples – could be stripped away. We persist in this today. To be sure, early Friends had both lengthy silent Meetings and lengthy preaching. Today, Canadian Friends flirt with semi-programming, singing, and reading before or after worship, but the gathered silence is a persistent central aspect of liberal practice.

It made sense to early Friends to abandon Christian creeds. Such statements of belief, required of all members, belonged to the church-in-waiting. When you were absolutely sure that the living Christ was your inward teacher in person, a formal statement of belief was not needed. Liberal Meetings continue to resist the temptation to write a creedal statement and this fits with the diversity of the spiritual experiences we have. At the same time, it makes it impossible to answer that favourite question of seekers: “What do Quakers believe?” Of course it is the wrong question to uncover our essential character. We are defined by our discipline; faith and practice are more accurate descriptors of who we are. We must learn to turn the “belief” question on its head and engage seekers with our deeds.

Liberal Friends recognize different gifts of ministry among members, and we continue to find group discernment an important method for clarifying and supporting individual callings. We are still doubtful of an individual spokesperson who does not have the intentional, and specific backing of a Meeting. The good offices of ministers and overseers (ministry and counsel in our terms) are still an important part of Quaker life today.

Quaker history can be read as a story of practices and beliefs left behind. Many customs were abandoned out of spiritual discernment. Other omissions were more influenced by social factors and the spread of science as a way of knowing and understanding the world. When English laws prohibiting Quakers from being educated, and from holding public office were repealed, it was also easier for Quakers to answer leadings to be more active in the world. It was difficult for Friends to persist in being a “peculiar people” when so many non-Friends agreed with social justice actions – such as abolishing slavery. Friends gradually gave up disowning one another for offenses against the codes of dress and behaviour, and for marrying non-Quakers. The prohibition against the arts gradually eroded and was replaced by recognition of the great spiritual richness that lies in music, theatre, and all the arts.

Perhaps the ultimate loss in most recent times is the strict expectation that Quakers today are a Christian sect. Certainly there are Christian branches of the Quaker family, but liberal Meetings have been led to celebrate diversity in this respect. There are members who embrace Christianity, worshipping side-by-side with others who may appreciate Jesus’ teaching but do not consider themselves to be Christian. We now welcome the diversity of Friends who relate closely to many other religions, or to none. Liberal Friends have found that the sacred writings of other faiths have, like the Judeo-Christian scriptures, the power to add Light to the seeking heart. The overall effect is to be a sect which celebrates uncertainty – another potential stumbling-block for seekers who are exploring our ways.

I was impressed by the close connection between Caroline Balderson Parry’s *Sunderland P. Gardner Lecture*, and the *Quaker Study*. Caroline summed up the dilemmas and importance of uncertainty as the *I-don’t-know-place* but added the comforting words, *Spirit with me always*. Ben Pink Dandelion termed this “the absolute perhaps”.

Diversity within the liberal tradition is at once a great strength and a great hazard. The attitude of tolerance and listening to other sincerely guided voices is a significant asset. But, it is also potentially destructive to attempt being all things to all people. Ben Pink Dandelion’s research, experience, and knowledge of Quakers in the United Kingdom today, suggest that this may be the greatest weakness we face. It may be important to have slightly porous boundaries, but no organization can survive with no boundaries at all.

Other risks to the liberal tradition include our ageing and shrinking membership, and the arrival of newcomers who bring more secular values, along with habits of thought, from other faiths and cultures. Our hope lies in worshipful defense of core values and practices, in outreach which recognizes that we may not be a good fit for every Seeker who visits, and in the promise shown by the energy and gifts of Young Friends.

Bert Horwood

Thousand Islands Monthly Meeting in Kingston

A Vermont Quaker Reflects



A member of Burlington Friends for sixteen years, I have never attended a Yearly Meeting. Why would I want to go to a Business Meeting every day for a week, when three hours once a month is already torture for me?

At CYM I actually began to appreciate, and to become reconciled to this Quaker practice. Not because it was a simple experience at Kemptville. It was long, intense, replete with pain, and a marathon of human possibilities.

Observing at CYM, I gained a grateful respect for how Quaker processes, and the growing pains of Quakers, can become strengths that our troubled human race can lean upon. So, thanks, Canadian Friends for being such fine hosts and teachers!

Sophie Quest, Burlington Friends Meeting

Burlington, Vermont, USA

“...Turn inwardly to God, praying that the Meeting may be guided in the matters before it and that the clerk may be enabled faithfully to discern and record the mind of the Meeting.” [Quaker Faith and Practice – 3.09]

REFLECTIONS ON CANADIAN YEARLY MEETING

Our Business

Nancy McInnis

This year's business agenda challenged us in more ways than one. We struggled with the disconnect between our somewhat ambitious vision for CYM's educational, and publications and communications programs, and the hard realities of both limited financial resources, and waning energy of committee members. We realize we need to respond to increasing government regulations by working to protect our beloved Society from liability and similar risks. We have much to learn and explore about this matter. Many Friends see a tension between the demands of the secular world and our spiritual leadings. Some of our most difficult and contentious concerns produced some of our most inspiring ministry.

We were saddened and distressed by hearing the Youth Secretary's report. She felt that [various] processes, and the support CYM offered, were inadequate. We are challenged profoundly to reflect with open hearts and minds on how to address the situation, embark on a process of healing for those hurt, and take decisive action to rectify the shortcomings in our policies and governance procedures. As a first step toward healing, we worshipped together for three hours with open hearts and minds in a specially called session. Many people spoke of their past painful experiences and expressed their hope for a continuing effort to improve our attitudes, policies and procedures.

Nancy McInnis, Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting

A Better Way

Jo Vellacott

On returning from Yearly Meeting, many of us listened to replays of Martin Luther King's *I have a dream* speech. If ever there were an occasion full of emotion, the culmination of the 1963 march on Washington was it. If ever there were a speech that brought that emotion to a pitch, it was King's great speech. If ever there were people who had suffered distress and injustice, they were there in his audience together with some who had been part of the cause. The speech and the occasion were crowded with emotion. But Martin Luther King made sure it was not backward-looking emotion, not an outcry of self-pity for suffering, not an attempt to work on a sense of guilt, not a call for retribution. The whole direction of the speech is forward-looking, a vision of a better way of being together.

Friends are naturally, and appropriately, situated within mainstream contemporary culture. Our commitment to living intentionally lays on us a responsibility to examine our actions and behaviours thoughtfully, and in the Light. In the past several decades I have seen the development of a climate where there is much more room for expression of emotion. I have welcomed this, and would not want Friends to put themselves outside the trend. But I think balance is Quakerly, and we need always to have awareness and control of our emotions, which in practice may mean tempering our response when we are confronted by distress, giving ourselves time to ascertain facts and discern a way forward. We should avoid a knee-jerk reaction which may lead to devoting an excess of time and energy to dwelling on the pain without either taking a wider and well-informed view of what happened, or recognizing that the most visible sufferers may not be the only ones, or getting on with the business of making changes.

This was expected to be a challenging Yearly Meeting with an enhanced youth attendance, and some significant changes to the distribution of time. It was all that and more, although, as it turned out, those planned changes were not where the major challenge lay.

The most severe jolt came from the need to respond to the report of the retired Youth Secretary. The presence of so many young people, already a source of great joy, enriched our efforts to deal with this. On the other hand, the diminished time allotted to Meeting for Worship for Business, already (for me) unwelcome, meant that we had no elasticity to make up for the time required to advance our consideration of the issues raised, and Yearly Meeting ended on a hurried note. There was also some serious disruption of previously planned programming.

There are clearly still unresolved issues around the resignation of the Youth Secretary and the events that led to it. These issues are necessarily being addressed, with confidentiality, by a smaller group of Friends. Equally clearly, there are structural problems leading to failures in our handling of employer/employee relationships in Canadian Yearly Meeting. These too are being worked on. Much remains to be done. Friends showed willingness and readiness to discern a way forward, working tenderly, and in the light of our God-given reason and our gift of Quaker process, learning from past mistakes but not dwelling on them.

Jo Vellacott, Toronto Monthly Meeting

REFLECTIONS ON CANADIAN YEARLY MEETING

The Words We Use

Ellen Pye

Traditionally, Friends have thought about the vocabulary we use, and made sure it reflects our faith. This practice has grown somewhat thin, in that most of us don't get hung up on the names of the months or days of the week, and use the plural for both singular and plural 'second persons'. We try not to use military terms when others will serve, although I have seen 'strategizing' creeping into our parlance.

Friends may have been surprised at my expression of dismay at the sudden frequent appearance of the word 'volunteer' in speaking of Friends who serve the Society, as distinct from 'staff'. Both terms are from the world of commercial business, NGOs and secular charitable organizations. They do not, to my way of thinking, accurately reflect the spirit in which Friends, whether paid or unpaid, serve our faith community.

Volunteers can work with commitment, but at the same time are free to walk away when it no longer suits them to help out; the connection is often impersonal and not the first priority in their lives. Staff do a job they are paid to do, but often work is just work, and they leave it when they go home. Friends are more deeply engaged with their task, and with those they work with and for, as Friends, regardless of whether they are receiving remuneration or not. They see the work as an intrinsic part of belonging to their faith community, and contributing to its life in a spirit of mutuality.

When Friends serve the Meeting, I would hope that it is a commitment to their faith community and fellow Friends – a spirit of fellowship that prompts them to be willing, whether they are paid for their work or not. What binds us together is our common focus on the 'Whatever' or 'Whoever' we are committed to serving, for the good of all, as we perceive it and have come to unity on. When I prepare a meal for a sick friend or relative, I don't consider it 'volunteering'. It is a labour of love.

It may be necessary to do some translating from the purely secular terminology we hear from the world around us, into the language of trust and love that is consistent with what we proclaim our faith to be. Quakers need to do this so we ourselves do not forget what we're about.

Ellen Pye
Vancouver Monthly Meeting

A Question of Truth?

Kris Wilson-Yang



CYM was for me, the best of times and the worst of times. This was my second Yearly Meeting and I was happy to be engaged in the work of the local arrangements committee. It provided a different perspective. Seeing the success of the Youth Challenge and the Young Friends Yearly Meeting active and organized was a great lift. I was happy to be a small part of Caroline Balderson Parry's *Sunderland P. Gardner* lecture, along with other members and attenders of Ottawa Monthly Meeting, including our new Burundian family. I found that Ben Pink Dandelion placed our current concerns in a continuity that was comforting and challenging.

I grieved with the Yearly Meeting clerks, standing committee clerks, and attending members of the Camp NeeKauNis committee, as a report from the former Youth Secretary was read, knowing with deep pain, that YM and YFYM were been thrown off Centre, and that recovery would be difficult. I found myself not understanding the role of raw emotion in decision making. Is it theatre? Is it worship? I found myself also not understanding what "multiple truths" means: multiple Truths or multiple points of view? I wondered about the place of evidence in the Society of Friends. Should we have a code of conduct? Is that a creed?

At the close of CYM, as I bid farewell to tired beloved Friends, I tried to piece together the shape of Canadian Yearly Meeting at Camp NeeKauNis (CYM@NKN) – our very own place, and to hold all of us in the Light.

Kris Wilson-Yang, Hamilton Monthly Meeting
Sojourning with Ottawa Monthly Meeting



*Julie C. Robinson [reflection, right]
Edmonton Monthly Meeting*

Family

Family is a meaningful metaphor for me when I think about relationships within the Quaker community. I was an attender for eight years before being nudged toward, and finally seeking membership. I deeply felt the risk of difficulties, and the weight of what faithfulness to one another would mean. But I am so glad to have made that leap. I have come to know wonderful people and they have been able to get to know me. Opportunities opened for me that I could not have imagined otherwise. It seems to me that sometimes, when things get really difficult, we need to say to one another: “You’re family, we can’t let you go”, or “You are my family. I need you.” And even, “I’m sorry I made you feel that way”, which opens a space for further dialogue, where the starting place is togetherness. In this way I think the family metaphor is important.

Power

Power has many faces. There is institutional power and privilege, which gives a one-way description of who has power and who doesn’t. There are also power relationships in families and family-like groups which are far more complex and less obvious. I think in this case, this fuller understanding of power gives us a much more spacious framework in which to work for full acceptance of responsibilities, and healing.

In any family, the transition of family members from nurtured youth to fully responsible elders, taking their place in shared leadership, can be an uncomfortable passage. Taking part in shared leadership and Quaker process means being able to trust that one’s contribution will be heard and taken seriously. It means entering into shared discernment where everyone is willing to hear other considerations, and accept that they do not control either the unfolding of the process or its ultimate outcome. The shift in roles and relationships can be bumpy, for both the established and the emerging leaders, and often the strain can ripple out to the whole community.

We need to have compassion for ourselves as a community – with the bumps and painful feelings of our transitions.

Nathalie Brunet, Annapolis Valley

Concern



One concern that rose for me was the frequent mention in many contexts of “safety” and of “liability”. We are a Society open to radical spiritual adventure and trust in being led, not necessarily into safety. While it is right to do our best to care for one another responsibly in our community, may we keep our grounding in Spirit. “For the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.”

Margaret Slavin (above), Wooler Monthly Meeting

Worship in Sound

chanting
enchantment
the words the tones the song
run a river of energy
between us and the divine.
amongst us
we melt we mold we quaver
our voices concord
the chors are strands
of being now
brightly visible as we close our eyes
see in sound
the unity of all



Anne Trudell, Wooler Monthly Meeting

What It's All About?

The sessions of Meeting for Worship for Business were deep and serious, with weighty matters before us. But it seemed quite appropriate that in the final session, when we took a brief stretch break, the Recording Clerk, [Carol Leigh Waking, pg. 12] wearing a tiara that included pink fluff, led us in the hokey pokey. Now we all know “what it’s all about”. I wondered what our visitors from other Yearly Meetings thought. Do they have as much fun together as we do?

*Christine Tansley
Yonge St. Monthly Meeting*

Stretched & Strengthened

CYM this summer was a whirlwind of emotion for me. The ropes of my faith were both stretched and strengthened. Young and Young Adult Friends came from all over the country to participate in the Youth Challenge, an event which I have been excited about since August 2012. I was overjoyed by the turnout and I hope that we can continue to have a larger number of Young Friends and Young Adult Friends in coming years. We participated in wonderful programming, business, and free time together. As a group we had deep discussions about the community of Young Friends, our connection to CYM and to Ontario Young Friends, and our future work. On learning about and discussing the resignation of the Youth Secretary, I felt both despair and profound hope for the future of Quakerism and the community of Young Friends. I know we have a lot of work ahead of us, but I also know that I have a fantastic group with which to share my joys and sorrows.

*Jessica Klaassen-Wright
Saskatoon Monthly Meeting*

Quaker Silence

Perhaps we do not keep silence,
Or sit in it
Or even observe it
So much as we simply hold it
Tenderly,
Like holding a newborn
Or a child ready to leave home,
Neither clinging nor expecting.
Perhaps we are not so much seeking
As allowing ourselves to be found
In the openings of silence.
Breathing into it, breathing out of it,
Hallowing the stillness
So that we may inhabit Spirit
As it inhabits us.

*Kenna Creer Manos
Halifax Monthly Meeting*



Carol Leigh Wehking



Jeanette Amdur,
Wendy Macpherson



Rachel
Urban Shipley



Manuela Popovici
Dave Grossman



Laurel Beyer, Mark Stanley



Jessica Klaassen-Wright,
Christopher Abbott, Effie
Stevenson, Peter Stevenson



Leigh Turina, Dan Copperstock



Claire Adamson



Vivian Abbott,
Corey Abbott,
Rosemarie Cipryk



A collection of Young Friends



Carl Thomas

Tony McQuail



Vivian Abbott, Jane Zavitz-Bond



David Millar, Sophie Quest, SJ Harris,
Carl Stieren, Isabelle Yingling



Steve Fick
collage retreat



Jessica, Isaac, Ahren
Klaassen-Wright



Jo Vellacott



A fine balance of Friends



Kenna Manos Celia Cheatley

What Stands Out

David Summerhays

This year was my first time attending Canadian Yearly Meeting after immigrating to Montréal from Chicago.

On Tuesday evening I was in Bell Hall playing a version of billiards with an older man. His left hand gesticulated into various ciphers that would've been gibberish to most pool-players. I knew excellent technique when I saw it. The older man was destroying me. I complimented his play.

"At university, I spent more time in bars than in libraries", he shrugged. "It didn't help my marks much."

A few minutes of silence passed as he continued to clobber me. Then I saw a young Friend walking toward me. Once he was really close he quietly asked: "Hey, wanna join me and some people?" "We're gonna go to a br."

"A what?"

"A br."

"Huh?"

"A bur."

I took a moment to put the pieces together.

"You mean a bar?" "Yes!" he whispered.

The older gentleman continued taking his next shot, graciously pretending he hadn't heard every word.

"Sure", I replied, confused. "I don't like the taste of alcohol but I'd love to come."

"Great! We're leaving in a few minutes." The Young Friend ran off to invite others.

This was a moment that particularly caught my attention. I'm pretty sure the Young Friend was kidding. I interpreted dropping the word bar as a joke, not as a real secret. Still, the old saying that there is a grain of truth behind every joke came to mind. Walking toward the bar a few minutes later, I wondered what that grain could be.

Along the way we ran into some other people. "Where are you off to?" they asked. "Oh, just going for a walk," one Young Friend replied. I thought I detected a figurative wink and nudge in the tone. Quite a few young people arrived, and within fifteen minutes a number of older Friends joined us.

When I think about my time at CYM, these joking secrets have stuck with me.

Legalism is a constant threat to any religion. It might be true, most of the time, that if we are in a serious religious or spiritual mood, we won't desire spirits, or commit an act of violence. But the difference between "most of the time" and "all of the time" matters. Jewish people two millennia ago had dozens of laws that were expected to be followed legalistically, all of the time. People were punished for not complying. One of Jesus' main concerns was abolishing Jewish legalism in favor of the more difficult and more flexible law of love. One story of Jesus has him overturning tables and driving money changers out of the temple with a whip of cords. This certainly violated many laws but not the law of love. Yet, within a few hundred years of Jesus, Christians living in Europe had created a new set of prohibitions that the Quakers – in many ways inspired by Jesus himself – wanted to abolish.

At CYM we learned that early Quakers were radical mystics and ascetics. Early Friends dropped many of the pleasures of earthly creation in favour of a mystical communion with the Divine. Plain living was a huge deal. We were suspicious of music, even literature. Suffice it to say, early Quakers were troubled by the intoxicating effects of alcohol. The Quakers proceeded to set up all kinds of rules about dress and plain living, including drinking.

Yet modern liberal Quakers, some of whom, like me, could care less about Jesus, believe that our inner leadings may defy any law. We've quit dressing funny and forbidding fun. I personally don't like the taste of alcohol but I think we can feel "led" to drink. Openly going to a bar at CYM is unlikely to seal a future as village drunk for anyone. So, on the surface, this winking and nudging seems to have nothing to do with liberal Quakers, as I think of us. It just seemed out of place; its grain of truth based in fear of offending sensibilities, asceticism, or ill-articulated hand-wringing.

I could draw on many other examples. Besides, I suspect this is a community problem that goes beyond the young people involved.

Only a dour idea of spirituality would say there is anything shameful about having fun. Let's encourage more honesty with each other. Either way, feeling shame about going to a bar, even in joke-form, is a figment of a prohibitionist past and deserves to stay that way.

David Summerhays

Montreal Monthly Meeting

Diversity In Quaker Faith and Practice: *Dave Newlands*

I believe that the core values of the Society of Friends derived from Christianity, and that throughout history there has been diversity. The question that must be asked by every generation is: “how far can diversity extend beyond our core values without being un-Quakerly?”

Over the past three and one-half centuries, a body of generally accepted beliefs and practices developed that we term ‘tradition’. Many of these are not written down. They are passed on from one generation to another orally, and through our practices. An example of this is the way the Meeting for Worship for Business is conducted and how decisions are made. This is not to suggest that traditions do not change, but changes occur slowly, after careful consideration. As time goes by our traditions become stronger. The roles they play become stronger and more important in defining a normative form of Quaker faith and life. Understanding the importance of tradition guides us in our interpretation of ‘diversity’. Beliefs and actions that are clearly against tradition, and cannot be justified by reference to the beliefs of Friends, are clearly beyond normal diversity.

Friends saw the Bible as a record of the workings of the Spirit, but not the Spirit itself. Friends’ understanding of the Bible was not an indication of any lack of significance of the written Word in their life, but they believed the written Word should not eclipse the revealed Word. For some, the Bible remains a central feature of Quaker life and faith. Any reading of the history of Friends, or examination of the traditions of our communities, clearly indicates the centrality of the Word, both written and revealed.

Friends were often seen as revolutionaries, not only because they wanted a different form of worship from that of the state Church, but also because their beliefs would invariably – if taken seriously – change society. Friends’ faith and life were intertwined. In Quaker history it is not possible to examine faith without seeing its political and social implications. Conversely, it is not possible to see the political and social views of Friends without seeing their religious roots.



Quakers did not wait for the society in which they lived to change. They changed themselves and established communities of people dedicated to living the Christian life. Over time, these communities became more or less fixed in their outward form. I believe this constrained the Spirit and witness of Friends. Beginning late in the nineteenth-century, Friends recognized that their peculiar dress and speech was a deterrent in effectively addressing the pressing social problems of the day. Thus, they gave up distinctive habits of speech and dress to better engage in the social concerns of the wider community. There may have been benefits at the time, but today, it has left much of the tradition of Friends without a way to express itself. It is not a rare occasion when a Friend asks, “What makes Quaker faith distinct today?”

Loss of many Quaker traditions, loss of the external signs of Quaker community, and our turning away from a Bible-based faith to a secular one, are factors that worked together to change the Society of Friends. We have shifted from being a community of Christians – seeking to live the Christian life by following the Spirit of Christ – to being a secular group of intellectuals who share common moral values, and are committed to appropriate social action. The question that was asked in the beginning of this article needs to be answered: “How far can diversity extend beyond our core without being un-Quakerly?”

Dave Newlands
Eastern Shore Meeting

Book Reviews:

The Shack. William P. Young, Windblown Media, 2007. \$14.95.

Q] How do you reach a fundamentalist Christian with the message that God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are not somewhere out there, above us controlling events, but rather are within each person, loving unconditionally?

A] With a novel about redemption that has sold over fourteen million copies.

While others have published their opinions that this book is heretical, it was surprising to find that we Quakers have more in common with some 21st Century fundamentalist Christians than we imagined.

The Shack is a story about radical, truly Fundamental Christianity, patiently urging us to commit to seeking the Spirit within each of us and all of us. Love does not control, but cares deeply and selflessly.

We are told that church rules and rituals are not serving our spiritual selves, but rather are institutional creations of sectarian power. Steeplehouses, eh?

It is a 300 page book, and is sometimes repetitive for the sake of convincing the more hesitant readers. We were glad when we finished it, but very glad to have read it.

*Dick and Betty Preston
Hamilton Monthly Meeting*

I Want to be Left Behind: Finding Rapture Here on Earth. Brenda Peterson. Da Capo Press 2010.

At first sight, this would seem an odd book to be reviewed in the Canadian Friend: a memoir of sorts, by a woman who was born into, and grew up in a fervent Southern Baptist family in the American South – rather remote from our concerns. Yet, subtly woven into it is a message that, once unwrapped, may be important for Friends to take to heart. It also poses a question: what leads an individual toward, or away from, a certain path in life?

The author describes experiences of her early years in a thoroughly evangelical, Fundamentalist environment, both at home and in her community. Over time she feels increasingly like a cuckoo in the nest, questioning and repudiating much of the religious belief she is being taught, first internally and then occasionally overtly, while avoiding open conflict.

This spiritual autobiography is written with a deft hand, and a delightful sense of humour. Peterson dives deep and treads lightly. To me, it reads like an expanded ‘Testimony to the Grace of God’ in her life while she is still alive, much as we would write for a Friend departed. The chasm between her *Way* and the unyieldingly dogmatic beliefs of her family is about as wide as it can get, yet she is able to bridge it, while enduring the discomfort and dismay this entails.

How did she do this? I was struck by how often the phrase ‘I understood...’ occurs throughout the book. She respected the people, holding aside the views that appalled her enough to try to figure out how they had come to believe what they did. Thus she acquired a ‘sense of their condition’. She was also aware how often the way they acted and treated others, was at odds with their rigid views and was dictated more by love than condemnation. She saw what was best in them – rather than ascribing hostile motives – while inwardly rejecting their tenets. The love they showed in their attitude to others carried more weight for her than their professed beliefs. Her love for them was stretched at times but never torn.

To her, Heaven is under her feet, all around her, in the natural world, here and now, and her commitment is turned toward the environment and protecting it. Heaven above can wait.

Peterson is not afraid to acknowledge that some of the groups she aligns herself with later in life, far removed in objectives from her original faith community and family, can be as dogmatic and judgmental, which contributes to her sitting lightly with both.

The opening and closing chapters sum up the message beautifully. They connect two parts of a continuing, loving dialogue between herself and a neighbour engaged in watching and guarding seal pups on a beach in Washington State. The neighbour is an ardent proponent of the Rapture – that he believes will take him up and leave her behind. These are two people whose beliefs are totally at odds with each other, yet they are close friends.

The view of life she has come to is close to what I believe many Quakers share, certainly in much of the unprogrammed tradition. Yet, I learned that Peterson had never heard of Quakers. Something more to ponder...

Ellen Pye, Vancouver Monthly Meeting

Quaker Book Service



The following titles have been added to our stock. For a complete listing of QBS books, see our 2013-2014 Quaker Book Service Catalogue available on the CYM website, www.quaker.ca/qbs. Enquiries to: quakerbookservice@gmail.com.

Faithful Friend: William Cronyn McCheane, 1843-1923 by Leona Crabb (a descendant of McCheane). Self-published 2013.

Leona Crabb uses original family documents, photographs and drawings (79 reproduced in the book) to tell the story of the establishment of a Quaker community in Canada, in Halcyonia and Borden, Saskatchewan. It was founded at the beginning of the 20th Century by W.C. McCheane and a group from England. Well-documented with annexes of original documents, correspondence, diaries, and reports. (406 pp. \$28.00).

The Heron Spirals: A Commonplace Book by Caroline Balderston Parry. Self-published 2013.

A collection of personal thoughts, diary selections, poems, and songs. The author spread them through four "spirals" of her adult life as she gained inspiration from watching great blue herons. (Heron is the motif of her book). Well-illustrated with paintings of herons and other birds. (176 pp. \$20.00).

The Quaker Way: A Rediscovery, by Rex Ambler. Christian Alternative Books, John Hunt Publishers, UK. 2013.

Rex Ambler tells what it means to be a Quaker in worship, making decisions, and meeting others. He stresses silent worship, beyond words, beliefs and reason, to help us realize our relationship with the spiritual reality of God. Five appendices, notes, and references. (160 pp. \$25.90).

International Experience with AVP: A Travel Diary by Ruth Hillman. Canadian Quaker Learning Series No. 3. 2013.

The author tells of her experiences in Alternatives to Violence Projects in prisons, schools, and other community groups in Canada, Britain, Russia, India, Latin America and Haiti. (28 pp. \$6.00).

Answering That of God: Discovering the Spirit Within, by Peter Parr. The Kindlers, London UK. 2013.

The book explores who Quakers are and the spiritual values that lie behind Quaker witness and practice, offering scope for reflection. (45 pp. \$7.50).

Twelve Quakers and Truth by Quaker Quest, London UK. Pamphlet 9, 2013.

Twelve Quakers in this popular series explore, sometimes with humour, and reflect on what they mean by living with integrity (40 pp. \$6.25).

Ordering Instructions:

Mail orders, enclosing payment by cheque or money order, should be sent to Quaker Book Service, Box 4652, Station E, Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5H8. **QBS does not have a telephone.**

Please add the following mailing costs:	
Value of an order	Postage Add-on
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\$10 - \$19.95	\$7.50
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\$35.00 - \$59.95	\$11.50
Over \$60	\$13.00

Around the Family Around the Family Around the Family Around

Hamilton Monthly Meeting: Our first intergenerational Meeting retreat in many years – organized by the First Day School, who generously chose to add the “rest of us” to their planned retreat – took place at Camp NeeKauNis from Friday 31 May through Sunday 2 June. More than thirty Friends attended. The cloudbursts didn’t dampen our enthusiasm or our pleasure in being together to share fun, food, games, talent, and fellowship. We explored our theme of *Quaker SPICES* in a number of ways: through a game – *The SPICES Trail* – in which we searched for clues and found stories and poems illustrating each of the SPICES testimonies; through readings before each meal. During the Sunday morning worship we participated in the KAIROS-initiated *Days of Action for Water*. It was a wonderful event.

Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting: We note the death of Meg Lynne Bonney, in Courtney (Vancouver Island) on March 30, after a long illness, and the Memorial for Bob Newell, which was held in Nanoose Bay on September 1, 2013.

Our Meeting is trying a new organization. We will meet for Worship for Business ten times per year in Victoria, with two Meetings held either in Nanaimo or Duncan.

An all-Island gathering: *Exploring Belonging* was held at the Lake Cowichan Forestry Reserve Centre on September 28. Arrangements by Duncan Worship Group. Over fifty friends of all ages attended.

Fern Street Meeting House, as many of you know, celebrated 100 years since its opening in 1913, on May 4-5. The Meetinghouse was extensively renovated during the winter-spring months. Many people participated in this venture, and we were able to use bequest moneys to finance the cost. We are specially grateful for the Meeting House garden which has become a living witness to the power and presence of God in nature.

The Meeting has renewed the lease of the property behind the Meeting House, to the Parks Department of Victoria, and is working with the local neighbourhood to improve it as park.

[Report (right) written by Christine Tansley
Yonge Street Monthly Meeting]

Yonge Street and Pelham Half Yearly Meeting: Approximately sixty-five Friends up to age ninety-seven, gathered at Camp NeeKauNis, June 7-9, with Minga Claggett-Borne and Jonathan Vogel-Borne, from Massachusetts. Their visit was under the auspices of Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) arranged by Virginia Dawson. They led several lively sessions on the theme, *Let the Living Waters Flow*. Singing, and high and low drama were part of the Friday night session. Saturday morning was more serious. We shared, in small groups, where we each find “water in the desert”; the spiritual practices that help us through difficult times. What helps us deepen our connection to the Spirit? What has helped us when we felt our boat was sinking? We agreed that we need more time in our own Meetings for sharing at this deeper level.

Don Alexander, a Pelham Friend, enabled us to heed the call from Kairos to gather our own local water (from Georgian Bay) and hold it in the Light. He will send this water to Ottawa to join with many others for a national Kairos “Gathering of the Waters” action later in June – a protest against the provisions of Bills C-38 and C-45 – that both undermine the protection of Canada’s water and weaken our Indigenous peoples’ power to protect it.

Saturday afternoon’s session was focussed on the *Kabarak Call for Peace and Eco-justice*. When we look into the world the wrongs seem enormous, and quite beyond our power to effect any change. And yet, people brought their stories of how quite small examples of keeping faith with our Light, can have far-reaching results – results that we may never know. We were inspired to go on following our Light.

Among other delights of the weekend were a compilation of mainstream film clips in which Quakers appear as others see us, and the reading of one of the “Witch Poems” of Niagara Friend, Barbara Bucknall.

I think everyone, even the hard-working cooks, went away feeling the great gift we have in being able to meet at Half Yearly Meeting. We got to know each other a little better on many levels as we acted out improvised skits, sang together, washed dishes, spoke, and listened from the heart to “those things that are eternal”.

Special Interest Groups Special Interest Groups Special

Maida Follini of Halifax Monthly Meeting (photo and article below), spoke to fourteen participants on the enlightened Quaker preacher, Elias Hicks (1748-1830), who preached for fifty years between 1769 and 1829 in the Eastern States and Canada. Elias Hicks was a lifelong member of Jericho Monthly Meeting, Westbury Quarter, New York Yearly Meeting.



Over a fifty-year period, Elias Hicks made sixty-four trips, traveling among Friends in the Northeast. Hicks was recognized "...as one of the two or three most effective Quaker ministers of the period". (Forbush: *Elias Hicks, Quaker Liberal*). Hicks worked to: abolish slavery, establish Quaker schools, and encourage faith.

Hicks separated the Spiritual from the Material. Discarding outward rituals, Hicks focused on Inward Sacraments: Inward Baptism and Inward Communion with the Divine. Jesus was divine, not because he was physically the son of God, but because he had within him the Spirit of God, in which all humankind shares, but which Jesus had in fullest measure.

The doctrine of "Vicarious Atonement" through the crucifixion of Christ was, to Hicks, an error, since each person must be responsible for his own errors; no one is responsible for the sins of others. The crucifixion was the act of wicked men. No merciful God would send his son into the world to be cruelly tortured. True Atonement is the continuing process of each person's repenting his own errors, and working to reform himself.

Hicks interpreted the Bible metaphorically. His views were in accord with modern thought. God enables humankind to make right choices through the Inward Light, interpreted by his gift of reason.

Footnote: Elias Hicks

Maida Follini's full and interesting biography of Elias Hicks has an important CYM footnote for today. When Sarah Wright Haight – the recorded minister from Norwich Monthly Meeting / Yarmouth Preparative Meeting, returned to NY to visit with her son, James, she attended New York Yearly Meeting when Elias Hicks preached. (This was at the time of the Separation in 1828.) She listened and considered his words. Upon returning home she reported her approval of his ministry, and Yarmouth Meeting did not separate. Later, Coldstream/Lobo was formed, and both were rural Meetings that remain as Meetings of Canadian Yearly Meeting today. They did not deplete their life by separation.

*Jane Zavitz-Bond (below)
Yarmouth Monthly Meeting*



Footnote: LGBTQ

The special Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgender-Queer (LGBTQ) presentation was a great success and highlight for me. An ad hoc group did the organizing and I joined, claiming the role of ally. A panel gave brief accounts of their own experiences, followed by focused sharing. I facilitated the allies' sharing and found it really rich and deep. LGBTQ Friends could share from their hearts and others could tenderly listen, respond and ask questions. Many stories were shared for the first time. We learned that we still have work to do, to be fully in community with each other.

*Nancy McInnis
Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting*

[The LGBTQ Report will be in the December CF issue]

My First Time at Yearly Meeting: *Matthew Legge*



In October 2012, I began work at the Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC), as the Administrative and Communications Assistant. Over the year – as part of my involvement with the Ontario Council for International Cooperation (of which CFSC is a member) – I attended several events at Friends House in Toronto. I was extremely impressed with the work CFSC was doing, their values as an organization, and with the overall feeling of Friends House – the architectural beauty, the sense of living history in every room, and the many displays of concern for social justice and peace. It immediately felt like a special place. Just prior to Yearly Meeting, in addition to my work as the Administrative and Communications Assistant, I was hired to serve as the Program Coordinator for CFSC's Quaker Peace and Sustainable Communities Committee (QPASCC).

My first time at CYM started off as a whirlwind: meeting new people and putting faces to names of folks I'd only had email contact with; getting signed in; meeting my roommate for the week; setting up all of the CFSC display materials. I enjoyed the liveliness of my first day. I was immediately impressed to see all of the young faces. These are Friends who will be instrumental in carrying Quaker traditions forward.

On the morning of my second day I was introduced in the Business Meeting. For those who have not been to a Quaker Meeting for Worship for Business, try to picture standing in a room full of people and seeing them all turning and smiling at you, their open

hands raised in the air and shaking silently (instead of applause) a lovely and welcoming scene. Thanks, Friends!

I had the chance to hear conversations that went easily and some that were challenging and emotion-filled. I was not expecting to see quite so many tears, but I didn't see them as a bad thing. To me, the tears seemed like the mark of a community that is comfortable enough to display and share real emotion together. When conflicts become particularly frustrating it is all the more impressive to see what I saw: a number of excellent and disciplined leaders using the many skills and qualities needed to heal and to nurture relationships.

Speaking of emotional conversations, I had the privileged of attending a session hosted by Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Trans/Queer Friends and allies. I was most impressed by the personal stories shared and by the rich discussions that followed, challenging me to question my own privileges, powers, assumptions, and acts.

There were so many other lively and thought-provoking special interest sessions on topics like Palestine-Israel, and the Blanket Exercise (which I will not try to explain but would recommend that Friends learn about and participate in - <http://www.kairoscanada.org/dignity-rights/indigenous-rights/blanket-exercise/>).

I was consistently impressed by the depth of knowledge and engagement of the speakers, and of the folks I chatted with one-on-one. What understanding and commitment! I was fascinated by the daily Quaker studies sessions, with their vivid depictions of the growth of Quaker faith. Throughout the week I appreciated hearing so many different perspectives on all things Quaker, including advice about the future of QPASCC. As a balance to the serious sessions there were songs, shared meals, and plenty of laughter.

I am very much looking forward to connecting with more of you in the future. Please feel free to be in touch. I would especially invite anyone who uses social media to visit CFSC's Facebook and Twitter and share your comments and feedback with me there.

Matthew Legge

*Administrative and Communications Assistant and
Program Coordinator of the QPASCC*

Guest Writer: *Rae Lawrence*

I have visited several Yearly Meetings this year and the differences are superficial. We are all seeking a deeper spiritual foundation. Communities are a natural consequence of searching and finding kinship in faith. Convicted communities that mind the Light, and nurture the *Seed* in each other, thrive.

There is one thing I would encourage all clerks to consider: if the agenda is long, or has contentious issues, longer worship at the beginning and periodically throughout, paradoxically smooths things along. Perhaps Meetings could even have time for longer silent thanks at the end of the session.

There is one who can speak to our personal conditions and our corporate conditions alike; when we ask we receive. We are all concerned for the same things: something beyond us that *I* know as Christ Jesus/God, meaning and purpose of life; fellowship in spirit for all; care and stewardship of our natural environment; travel expense; consequence; sustaining a concern past our Light.

Those who think they know what God wants for us, based on a book written about others' experiences thousands of years ago, are missing the point – that The Word came, and walked the earth, and is present today to teach and instruct in the Way, *if we believe, invite, and listen*. We are not meant to live in the past or the future, but in the present. The promises of a teacher, shepherd, comforter, guide, promised in the book mentioned above, are fulfilled today in faithful believers and communities of believers, each in his/her own measure.

We seek something greater than ourselves. To this I can witness to the Presence in my own life, all my life, growing and changing with me, helping me grow, always patient, forgiving, loving. When I ask for more, I am given more, *if I'm ready*: more love; more capacity to love; forgiveness, and assistance in forgiving. Always patient with me no matter what my condition is. Grieving with me. Upholding, strengthening, teaching, enlightening, tempering and refining, sometimes in fire, sometimes in foggy mist. I am never alone, but need solitude to hear the Eternal and be refreshed. Practising the *Presence* is open to all.

Rae Lawrence

*Multnomah Monthly Meeting, Portland, Oregon
Travelling in Ministry since 2004*

Threshing Session on CYM

Focus was on the lack of financial resources for hiring staff for the Quaker renewal program – Quaker Education Program Coordinator and Youth Secretary; lack of adequate human resources knowledge on the part of volunteer Friends acting as CYM employers; overburdening of older Friends serving on CYM committees; the rapid diminishment of our CYM general fund if we hire more Renewal Program staff; how CYM administrative work could be streamlined.

Queries: 1] What is most important about CYM? 2] What parts of the Quaker renewal program work do you want to see continued? (Katrina has resigned. Sue finishes end of October.) 3] How do we grapple with limited resources? Attempts to increase donations to cover costs of hiring two new part-time staff were unsuccessful; many committees and Friends report being overburdened by CYM commitments; nominating committees have difficulty recruiting enough volunteers to fill positions.

Several Friends spoke clearly and passionately about their vision of CYM. Friends see the Yearly Meeting as a support for the leadings and activities of individual Friends and Monthly Meetings. If we allow our structure to become too complicated, the work becomes self-perpetuating and further from the Spirit which inspired it and is central to what we do. Other Friends pointed out that inadequate structures for support of staff gravely interfere with spiritual grounding.

It was pointed out that our difficulty with raising funds has much to do with the fact that there are only about 1000 Friends in CYM and only twenty percent of those donate to CYM directly. We are trying to do the work of a much bigger organization. We could cut back by educating ourselves and holding CYM in session every two years rather than annually.

At the end of the session, it was stated, and there was a sense of agreement that we are corporately in the *I don't know* place, and that we need to sit there for awhile until we have a clear way forward. Meanwhile, we can work on streamlining our structures, and making sure that the legal and liability gaps in our processes are addressed. Work on this will continue in consultation with Monthly Meetings, Half-Yearly Meetings and Regional Gatherings.

[Excerpted from full Threshing Report:
Determining Priorities and Envisioning Change]



location

Camp NeeKauNis is on a hill above the shores of Georgian Bay. The cabins, outbuildings, woods, and enhanced waterfront provide the perfect location for kids and families to experience northern living within a community environment.

real world skills

Our camp is rooted in the Quaker principles of equality, cooperation, and respect. The interpersonal skills campers learn here will become an invaluable asset in their lives as well as something they can pass on to others.

campers : staff

Our camper to instructor ratio is one of the best and, depending on the camp, will range from 4 : 1 to 2 : 1. This allows each camper to participate in all activities with proper supervision.

camp experience

Everyone has a passion and ours is making sure each camper has an unforgettable experience. Campers will have the opportunity to spend time at the water front, in the sports field, playing drama games, and leaving camp spiritually refreshed.

Programs for families, children, young adults, and mixed groups are offered in a series of camps which provide opportunities for recreation, relaxation, and spiritual growth.



For more information on camps and travel bursaries, or to download registration forms, please visit our website at www.neekaunis.org

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Please contact Jane Orion Smith or Jennifer Preston to confidentially discuss how your bequest can help create a sustainable future for CFSC.

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**Canadian Friends Service Committee
(Quakers)**

A Committee of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Canada

Kairos Report: *Jennifer Henry*

"Everyone is so friendly", she said, without a trace of the possible irony. Bella is not quite ten. But that was also my sense when my daughter and I joined you for part of the 2013 Canadian Yearly Meeting. We felt warmly welcomed, our presence appreciated, and our active participation encouraged.

I came this year because, in my role as Executive Director of KAIROS, I think it is very important to try to be with our member churches and organizations at critical times in their ongoing lives. Not only is it an opportunity for me to make visible witness to the ecumenical social justice work we share, but it is also an opportunity to learn from each of our members. It is valuable to hear about the justice issues that are your priorities as, in KAIROS, we continually discern the work we do together. It was an added benefit to have the opportunity to attend *Quaker Study*, where I learned a tremendous amount about your roots and the strengths and challenges from your tradition.

As faith communities, we are called to not only *do justice* but to *be just*. Perseverance and commitment to those dual goals was very much evident in your time together. With the very important minute repudiating the *Doctrine of Discovery*, and in ongoing discussions on a just peace in Israel-Palestine, you showed your passion for justice in the world – as is also expressed in the KAIROS mandate for a faithful ecumenical response to the biblical call "to do justice" (Micah 6:8).

In a time when churches and faith communities are facing financial challenges and internal struggles, it seems even more important that we preserve our critical role in prophetic public witness. We exist not only for ourselves, but as communities of resistance and solidarity. When our country engages in rapacious resource extraction and abandons commitments to human rights at home and abroad, we must respond, standing with those whose lives will be most affected.

I also heard you strive to be just in your commitment to Meeting processes that included every voice, in your clarity about the participation of young people in the community, in your expanded learning about LGBTQ folks, and in the ways in which you reflected on your employment practices. There was deep intention toward just ways of being together that can sometimes be forgotten, or are expressed in very different ways in other communities of faith.

Both commitments are, of course, never-ending. There is no "there" in *our* lifetimes, to the realization of God's justice in the world, or to true welcome and inclusion in our communities. While there is deep challenge in the processes, and we can get weary, there is also genuine hope to be found in the struggle. What is profound to me about community, is that when one of us is too tired to continue with the work, too disenchanted to see the vision, or too discouraged by the barriers in the road, another can lift up the work anew, can give hope back, can see light in darkness. It is that capacity to hold one another in the broader vision of holy justice, that makes us a community of hope.

So thank you for being so "friendly", for your work for justice and peace in your community and in the world, and for your contributions to the ecumenical social justice movement. Quakers are a unique witness, and we are ever strengthened by your continued presence with KAIROS.

Jennifer Henry
Toronto, Ontario



Report on QAAC: *Don Alexander*

Jennifer Preston, Programme Coordinator of Canadian Friends Service Committee's (CFSC) Quaker Aboriginal Affairs Committee (QAAC), participated in a panel at York University, Toronto, Friday June 28.

Linking Arms Together was arranged to link the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Residential Schools matters together, with implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The foundational harm of the Doctrine of Discovery was also highlighted by several speakers. The three topics are a significant focus of current QAAC work.

Three survivors of the Residential school system: Margaret Tourville, Michael Cheena, and Murray Crow, gave witness and told their stories. The emotional response of the audience served to strengthen the meaning of the other presentations of the day.

The panel comprised people from groups that have met often through the years, ranging from the United Nations, to presentations from our coast-to-coast-to-coast. Speakers included: the Truth and Reconciliation Commissioner – Chief Wilton Littlechild; Grand Chief Edward John – a member of the UN permanent forum on Indigenous issues, and executive member of

First Nations Summit; Dr. Marlene Brant Castellano – a Mohawk Elder and Professor Emeritus of Native Studies at Trent University; Dr. John Milloy of Trent University, who is the lead researcher on Residential Schools for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

The event was held on the Traditional Territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, in Osgood Hall, York University.

York University streamed the event, and a two hour segment may be accessed from a link on the CFSC Web site. The on-line resources from the event give excellent information about QAAC work:

<http://quakerservice.ca/news/video-of-panel-discussion-on-un-declaration/#sthash.O0hZHALu>.

Dom Alexander, Pelham Meeting

[Photo below: (L to R) Paul Joffe, a lawyer specializing in indigenous peoples' rights and international law; Romeo Saganash, Member of Parliament, Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou; Jennifer Preston, Programme Coordinator QAAC; Ellen Gabriel, Vice President of Kontinóhstats, the Mohawk Language Custodians Association; Craig Benjamin, Amnesty International.]



Notice Board

The Lawson - McMechan Fund

Mission Statement

It is the wish of the founders, Bill and Rosemarie McMechan, to commemorate the lives of A. Helen, Kathleen, and Elizabeth L. Lawson through this trust, and to celebrate the friendship between their two families. The fund is intended to support individuals and organizations of limited means in work which promotes understanding and harmony amongst people and fosters a healthy environment.

Objectives

1. To help fund individuals and small organizations involved in training and educating people to understand and practice a nonviolent way of life
2. To support the activities of individuals and small organizations devoted to furthering the ecological health and integrity of the natural world.

Areas of Interest

Non-violent conflict resolution, Holistic approaches to ecology, Environmental integrity.

Please note: This is a very modest fund. While the average range of grants is expected to be \$1500 - \$3000, proposals for smaller or larger sums will be considered.

Contact: Sylvia McMechan 829 Orchard Blvd., Kingsville, ON N9Y 2R7

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting seeks new General Secretary



Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (PYM) of the Religious Society of Friends seeks candidates for the position of General Secretary of the Yearly Meeting.

Under the direction of the Yearly Meeting, the General Secretary leads the operations of PYM and its programs, supervising a staff of approximately 20 full- and part-time employees. Responsibilities include fundraising, personnel management, budget and finance, public relations and outreach, and communications with and support for PYM committees, member meetings and other Friends organizations.

Qualifications include active membership in the Religious Society of Friends and a demonstrated record of servant leadership, team building and management skills.

A detailed description of the position, qualifications and the application process will be posted on the PYM website (www.pym.org) in mid-October. The PYM Search Committee will begin active consideration of candidates in December 2013. Questions or nominations may be emailed to: gssearch@pym.org

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Gleanings: clerk: "Can we approve these three recommendations in one **swell foop?**" "We're waiting for a **moment -- I mean, a minute!**" At *Quaker Study*, when the lights went out: "**Raise your hands, many hands make lights work.**" "**What if the hokey-pokey* is* what it's all about?!**" "**Among Friends, one finds the full range: deep spiritual insightfulness to jaw-drawing immaturity... sometimes in the same person.**" At Meeting for Worship for Business: "**Dan, you haven't said anything yet ... !**" A Representative Meeting Clerk: "**I'd never have said that if a gleaner was around!**"

Notice Board

Education Outreach

Interested in starting a new Quaker meeting or worship group?

FGC's *New Meetings Project* can help you:

- Receive nurture and support
- Learn about valuable resources
- Benefit from others' experiences

Send inquiries to Brent Bill
Friends General Conference
New Meetings Project Coordinator
brentb@fgcquaker.org



FGC

NURTURING FAITH AND QUAKER PRACTICE

photograph by Joanne Clapp-Filligan

Education and Outreach Committee of CYM (formerly called HMAc) is coordinating CYM's participation in the New Meetings Project of Friends General Conference. We would like to know if any Canadian Friends feel led to be mentors for new Meetings. There is a retreat for mentors in Indiana in November 2013. We would also like to know about any new Meetings or Worship Groups in Canada that may benefit from support from this project. Please contact Marilyn Manzer, clerk of Education and Outreach Committee.

As part of supporting new Meetings and Worship Groups, the New Meetings Project is seeking seasoned, faithful Friends to serve as members of mentoring teams. We seek Friends who can bring into encounters with others an experiential understanding that the Spirit can teach us together; who have the ability to invite people more deeply into God's presence, and teach the Quaker way. For more information on the Mentoring Teams, visit <http://www.fgcquaker.org/serve/opportunities/serving-new-meetings-project-mentoring-team>

We have organized a "New Meeting Toolbox" on the website. It currently has six main subject areas – "Getting Started", "Worship", "Outreach and Publicity," "Welcoming Newcomers", "Spiritual Growth" and "Wider Friends Contacts." Other categories are in development. Materials in each category are being developed and posted as free downloadable PDFs. Some of the materials were adapted from previous FGC publications, others are new. It's constantly being added to. Visit it at <https://www.fgcquaker.org/deepen/outreach/new-meetings-project/new-meetings-toolbox>. Many of the materials there will be helpful to existing Meetings too!

Guest Writer: *Laura J. Rediehs*

Coming to Canadian Yearly Meeting reminded me that Quaker community is close to the ideal of the Blessed Community. I was impressed by Friends' thoughtfulness, care, and kindness, by the spirit of helpfulness, and by everyone's ability to discern needs, large and small, and take responsibility for what was before them. All week, Friends were watching out for each other, reaching out to newcomers, meeting new people, and renewing old friendships.

We were also humbled during Yearly Meeting by the reminder that we do not yet completely fulfill the ideal of the blessed community. Yet, even when we deal with profound disappointment, hurts, and pain, we face these difficulties with a powerful combination of honesty and tenderness I have seldom seen outside the Quaker world. As individuals, and as an organization, we have our limits and failings. Because our community manifests so much promise, we may raise unrealistically high expectations of each other, with the result that our failings and disappointments are so much harder to bear. But our biggest strength is that, in times of crisis, we remember to try to tap into that force of goodness and love that transcends our human limitations.

Ben Pink Dandelion reminded us, during the *Quaker Study* sessions, that early Friends believed that a kind of human perfection *is* possible. It seems today that Friends have both let go of this view and yet at the same time continue to believe in it. But I think we have to be careful how we strike the balance. The early Friends never held that human perfection was to become like God. We can call each other to a higher standard, but we cannot insist that others, or Quaker practice, be God in our lives.

My own view is that the kind of perfection that early Friends thought was possible was a transition from self-interest to serving the callings of Goodness and Love. There is a kind of transformation that we can experience, of genuinely no longer caring primarily about our own comfort or happiness, or enlightenment, or salvation, or success. Instead, we can care most of all about doing what we can with our lives, to bring God's love and goodness more fully into the world. We still have to care about ourselves to some extent, because we need to maintain health and well-being, and to discern what special gifts we bring to the world, but the focus of attention shifts. The journey inward

to find God's love results in becoming centered within God's love, at which point we now turn outward from that centeredness to care for the world.

This kind of perfection – if I am right that this was what the early Friends meant by the term – is not “becoming Godlike”. As humans we still have our limits. We can get things wrong. In this state of centeredness or perfection, the reason we still get things wrong is not necessarily because of malice or selfishness, but simply because, as humans, we have limits. We do not know everything, and we can get tired, or our fears and anxieties can get the better of us.

Even if the *Blessed Community* consisted of perfect people in this sense, forgiveness is still relevant, even imperative. Can we find the right balance of holding ourselves, and each other, to high standards, and forgive each other for the ways we fall short?

What I saw and experienced at Yearly Meeting was that we can, and do. I saw Friends speaking and really hearing painful truths. I saw humility. I saw commitment to mending and healing, and I saw forgiveness and reconciliation. The problems are not all solved yet, but the blessed community, like human perfection, is never a final state. It is constantly evolving. Life and love flowed through Yearly Meeting, washing us all with its healing power.

Laura J. Rediehs

*St. Lawrence Valley Friends Meeting (Potsdam, N Y)
Allowed Meeting of Ottawa Monthly Meeting*



[Laura is an Associate Professor of Philosophy and Coordinator of Peace Studies at St. Lawrence University, Canton, NY]

Jokers

I am thankful for the Ministry of “Jokers”. I seriously believe that they add an important and enriching dimension to our Yearly Meeting sessions. I am thinking of a small number of Friends in particular who like to laugh and joke and play word games. They don’t take themselves too seriously and they help to break the tension that we sometimes encounter in our strivings. They certainly help us to laugh and relax during our free times. I think of them as something like the medieval court jesters, or the characters in a Shakespearean play who played the part of the fool. In the same way these Ministers in our midst often come out with nubs of wisdom amidst the jesting, which really make us stand back and think. These Friends among us who pun and tell jokes often find a common ground with others in small talk. They provide a welcome relief from the heavy business of the day .

When I was growing up in rural Ireland our village was too small to have its own village “fool” - a local character in Irish villages who freely entertained children and adults alike. So we had to borrow one from the next village whenever we needed entertainment. We would invite this character from the next village to come, perhaps after our games on a Sunday, and he would regale us with stories and acts, like pulling faces or funny walks. We are fortunate to have our own village characters at CYM and I hope they are always with us.

Mel Earley, Halifax Monthly Meeting

Awe

I always love the camaraderie of CYM, but inevitably year after year I am awed by how we deal with crises. The process is frustrating and yet, every year our combined membership works its way through the details and emotions. I believe that is why many of us are Friends. We are people who refuse to accept the quick and/or easy way to solve a problem – no majority rules or consensus. This slows the process but also promotes healing and reconciliation. We try to treat each other tenderly, not necessarily agreeing with the other person’s view, but respecting it. Sometimes it backfires; and then we deal with it!

*Patty Lembke
Prairie Monthly Meeting*

Documents in Advance

Both before and after Yearly Meeting, I value and use *Reports in Advance*. They are a great resource.

A lot of work by Committees, Meetings, and our CYM office staff, goes into producing these reports. It has long been the practice to prepare *Documents in Advance* for Yearly Meeting. I recall the time when the reports were on loose pages, but for the last several years they have been put into a booklet.

They include: Memorial Minutes; Representative Meeting Minutes; Reports from all Standing Committees of Yearly Meeting; Reports from Representatives to Other Bodies; the State of Society Reports of Monthly Meetings. They are where we learn about the wider service that went on in the Society over the previous year – a wonderful reporting which gives much information and inspiration.

The State of Society Reports are brim-full of ideas and experiments which have been tried by other Meetings. All Friends would do well to spend some time with these, and engage in discussion of ideas and practices that have been tried and found valuable.

The other booklet prepared by the Yearly Meeting Office – *Minutes of Canadian Yearly Meeting With Late Reports and Committee Directory* – appears in the autumn, with minutes and reports from the Yearly Meeting in Session, and any particular concerns which derive from the Yearly Meeting. It is well worth spending time reflecting on these.

We owe great appreciation to Kerry MacAdam who oversees the preparation of this documentation.

Arnold Ranneris, Victoria Friends



Memories from the Archivist: *Jane Zavitz-Bond*

During worship sharing on Thursday of Yearly Meeting, I remembered an important incident and life-changing event among Friends sixty-five summers ago.

I was one of sixty Young Friends, and friends of Friends, from eighteen countries, who met at Quaker School Eerde, a castle near Ommen, Holland. We anticipated meeting together after being separated by WWII. Four clerks from England, Holland, Germany and the USA, presided over the sessions. We heard assigned presentations on *The Significance of Christ* (the Spirit Lives!) by an American; *Does God Still Speak To Us?* (Do we listen today?) by a Dutch Friend; *Creating Community* (Building the Kingdom Today) by an English Friend; and *The Peace Testimony* (Living Peace Today) by a German Friend.

A few days into the Conference, the Peace presentation was made in German, with disjointed English translation. The Dutch clerk stood and abruptly ended the session. "How could a German not have a translation prepared? Or even speak of Peace?" Building on previous sharing and bound by our desires for a renewed and a wider Friends community, we were dashed, a broken body.

When the meeting recessed we discussed quietly in pairs or small groups, the grounds on which to reconnect. Talks continued during supper in the castle, and over café au lait on the bridge. In the evening, a few prepared the translation with care, and mimeographed it for all to share.

Travelling to Ommen, we had seen many shrines with flowers kept fresh where Germans had shot Dutch villagers. Over the hours, the awareness that the German pacifists had suffered in their own land, and were not responsible for the cruelties of the occupation, filtered through to us. These were our friends.

The next morning as we gathered, still seeking community, Otto Boetes, the Dutch clerk, rose and quietly asked the forgiveness of Hans Schneider, the German who he had interrupted the previous day. Otto said that he had acted from memories of war that overwhelmed him. All Friends lived the Peace Testimony and suffered during the war for doing so. We were again bound together. The session reopened. The Peace Message was read and received with tender hearts.

Over the years, many of the Young Friends at the Ommen Conference became active leaders among Friends, and in the larger world. Hans Schneider became clerk of German Yearly Meeting, and while an elected member of the Dutch Parliament, Otto Boetes witnessed for Peace on a hunger strike in a railroad box car, opposite Parliament in Amsterdam, during the Vietnam War. The care taken by Young Friends to repair relationships allowed them to grow and share more fully, and this [open sharing and seeking] has continued over the years. Otherwise many of us may have left Friends, disheartened.

We must seek to live our faith for ourselves, and for others. We are a community. We grow from our struggles, nurturing one another. Perfection is difficult, but we are called to it. I looked about the room at Kemptville, saw many I knew, and thought of others who had been hurt by Friends in service, whether employed or [nominated]. We can do better, and must. It will free and empower us in the future.

I need to continue to work on the later lives of those Young Adult Friends (YAFs) of the summer of 1948. They are proof of the importance of involving youth in Friends' activities and work, before they move onto other paths

The Young Friends, aged eighteen to thirty-five, were impressive. Harold Smuck was clerk of Friends United Meeting (FUM) at a crucial time when it was threatened with dissolving. Earlier he was representative of FUM Missions in East Africa, and before that, principal of the Ramalah Friends School.

In most of the intervening years I never read a major Friends' periodical or Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) bulletin, without seeing account of some of these Friends!

Jane Zavitz-Bond, Yarmouth Monthly Meeting

Young Friends and Young Adult Friends spent a full and fulfilling week together. While they too were shaken and moved to action by the apparent failures of our employment procedures, the Youth Challenge was nonetheless an amazing experience. They engaged in a wide variety of activities, from swimming in the pool of a very kind Friend, to the traditional, late-night marathon business sessions.

[Excerpted from the 2013 Epistle]

Last Words: Tony McQuail

[Song]

Dear Friends, Dear Friends
Let me tell you how I feel
You to me are such a treasure
I love you so

Dear Friends, Dear Friends
Let me tell you what I know
We are all imperfect humans
Yet on we go



Some of the ideas that help me go on are drawn from my experience in *Couple Enrichment* and *Holistic Management*.

C o u p l e Enrichment teaches us that it is a rare relationship where you can be both close, and not step on each other's toes.

The people we love and trust are the ones who can hurt us and make us angry, because we have such high expectations for them, and for the relationship.

I am convinced that couples don't get married so they can have a messy divorce, nor do volunteer organizations hire staff so that they can spend time before the labour relations board. But all too often that is where things end up. Yet I also know that there are communication tools which can help us avoid misunderstandings, minimize hurt, and help us grow from our conflicts to have rich relationships and satisfying work achievements. We can learn the skills, we can practise them, and make time to use them regularly.

Holistic Management has a powerful tool box. One concept that has been very liberating for me, is the idea that you make the best decision that you can at the time. Then you assume that it is going to be wrong, and you monitor to see where it comes off the rails. You monitor so that you can make adjustments to your plans, to ensure that you keep moving toward

your goal. This has taken a great burden from me. I no longer feel like a failure if my decision proves to be counter-productive. I don't have to defend it. I don't have to keep going with it. I can say, "that was a mistake". And based on what I've learned, I can ask "what is the best decision I can make *now*, to keep moving toward my goal?" It helps me learn from my successful and unsuccessful decisions. It helps me be much more comfortable saying, "I was wrong. I'm sorry. Now how can we move forward?"

I've also learned that it is often the most painful times that force me to re-examine what I'm doing, and make changes. This has helped me grow into much happier and centered places.

So Friends, where we are may be painful. We have done things that may have been hurtful one to another. But I am also hopeful that together we can grow in our ability to: hear each other; speak clearly and unhurtfully; learn from each other; see each other in the Light; and work to let go the blinders of sexism, ageism, and racism, that we have all absorbed from our culture in varying degrees.

Tony McQuail

*Lucknow Worship Group
Kitchener Monthly Meeting*

Closing Minute:

This has been a year of challenge and change. Our CYM week together was infused with the positive energy of so many Young Friends, and Young Adult Friends, who were here for the 50 Youth Challenge.

We laboured, together and separately, over sensitive and sometimes painful issues. We became more aware of how we sometimes unintentionally hurt each other, through lack of attention.

At times we found ourselves in the *I don't know place* referred to by Caroline Balderston Parry in her *Sunderland P. Gardner* lecture, and yet we also have come to know that it is a holy place. It was in that place that we found the Spirit that has helped us understand one another, and has inspired us to move forward together. We look forward to a time of healing and of new energy, when we meet together at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, Manitoba, August 8 to 16, 2014.

[Read by Susan Stevenson – Clerk]

The Canadian Friend

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December 2013

Quaker Thought

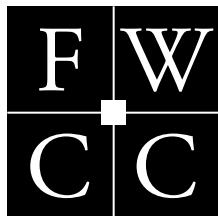
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Health and Wholeness

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