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*by Sheila Havard*

Coldstream Monthly Meeting is located in a small village northwest of London, Ontario, and so we appreciate all the more the few visitors who manage to navigate their way there to join us on Sunday.

Our weekly Meeting for Worship starts at 10:30 AM. On the first Sunday of the month we enjoy singing Friends' hymns after worship. On the other Sundays after meeting we discuss a quotation, which we take turns to choose. These "Quintessential Quaker Texts" are circulated by email every week. Our potlucks on the third Sunday of the month before Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business are a much-enjoyed opportunity to mingle.

An average of some fourteen Friends attend Meeting for Worship and eight to ten attend business meeting.

We continue to work closely with different groups in London to sponsor refugees. They have come from Iraqi Kurdistan, Somalia, and Eritrea. We work with an Interfaith Refugee committee which includes people from various faiths. The financial commitment varies, as some refugees have family here who are established and able to provide support, whereas others rely on us more heavily.

Some of the more settled refugees have learned English, successfully completed their education, and found work. One recently became a Canadian citizen.

In the summer a Truth and Reconciliation Response Committee was set up with a membership of five people. It has met almost every month and organized a workshop for January 27. The workshop explored the history behind the need for Truth and Reconciliation and provided an overview of the Commission's 94 Calls to Action.

Our Twelfth Night celebration in early January revealed much unsuspected musical talent in our group. Our retreat this year, on February 24, will focus on questions around death and dying.

A number of us are connected with the wider Quaker world by serving on CYM committees and the CYM annual gathering in 2018 in Barrie, Ontario attracted six of our members and attenders. This helps to prevent us from becoming too introverted.

## Ottawa Monthly Meeting

*by Carol Dixon*

We held our annual Ottawa Monthly Meeting retreat in January at the Meeting House – Friday evening, all day Saturday, and Sunday morning. Our theme was "mending" – including mending relations with others and with Spirit. About forty attended, with numbers varying over the weekend.

Friday evening we gathered for music and an introductory dialogue on the mending theme. Saturday we learned about *wabi sabi* – a traditional aesthetic in Japanese culture that embraces imperfection and transience. Other Saturday workshops involved working with watercolours as an expression of Spirit, learning some American Quaker history, mending relationships through dialogue, writing for healing, and being introduced to Theatre of the Oppressed.

There was also wonderful food! Our Friday supper was catered by Syrian Kitchen, a local restaurant that employs newly-arrived Syrians. Members provided food for the rest of the weekend – Saturday lunch and supper by Isabelle Yingling and Sunday breakfast by Jane Keeler and Lilia Fick. It all added up to a very full and satisfying weekend.



Sunday morning waffles at the OMM retreat.  
Photo : Carol Dixon

We have also had three evening sessions learning about reconciliation with Indigenous peoples through Aboriginal Peoples Television series *First Contact*.

Each session was followed by discussion and some further follow-up. Many of us engaged with a postcard campaign telling Senators to pass Bill 262, a bill to ensure Canadian laws are in harmony with United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Our Peace & Social Concerns Committee is working on a number of themes, including engaging with other Ottawa groups to push City Hall to ban bottled water in their buildings.

## Hamilton Monthly Meeting

*by Beverly Shepard*



Hamilton Monthly Meeting's annual potluck Thanksgiving dinner, which around 25 people attended. Photos: Wilf Ruland.

After more than two years of work and hope, Hamilton Monthly Meeting welcomed two members of the Syrian refugee family we have been hoping to sponsor. They are the parents of the family and are presently living in an apartment on the upper floor of our Meeting House.

The two have a daughter already living in Hamilton with her husband and children, so their arrival was a joyous reunion. However, another daughter and *her* toddler daughter remain in Turkey due to visa problems. We think those problems may at last have been solved and we hope that we will be able to welcome them to Hamilton soon.

The annual Christmas presentation by members (and associates) of our First Day School was very thought-provoking

this year. It told the story of a refugee child seeking – and at last finding – help and safety, comparing this story with that of the Holy Family forced to leave their homeland and dwell in Egypt as refugees. Hamilton Friends were impressed and inspired by the presentation.

And in somewhat old – but still significant – news:

William Olenek, son of Katherine Smith of our Meeting, won two awards in 2017 for the volunteer work he does. He's won awards before this, but these are especially significant. One was a Canada 150 Award and the other the Youth Volunteer of the Year Award in Dundas, where he does most of his volunteering.

To quote from the statement for that award:

“His most important quality is his drive to give back to Dundas and the natural areas. Week after week William tirelessly comes out to clean the Cootes Watershed and as our quartermaster maintains and organizes all of our equipment. This literally makes him the first to arrive and the last to leave – and a key member of our team. Twice a week, William takes a half-hour bus ride after school to volunteer at the Stewards of Cootes Watershed offices to manage our equipment room. As a volunteer student coach of the Junior League of the Hamilton Water Polo Club, William has aided the development of many of Dundas youth.”





## Kitchener Area Monthly Meeting

*by Daniel Allen*

This is Kitchener Area Monthly Meeting at our 2018 Christmas potluck. The kids decorated cookies, and after our potluck we took some next door and learned to make Indigenous crafts with Healing of the Seven Generations, an Indigenous service organization.

Clockwise from lower left, you can see: Chris Springer's hands, Alice Preston, Asher Segel-Brown, Rebecca Ivanoff, Rachel McQuail, Elliot, Anne Noice, Addie MacDonald, Emanuele, Kerri VanderMeer, Emily Compton, Tim Alamenciak, George Ivanoff, Robin Sanders, Emily.



Photo: Daniel Allen

## Toronto Monthly Meeting

*by Elizabeth Block*

In addition to Toronto Monthly Meeting's Refugee Committee, we have a new committee, Toronto Friends Sponsoring Refugees. We have brought in one family – two brothers – and are working on a second and third.

The children's program has a new Kids Activity Leader, Rostine Valid, who is well-known and loved by many Quaker children from Camp NeeKauNis. On Sundays there are likely to be three or four or five children for his program.

Our Resident Friend, Ben Bootsma, designed our colourful new Friends House pamphlet. He has been using it very successfully to promote rentals at Friends House. The House is becoming well-known as a great venue for events.

We celebrated Jim Adamson's 100th and Frank Showler's 99th birthdays, with excellent and well-attended parties.

Megan Shaw started Dinner and Games Nights, now called Community Nights. Megan is on staff at CFSC and she and Parker Glynn-Adey were married here in August 2017. Community Night includes a potluck, socializing, and some or all of board games, music, watching a movie, and watching Parker and his friends juggle.

Every month there is a display in our library – it has probably the best collection of books on Quakerism in the country – on a particular theme. For January 2019 it was books and pamphlets written by TMM members past and present. There were quite a lot of them!

One was Keith Maddock's personal testament, *Praying Through the Bars*,<sup>1</sup> a pamphlet based on his years of experience visiting with prisoners in the Don Jail.

<sup>1</sup> A digital version of this pamphlet is available at [quaker.ca/resources/quaker-learning-series](http://quaker.ca/resources/quaker-learning-series). Keith also has an article in this very issue of *The Canadian Friend* discussing his experience visiting with prisoners (see p. 27).

## Prince Edward Island Allowed Meeting

*by Daphne Davey*

We had a busy summer and fall in 2018, with visitors joining us on no less than ten Sundays, for a total of 23 visitors! They dropped in from mainland Canada, eastern USA, England, and Australia. Another couple stepped off a cruise ship and went looking for us, but unfortunately we weren't to be found that day. Perhaps the best part was the arrival of two Friends from Coldstream MM, who have moved to Prince Edward Island and joined our small Meeting.

We have now spent a year in our new Meeting venue, the library at the Mount Continuing Care Community. We have been able to import our Quaker library into their room – and have taken on the responsibility of managing both libraries and a puzzle collection. One resident, a practicing Hindu, is interested in exploring our Meeting for Worship.

Our semi-monthly Quaker Study sessions picked up again this fall. We cover any and every topic, most recently forgiveness, and are now studying Thomas Kelly's *Testament of Devotion*. Unfortunately, a few Friends are unable to attend these sessions, but we try to make up for that with some interesting chats over snacks after Meeting for Worship.

And to end on a happy and unusual note: our friend Jen, whose husband John Clement was a beloved member of our Meeting for many years, became both a grandmother and great-grandmother in the same week, what with the arrival of two baby boys. John would have loved that!

We recommend that anyone visiting PEI and wishing to attend our Meeting advise us in advance to confirm place and time, as we do occasionally shift venue or cancel. Contact Daphne Davey, our Clerk, at [pei-contact@quakers.ca](mailto:pei-contact@quakers.ca).

## New Worship Group of Yarmouth Monthly Meeting

*The Birth of the Otterville Worship Group by Kerrie Gill*

It is with great excitement that we announce a new Worship Group has formed under the care of Yarmouth Monthly Meeting. Starting with an info session in 10th month of 2018, the group has been meeting monthly for worship, fellowship, and discussions of faith.

The Otterville Worship Group welcomes everyone the last Sunday of each month at 2pm at Woodlawn Adult Community Centre, 225422 Main Street West in Otterville, Ontario, N0J 1R0. Contact Kerrie Gill at [kgill.mcq@gmail.com](mailto:kgill.mcq@gmail.com) or 519-532-2540 for more details.

## Warning: Poetry Ahead

*by Charles Follini, Halifax Monthly Meeting*

### POETRY

#### WARNING:

May contain  
Raw Emotion  
Dangerously compressed language  
Explosive images  
Layers  
and layers of  
meaning  
Speaking in metaphors  
Philosophical musings  
Observations of often overlooked details the authorities  
don't want you to notice  
Calls to rebellion, to overthrow injustice

It may use

white space

on the page  
(as much as the ink)  
to reach you  
The shape to our eye  
And sometimes rhymes, rhythm, sounds  
Or simple direct words

it may even (selectively) ignore spelling and grammar  
rules! !

YOU MAY BE CHANGED ... in a matter of minutes

## Tradition and Continuing Revelation (Part I)

George Fox and the Birth of the Quaker Movement *by Maida Follini*



*George Fox refusing to take the oath at Houlker Hall, A.D. 1663 (1863) by John Pettie R.A.*  
The prominent standing figure is George Fox, while Margaret Fell is sitting to his right. The justice at the end, stretching out his hand, is Justice Rawlinson.

*This is the first of a series of articles which will show how belief in continuing revelation allowed the faith of Quakers to progress, beyond the limitations of tradition. This installment will examine George Fox and the birth of the Quaker movement. In future articles we will see how Fox, Barclay, and Penn – religious revolutionaries in their day – were followed by Elias Hicks, John Greenleaf Whittier, and Rufus Jones, who testified to new insights into humankind's spiritual responsibilities.*

Christianity has seen many changes over two millennia. From Jesus' preaching to the spread of Christianity to Rome in the west and India in the east, different interpretations of Christianity were taught. The Apostles' Creed, written down in the 8th century, sought to solidify the Christian faith in Western Europe, and continues to be used today, with some revisions, in many denominations.

In the medieval era, authority in the church became lodged

in the Pope and the bishops, parallel to the secular authority of emperors, kings, and nobles. As the church grew in power and riches, so too did it grow in corruption and oppression of the poor and disempowered.

With the Reformation, Martin Luther, Calvin, and others challenged the legitimacy of papal power to decide the basis of Christian faith. In the 1500s, Protestants split off from the Catholic faith and a multitude of Protestant sects grew up on the European Continent and the British Isles.

In England, the Church of England became the state church, with the king at its head. Other sects were outlawed. Centering power in the ruler and his bishops was not so easy, however. Through the translation of the Bible into English, the common people could read the scriptures for themselves. And what they found was very different from the practices of the official church.

>>>>



>>> Jesus preached charity to the poor, visitation of the sick and the imprisoned, mercy to sinners, kindness to children, peace with both neighbours and enemies, and love to all. As ordinary people read the Bible, they disputed the practices and rituals developed by the hierarchy of the official church. The Calvinists, Baptists, Puritans, and others disputed some of the traditional Catholic and Church of England views. Papal and bishops' power was questioned, and traditional concepts such as baptism, salvation, original sin, and the divinity of Jesus were debated.

George Fox (1624–1691) was one of the questioners. He found it difficult to read the Bible without coming across inconsistencies. As a young man, Fox visited both Church of England priests and dissenting ministers, without finding satisfactory answers. While in this state of doubt, Fox heard a voice telling him, “There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition,” and, he writes, “When I heard it, my heart did leap for joy.”<sup>1</sup>

The voice that Fox heard convinced him that the basis of faith was not the Bible, or the ministers of the church, but direct communication from God, without the need of any intermediary. Fox interpreted this revelation in a radical way. Other outstanding religious leaders who received what they believed were revelations from God often felt they were uniquely privileged, specially chosen to be prophets. George Fox concluded that not only he, an ordinary villager, but others, whether rich or poor, could experience the divine Spirit and share in this as a common benefit. They only needed to be made aware of it.

The tenet that every person may receive revelations from God led to Fox's acceptance that ministry can come through any person – man, woman, or child, rich or poor, educated or not. From the very beginning of Quakerism, when Fox challenged a minister for forbidding a woman to speak in church, Quaker women have shared ministry with men, and the common people with the educated.<sup>2</sup>

Fox preached that the spirit of the divine was in every person:

“The Lord showed me, so that I did see clearly, that he did not dwell in these temples which men had commanded and set up, but in people's hearts... his people were his temple, and he dwelt in them.”<sup>3</sup>



*Quaker Meeting in London: A female Quaker preaches (c.1723), engraving by Bernard Picard (1673–1733).*

“Walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone; whereby in them you may be a blessing, and make the witness of God in them to bless you.”<sup>4</sup>

If there is that of God in everyone, it follows that all races, all nationalities, all classes, and all genders share a basic equality. Artificial distinctions, such as expensive clothing or honorary titles (e.g. Doctor, Reverend, or Squire), mask this basic equality. Therefore, Quakers did not use honorary titles, but simply people's names. Squire Jones became simply James Jones; King Charles was simply Charles Stuart.

If every person shares that of the divine within them, it follows that it would be a dreadful crime against God to injure or kill them. The Old Testament sixth commandment, “Thou shalt not kill,”<sup>5</sup> forbids us to kill one another. And Jesus's admonition to “Love your enemies,”<sup>6</sup> instructs us to live in peace, forbidding war.

Fox was not impressed by talk unsupported by action. He was quick to spot hypocrisy in supposedly religious people who talked one way and acted another. For Fox, the outer show of religion was worthless if the actions were not in accord with Christian belief. He wrote,

“I was to bring people off from all the world's religions which are vain, that they might know the pure religion: might visit the fatherless, the widows and the strangers, and keep themselves from the spots of the world.

1 p. 82 of *The Journal of George Fox*, edited by Rufus M. Jones, Capricorn Books, 1963. (First edited and published by Thomas Ellwood in 1694.)

2 p. 92 of Fox's *Journal*.

3 p. 76 of Fox's *Journal*.

4 pp. 288-9 of “Letter to Ministers, 1656, from Launceston Prison,” in *The Works of George Fox*, vol. 1 (Gould 1831). As quoted in Stuart Masters, “A Quaker Stew,” [aquakerstew.blogspot.com](http://aquakerstew.blogspot.com). This volume of *The Works of George Fox* (and several others) are also available from [Google Books](http://Google Books).

5 Exodus 20:13, King James Version (KJV).

6 Matthew 5:44, KJV.



Then there would not be so many beggars, the sight of whom often grieved my heart, as it denoted so much hard-heartedness among them that professed the name of Christ.”<sup>1</sup>

It was a person's actions, the way they lived their life, that made them Christians – not the expensive cathedrals, the showy ecclesiastical robes, or the elaborate ceremonies of the traditional religions.

Fox gathered followers around him and taught them that they too had the ability to receive divine revelations and to share their ministry with others. God's revelations had not ended with the death of Jesus and the passing of the Apostles and early Church Fathers.

The Bible, though an important guide, was not the final word on Christian belief. God's messages had never stopped! Religion was not only a matter of looking backward, to the scripture and the prophets of the past. It was a matter of looking for revelation here and now, in Fox's own age and in the future.

At this time in England, there were many small sects of people seeking true religion. Fox exhorted people to receive the Light with which Christ had enlightened them and witness to it. As his followers increased and set out to preach on their own, some form of monitoring was necessary to keep the newly convinced from straying off course.

Yet the old authority of bishop and priest was broken. How could Quakers be sure that those among them would speak true divine revelations and not what the Quakers called mere “notions” or “rantings”?

The Quakers developed a system in which the group monitored the individual's prompting. At first this was an informal use of questioning and reason, but it later became a discipline such as we now have – in which spiritual insights are tested against the views of the community and either encouraged or discouraged, depending on whether they seem in line with the teachings of Jesus.

Quakers became adept at the process of discernment, in which they held up to the Light ideas and propositions to test whether they were in accord with revealed truth. Both Bible texts and individuals' revelations were used to thresh out the true Light from spoken testimony.

The belief in continuing revelation, and in the Divine Light available to all people prevented the development of a fixed

Quaker creed. Faith was allowed to evolve, depending upon the varying conditions of the Quakers.

For George Fox, details such as baptism, standard prayers, and other church rituals were outward forms. He stripped away the material and outward parts of how faith was expressed. Thus, ‘church’ was the people, not the building. A worship service could go on outdoors, on a hill, or in an unadorned meeting house with no statues or stained-glass windows. Religion to Fox was a matter of the spirit, not the letter.

In the Gospel of Luke, there is a story of how Jesus was teaching in a synagogue on the Sabbath, when he saw a woman who was crippled with an infirmity for eighteen years. “She was bowed together and could in no wise lift up herself.”<sup>2</sup> And he laid his hands on her and she was healed.

But the official in the synagogue was indignant and criticized him, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, when no one was allowed to work! To Jesus, acting with charity, mercy, and love superseded rigid rules.

This generous and merciful Christianity was something George Fox sought to restore. Fox's view of humankind was optimistic. He stressed the belief that there was the spirit of the Divine dwelling in every person. He rejected the Calvinist and Puritan view that people were lost in depravity. Traditional preachers were, Fox thought, “in a rage, all pleading for sin and imperfection, and could not endure to hear talk... of a holy and sinless life.”<sup>3</sup> He believed people were redeemable and could be turned from sin.

For Fox, being a Christian meant living with the spirit displayed by Jesus, not by following empty rituals, but by acting with love for all people – and particularly to the poor, the disabled, and the vulnerable.

“We are a people that follow after those things that make for peace, love, and unity; it is our desire that others' feet may walk in the same, and do deny and bear our testimony against all strife, and wars, and contentions that come from the lusts that war in the members, that war against the soul, which we wait for and watch for in all people, and love and desire the good of all. ...

And now you are come up into the throne to be tried, we cannot but warn you in your day to do justly, and to love mercy, whereby the violence of the wicked might be stopped; which is for your own good and prosperity. And so we desire and also expect to have the liberty of our consciences and just rights, and outward liberties, as other people of the nation.”

— Margaret Fell, “Letter to the King On Persecution”(1660)

1 p. 104 of Fox's *Journal*.

2 Luke 13:11, KJV.

3 p. 85 of Fox's *Journal*.

## In Fox's Footsteps

### A Pilgrimage in England's Northcountry *by Sheila Havard, Coldstream Monthly Meeting*

Three years ago I conceived a plan to visit the '1652 country' – the birthplace of Quakerism in northern England, where George Fox and the Valiant Sixty itinerant Quaker preachers laboured and suffered in pursuit of their faith. In August I finally went.

In our world-weary age, it is hard to grasp the fervour and single-minded determination of early Quakers – and the turmoil and religious and political ferment of those times. Surely, I thought, this might be achieved by immersion in the historic Quaker Lancashire and Yorkshire sites. Experiential learning would supplement my meagre book learning.

The word 'pilgrimage' jarred slightly though. It conjures up the Camino and the Hajj, etc., and seems rather alien to Quakers. After all we do not believe in sacred spaces. Ever since George Fox shunned 'steeple houses,' we have felt free to worship anywhere. Nevertheless, travelling to places of historic significance illuminates the events with unparalleled vividness and may lead us to muse about the differences between 'then and now' and to ask what we can learn from the past.

The majority of our ten-person group were German Quakers. There are two hundred Quakers in Germany and they value their British Quaker connections. We were all fluent, in varying degrees, in German and English. Our leader, Gordon Matthews, was a fellow old scholar of Sidcot Friends School, like me, although our paths never crossed there.

Appropriately, I arrived at our headquarters at Swarthmoor Hall on foot, bearing my luggage along a footpath that crosses the stream into which George Fox was allegedly plunged by a hostile crowd. He is also said to have first come to the Hall on horseback via the treacherous Morecambe Bay quicksands.

The highlight of the tour was Pendle Hill, which was scheduled for our very first day. But before the ascent we naturally had to have tea and biscuits, in true British fashion. Never have I drunk so much tea as during these four days!

None other than Ben Pink Dandelion did the honours of welcoming us, in Clitheroe Meeting House. It was a joy to be treated to an introduction to early Quakers by Ben, a Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre lecturer who had delivered the Quaker Studies talks at Canadian Yearly Meeting in 2013. He even entertained us, as he had then, with his 'Quaker walk' – stumping along with a stern frown – and had us in stitches of laughter.

The early Quaker movement spread so fast that 1% of the English were Quakers within a short time. In Bristol it was even 10%. None of the others among the proliferation of sects at the time survived. Quakers were outright radicals and made no bones about telling anyone of another denomination that they alone (the Quakers) had got their theology right and everyone else was wrong. In view of this overweening and stubborn self-confidence, no wonder so many early Friends were jailed. When the initial enthusiasm and mission work petered out though, we were told insufficient energy was put into preserving early Quaker accomplishments.

From the base of Pendle Hill we slogged up a series of uneven stone slabs (most of us at least!). It was not clear whether this was the exact route Fox took "with much ado," but near enough! His diary reads "I saw the sea bordering upon Lancashire. From the top of this hill the Lord let me see in what places he had a great people to be gathered."

The view from the summit was indeed awe-inspiring – although, unlike George Fox, we could not catch a glimpse of the sea. Farms and small settlements dotted the landscape, which was flanked by the hills of the Lake District to the northwest and the Pennine range to the north. We settled down on tufts of heather, sheltered in a secluded hollow and lulled by a slight breeze, to a truly peaceful and gathered Meeting for Worship, until Gordon broke the silence by singing "Spirit of the Wind." The feeling of us gathered together for Meeting on Pendle Hill will abide with me.

Incidentally, Pendle Hill has a double meaning for me as my father ascended it during a pre-WWI Young Friends' peace pilgrimage. The pilgrims rambled through Yorkshire and Lancashire, from village hall to village hall, holding meetings in an attempt to counter increasing warmongering.

On day two, Meeting for Worship was at Brigflatts Meeting House, the oldest purpose-built Meeting House in the north of England. This Meeting House is a jewel. Built in 1675 in the style of local farmhouses of the period, this stone building is practical, simple and undecorated.

The interior features oak panelling and, like other neighbouring Meeting Houses, it has an upstairs gallery where women Friends held their business meetings. Downstairs, two rows of benches surround a small table set with a simple vase of flowers. There are the usual ministers' or facing benches on one side, with a panel of wood behind them. Some of these old Meeting Houses date back to before Quaker Meetings were allowed by law.



One possible reason for building them was to avoid the legal repercussions of holding Meeting in a private home, as householders might be held responsible and risk having their possessions confiscated or destroyed.

Our visit to Firbank Fell was unfortunately marred by driving rain and swirling mist. George Fox preached from a natural rock pulpit on the Fell to some

thousand Seekers, having refused to enter the chapel. Many were convinced and this event is now usually identified as the start of the Quaker movement. The yew tree under which he talked for three hours was broken into pieces when felled, and one piece was on display in nearby Yealand Meeting House.

The Kendal Quaker tapestry was our next port of call. This international project started in the 1980s and the idea came from Friends' children. Canada was represented by two panels, one depicting the Underground Railroad and one featuring Camp Neekaunis and Indigenous concerns. The beautiful stitching is done on a background of undyed natural wool of beige and brown colours.

On day three, we finally got to see Swarthmoor Hall itself, now a conference centre. Incidentally, we guests received royal treatment here from the Resident Friends and the kitchen staff.

Swarthmoor Hall was the family seat of the Fells and was purchased by London Yearly Meeting in 1951. Margaret Fell was the great organizer of the newly 'settled' Quaker Meetings. Her correspondence was voluminous and she particularly kept in touch with and cared for jailed Friends. Her husband Thomas tolerated his wife's activities but never became a Quaker. As a judge, his benevolent presence afforded significant protection to the budding movement and Quaker persecution became much more severe after he died.

Margaret was buried in the Sunbrick burial ground, where the remains of over two hundred early Friends lie in a grassy



Climbing Pendle Hill. Photo: Sheila Havard.

enclosure sloping down towards the nearby sea. There are no gravestones or markers of any description. Early Friends forbade gravestones as 'cumber.' As they could not be buried in consecrated land, Quakers were often laid to rest in a Friend's property.

A metal plaque above the muddy entrance to Sunbrick was the only official sign it was not just a pasture. The

simplicity of this patch of dishevelled grass, with its total lack of monuments, was deeply moving.

After we had glimpsed a BAE Systems installation from afar, where nuclear submarines are made, our return journey was blessed by a beautiful rainbow. It seemed an auspicious sign. Before dispersing, we held one final Meeting for Worship in the Swarthmoor Hall conference room, during which we revealed insights gained and future plans to realize them as part of a worship sharing session. Both Gordon and I expressed the desire to take life more slowly. To close he sang George Fox's words (1652):

"Ye have no time but this present time  
Ye have no time but this present time  
Therefore prize your time for the sake of your soul"

If you would like to go on a similar pilgrimage, visit [www.swarthmoorhall.co.uk/media/Documents/2018/Swarthmoor-Hall-In-Foxs-Footsteps-Guide.pdf](http://www.swarthmoorhall.co.uk/media/Documents/2018/Swarthmoor-Hall-In-Foxs-Footsteps-Guide.pdf). The cost for 2018, exclusive of airfare, was £500 (slightly less if you share a room). Every few years, a group of American Friends also does a tour of the '1652 country' based at Glenthorne, a Quaker centre in the Lake District.

If you would like to explore some relevant reading, I recommend *The Cradle of Quakerism: Exploring Quaker Roots in North West England* by Arthur Kincaird.

Finally, I would like to thank Education & Outreach and Coldstream Monthly Meeting for financially facilitating my participation in this pilgrimage.

## Archives Corner *by Joyce Howerda*

The Archives Committee is pleased that Bev Jackson and Katherine Smith have accepted positions of Co-Clerks for the coming year. Bev has been part of the Committee for almost twenty years and brings to the role thirty-six years of library experience.

Katherine is new to the Committee and has graciously agreed to step in, bringing with her management skills from her nursing career and her interest in Quaker and family history.

Letter from Walter Clayton to Joseph Clayton, 1944;  
Enclosure re: Helen (Crosbie) and John Stevenson<sup>1</sup>

'A New Installment of a Wonderful Old Story'

One day John Stevenson, a Civilian Public Service cook, visited Pacific Ackworth School.<sup>2</sup>

The teachers, Ruane Scott and Helen Crosbie, sent him outside and down the steps for some water for cooking. He realized, during the journey, that he had some furlough time to his credit. This he mentioned as he handed Helen the full teakettle along with, "I would dig a cesspool if you could get the brick."

Helen, being quick to pick up any offered help, talked to the school committee (as fine a group of parents as you could find) and it was decided to buy the brick. Thus John spent his furlough at Pacific Ackworth working on a cesspool. But John was not working alone. He had the help of nineteen little pair of hands, for each of the children shared in the work.

While he was working John noticed that Helen loved the children as she taught them. Helen, too, saw that John loved the youngsters. And the children reciprocated. Each said to himself, "It's nice to know such people."

The digging over, the work became harder; two pairs of strong hands were needed. Since Helen had one pair and John, another, she stayed after school one day and they built the wall. The wall ready to crown, they noticed that the sky was beginning to be tinged with pastels, so they dropped their work and sought a spot where they could stand side by side and watch.

1. Helen and John Stevenson joined with George and Mary Pollard to move from California and create the Argenta Quaker community in B.C.
2. This alternative school in Temple City, California, was founded in 1942 by Western unprogrammed Friends. They felt that children in the public schools were being pressured to support the war. (See David Raphael Israel's "Pacific Ackworth Friends School." [kirwani.blogspot.com/2006/11/pacific-ackworth-friends-school.html](http://kirwani.blogspot.com/2006/11/pacific-ackworth-friends-school.html))

She has traced her family back to the 1670s, with a Quaker thread running through the length of the family tree. And she hasn't finished yet!

Thanks to a donation by Margaret Chapman of her father Arthur Clayton's papers, June Pollard unearthed this beautiful account of the love story of John and Helen Stevenson, who are well-known to Friends across Canada.



Helen Crosbie and John Stevenson in the 1940s. Photos courtesy of David Stevenson.

Suddenly, in a moment of worship they felt God was near. As the sunset faded they stood quietly, delighted with the discovery that each enjoyed the richness of beauty and the warmth of living silence.

The cesspool built, the furlough over, John agreed to come back to school one afternoon a week to help with the

shop class and with the installation of the sink. Helen stayed after school to help and to do some of her own work. Occasionally, when the evening's work was done, they had time to talk a bit — each discovering that they were seeking to find God's way in the world, each trying to follow the way found.

As Spring changed into Summer they realized they were thinking together more as a unit than as a pair; they began to believe that maybe they belonged together. Each new discovery of mutual concern brought keen delight. When they found that they could laugh gaily at themselves and the world; when they felt a glow of kinship with John Woolman in his simple labors; when they discovered a mutual respect for small communities and a concern for the rigidity of large organizations; and, most of all, when each found the other trying to be honest in facing his own inadequacies, they knew "soon was the time" — was the time for taking their place in the community as a new social unit.

Thus it is that they are to be married in a public meeting held in the Friends Meetinghouse on the corner of Oakland and Villa in Pasadena at three o'clock in the afternoon on 12-18-1943.



## To believe in God?

by Eric Schiller, Ottawa Monthly Meeting

“There is no God” says Stephen Hawking in his latest (and last) book, *Brief Answers to the Big Questions*. Compare this to the paragraph with which he concludes his most famous book, *A Brief History of Time*:

“However, if we do discover a complete theory, it should in time be understandable in broad principle by everyone, not just a few scientists. Then we shall all, philosophers, scientists, and just ordinary people, be able to take part in the discussion of why it is that we and the universe exist. If we find the answer to that, it would be the ultimate triumph of human reason – for then *we would know the mind of God.*” (Emphasis mine)

I think the problem here is the definition of what we mean when we say the word “God.” If we limit our definition to the mythological concepts developed by the various religions, we can understand why Hawking made the first statement above. However, if we come at this in a different way, we may see why Hawking is talking about the “knowing the mind of God.”

Basically, Hawking spent all of his life exploring how the universe operates, yet he could not explain the why of it all. Let me try to explain.

Modern interstellar telescopes have enabled us to discover that the universe seems to be continually expanding. If we then move backwards in time, that is to a contracted universe, we logically come to a point where all this expansion began. Not only do we come to a point in time, but at that “time” the universe is very compacted – all mass, energy, and spacetime reduced to a small concentrated point.

This is impossible for our small minds to grasp, but to explain all of this, scientists have come up with the theory of an original “Big Bang.” This is the time at which the universe itself began, about 13.8 billion years ago.

So, there you have it. According to the latest scientific theory, there was a time when there was nothing, except perhaps near-infinite concentrated energy (In the beginning was the word...?) and then bingo, the universe exploded into being. Now all of this, like all scientific theories, could all change with the advent of additional data, but for now this is our best available explanation.

We know how this may have happened, but why it all happened continues to baffle us. Let us then redefine our view of God as *creative mystery*.

So this primordial energy is amazingly *creative*.

One of my favourite pursuits is to pour through Netter’s illustrated book of human anatomy. Each page reveals the phenomenal complexity of our human bodies. What drove the evolution of such complexity? Why is it so full of purpose? What is the life force that is driving this all on? And the pages of the *Atlas of Human Anatomy* do not even get into the question of spirit and consciousness that cannot be revealed on written pages.

The creative complexity revealed in our human bodies just describes one species inhabiting a lonely planet. This creative energy extends into the entire cosmos. Hawking spent much of his remarkable life trying to explain this cosmic structure. He explored black holes and other mysteries.

Finally, this creative energy is *mysterious*. Why? Why? Why? We cannot answer it. If the universe began with a big bang, why did it occur? What is its purpose? What was its origin? We don’t know, and we most certainly will never know.

God, *creative mystery*. I believe in it.



A group of campers at last year’s “Carry On Discovering” week in September.

Alice Preston, one of those pictured, says “If you weren’t in this group last year, it’s not too late to join us this September at Camp NeeKauNis! You need to be 55 years old at least, but there is a little wiggle room” – and there are other groups, which you can investigate at [www.neekaunis.org](http://www.neekaunis.org).

## Sonnets from the Don and Beyond

The Poetry of Prison Visiting *by Keith R. Maddock, Toronto Monthly Meeting*

Prison visiting is an opening into a different reality than the one we have become accustomed to. It is an introduction into a world where the familiar rules of human interaction and where the freedom to come and go as we please may not apply.

The Toronto Jail – also known as “The Don” – where I visited, was a remand centre, intended for short term custody prior to trial or release. There was little space or opportunity for prolonged visits. Yet these limitations often led us to organize our time more productively. We were not allowed to bring anything with us apart from a willingness to check our preconceptions at the door – and to bring the little light we have to share with others.

Visiting may involve a risk of confrontation with individuals who have committed violent crimes. Then again, it may show our conditioned attitudes and preconceptions in a fresh perspective. We may be invited as visitors, to pass through locked doors and security checks to meet people who might have been our friends and neighbours, were it not for their different life experiences.

Inmates, recognizing a stranger in their midst, would usually take the initiative to find out what we had to offer. While many visitors offered spiritual and religious programmes, others were more knowledgeable about addiction and mental health. My experience at that time led me to combine spiritual care with creativity in the arts.

On one occasion, a man calling himself J.J. requested a personal interview to show off some of his poems. First, he asked me if I listened to rap music. Sensing my hesitation, he asked for a minute to retrieve some lines from his store of memories. Then, in rhythmic rap style, he recited a familiar Shakespearean sonnet which begins:

“When in disgrace with fortunes and men’s eyes  
I all alone beweepe my outcast state  
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries  
And look upon myself and curse my fate  
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope  
Attired like him, like him with friends possessed,  
Desiring this man’s art and that man’s scope  
With what I most enjoy contented least...”

Yes, I thought, we may live in different worlds, but some form of mutual understanding was bringing us closer together. The words of Oscar Wilde came to mind. Reflecting on the effects of imprisonment in a letter from the Reading Gaol, Wilde wrote,

“Prison life with its endless privations and restrictions makes one rebellious. The most terrible thing about it is not that it breaks one’s heart – hearts are made to be broken – but that it turns one’s heart to stone.” (*De Profundis*)

Later, using a poetic form myself, I wrote in my journal:

### Locked

If my world were locked by night  
and all my days were numbered  
even to eternity...  
would I feel interred before my time,  
bereft of imagination and the hope of flight?  
If my world were barred and concrete-lined  
with a narrow aisle to walk by day  
and a box in which to sleep at night,  
would I still believe a god of love  
could exist beyond the stars that shine  
so far away, like memories of another life?  
Could I bear it, crouching in the darkness  
of unknowing, fearful to be born again  
before the time was right?

The evocative language of poetry may open surprising channels of communication between individuals from different backgrounds. I began to understand how difficult it might be for a man to break loose from the secure confines of prison life and to readjust to freedom upon release. Reflecting on a conversation we had about pre-release planning, I interpreted J.J.’s words this way:

### Release

If only this were a fresh beginning –  
stepping out just as the unseen hand  
lets in the winter air, I feel the judgment  
of the world upon my back again.  
The cross of living in the street,  
the freedom that is far from being free  
for one whose only notion of a home  
is the security of everyday routine.  
Roll back these clouds, grates steaming  
from the underworld of prison dreams,  
and when the doors roll open once again  
may the winter landscape be as it should be –  
a familiar road awaiting my first step  
toward the place where life began for me.

(2005)





The restored facade of the Don Jail in 2013, now serving as the administrative wing for Bridgepoint Health. Photo: Mark Watmough (Creative Commons, through [flickr](#).)

Dialogue between poets can become a duet when it contributes to self-understanding and transformation in both parties. And so it can unfold between any inmate and a sensitive visitor. I lost touch with J.J. for some time, until receiving this message a year or two later:

## Unanswered

Long have I kept the incense burning brightly,  
But to my soul no answer comes as yet,  
Until, sometimes in weakness, I half wonder  
If God His blessed promise can forget;  
Will He our cares and sorrows truly share,  
And safely keep the loved ones of our prayer?  
My path would easier be, but I am human,  
So very human, Lord, and short of sight,  
That often I lose my own way in the darkness;  
How then for others can I choose aright?  
You love them more than I, and so on You  
I lay a load too heavy far for me. Amen.

(Used with permission from J.J. Vaughn, 2007)

This visit was an opening in faith and understanding for both of us. I only hope there may be future openings to resume our conversation. Hopefully other Friends will have similar opportunities to discover the outreach potential of their faith journeys by sharing their creativity as prison visitors.

## GLEANINGS & QUOTATIONS

“In our age, the road to holiness necessarily passes through the world of action.”

— Dag Hammarskjöld, second Secretary General of United Nations

“Courage doesn’t always roar. Sometimes it is the little voice at the end of the day that says ‘I’ll try again tomorrow.’”

— Dennis Edney  
(Lawyer for Omar Khadr) on “After Guantanamo,”  
CBC Radio *Ideas*, 1 February 2017.

# A Song for Home

## A Little Piece of Friendly History *by Beverly Shepard, Hamilton Monthly Meeting*

A number of years ago, Yonge Street Half-Yearly Meeting was held at Toronto Monthly Meeting with the theme of the meaning of home. This was a lovely occasion, with Friends sharing their ideas of home in many ways.

In the morning we had a worship sharing circle where we each spoke of what home meant to us. One attender, Michael O'Regan, said that this was a sensitive question for him, as he had been on his own since some time in his teens and had been on the move most of his adult life. Home was a slippery concept. But his conclusion, on thinking about it, was that what made a place a home for him was playing the music he loved on his stereo. I think all of us were moved by his ministry.

In the afternoon we were to divide into small groups to consider the idea of home in various and quite different ways. For instance, one group was to write a letter to the Ontario Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing about the need for greater provision for the homeless.

There were other topics to be considered in small groups, but those that had been arranged ahead of time by Toronto Monthly Meeting Friends were probably going to be insufficient to accommodate the large number of attenders at this particular Half-Yearly Meeting. So organizers asked whether anyone else would like to suggest and lead a new group. Friends who know me won't be surprised to learn that I suggested a group to write a song about home.

When we gathered in our groups after lunch, the songwriting group was of a good size and very keen. Elizabeth Block, another Quaker songwriter, and I sort of shared the leadership.

She had a guitar along, so we were able to play nicely with tunes and harmonies. The lyrics needed to come first, and the group talked about the various ideas of home that had been raised in the morning. It was clear that all of us had found Michael's witness particularly poignant.

The song came together, first the words, capturing the spirit of our morning's sharing, then, with humming and "la, la, la" and fitting words to notes, the melody. When we had our song, we sang it together several times, in order to be ready to perform it when the large group reassembled.

Back in the meeting room, we heard the varied and impressive products of the other groups' discussions. Our group presented last. We sang our song, and as we did, I kept glancing at Michael. He sat motionless and expressionless, and when we ended, to the appreciation of the assembled Friends, he was still sitting unmoving, staring unfocused in front of him.

I was worried. The session ended, and I went straight to Michael, wondering what we'd done to him and whether I could fix it. I sat down beside him and said, "Michael, I'm so sorry – have we upset you?"

He looked up and said, "No, no – it's the best thing that's ever happened to me."

Michael died a few years ago. I think of him often. I hope that he is home.

Here's the song.

### Home Is Where the Heart Is

Friends

Some folks need to have their own space, with their own things all a-round; some are home 'most  
a - ny place, to one spot they're not bound. Home is where the heart is; that's - what peo - ple say,  
but for me, home will al - ways be a - ny - where I hear my mu - sic play.  
a - ny - where I hear my mu - sic play... a - ny - where I hear my mu - sic play.

### Verse 2

(Needs a few extra notes in measure 2)

Home is where you feel familiar,  
where you welcome others at your door,  
where you care for them and they care for you  
and that's what home is for.

Home is where the heart is –  
that's what people say,  
but for me, home will always be  
anywhere I hear my music play.



## REFLECTIONS

### How Good Could Business Meeting Be?

by David Cheatley

Could it be like a gathered Meeting for Worship? It is a Meeting for *Worship* for Business, after all.

Should we not feel touched by the Light, gathered into unity and the embodiment of love when we leave business meetings?

Does our feeling of responsibility to reach consensus on *all* the agenda items block the Light?

“Consensus is the product of willfulness. We *will* ourselves to a decision. Sense of the Meeting is a product of *willingness*, in which we allow ourselves to be led...

Consensus involves a process in which we promulgate, argue, and select or compromise ideas until we can arrive at an acceptable decision. When we seek the Sense of the Meeting the decision is a by-product. It happens along the way. The purpose of seeking the Sense of the Meeting is to gather ourselves in unity in the presence of the Light.”

— Barry Morley, *Beyond Consensus: Salvaging Sense of the Meeting*, Pendle Hill Pamphlet 307 (1993).

If we are to be led to the Light, we need to release our emotions and opinions about the agenda items. Some Friends

can do this when speaking to an item. Some Friends cannot. All Friends need to be heard with love and with no attempt to analyze, criticize, judge, or correct.

Friends then need to seek the long view. Seeking the Light *through* the items on the agenda is the object of Business Meeting. Creating a minute on every agenda item in fixed amount of time is not the goal.

Often agenda items are a small cog in a much larger process. The process is to let the Light guide us.

Creating a minute that Friends who are present don't disagree with is not the purpose of the process. In seeking the long view we are not working on consensus or a solution to a problem, we are waiting to be led to the Light through the item.

If we are to be gathered into unity, we must strive to be open to the Light on every agenda item.

We must allow ourselves to release our emotions, seek the long view, and wait for the Light to be given.

We must hold *all* Friends in the Light and wait in silence for the Light to speak through us. This is why we meet.

## Leave a Legacy

“We get by on very little but I’ve always thought it’s important to support what you believe in. Sometimes you can make a big difference in little ways. I’m not a Quaker but I’ve always been impressed by Quakers. As far as I can tell, for the little funding you get, you definitely make a difference. That’s why I’m including CFSC in my will.” – David Rothkop

Contact Tasmin at 416-920-5213 or [tasmin@quakerservice.ca](mailto:tasmin@quakerservice.ca) to discuss leaving a legacy of support for your values by making a gift to Canadian Friends Service Committee in your will.

## Representative Meeting, November 2018

*by David Summerhays, Montreal Monthly Meeting*

Representatives from each Quaker meeting from across Canada gathered for 2018's fall Representative Meeting in the Fern Street Meetinghouse in beautiful Victoria, BC. For those who would like more details on the business, the minutes are available ([quaker.ca/business/rm-document](http://quaker.ca/business/rm-document)).

This report has more to do with the highlights and the spiritual element of the weekend from my point of view, with some consultation. This report is divided into practical reflections and spiritual ones.

### Nuts-and-Bolts

The subject of money hung over this meeting. Many Quaker committees have been living off Renewal funds meant to reinvigorate Quakers across Canada. In the next few years when many of those funds run out, our current expenses will be larger than our income by \$130,000 per year – meaning no more reserve fund within four years at current spending levels.

This created a sharp yo-yo from this summer at Yearly Meeting in Session, when we discussed extending the Secretary position from another year. Quakers in Canada at the moment have big ambitions without the fundraising to cover it.

We were also reminded that our Monthly Meetings, Canadian Yearly Meeting, and Canadian Friends Service Committee have separate revenue streams. We learned that Monthly Meetings donated about \$130,000 to Yearly Meeting last year, while we had only 185 individual donors, who averaged \$355 per donation.

All in all, regular donations to CYM are down from previous years. We were informed that we need to both increase our



David Summerhays at Representative Meeting 2018. Photo: David Cheatley.

contributions individually and as Meetings, and reduce our expenditures significantly. At Representative Meeting, we responded by agreeing to not follow through with hiring the Secretary for a fourth year<sup>1</sup> and struck a committee to consider our financial contributions to non-Quaker bodies.

A few other nuts-and-bolts highlights:

- The Education and Outreach (E&O) committee has decided to use a new model of working groups. When three or more people are interested in a topic, a working group is created for those members to focus on that work. Members would be much appreciated for any of the following working groups:

- Resources for children and families;

- Educational materials;

- Communications liaison between Publications & Communications and Education & Outreach;

- Resources for isolated Friends; and

- Religious education.

- Personnel policy is improving, with better compliance with the law.
- The Organization and Procedure manual will publish its updates on [quaker.ca](http://quaker.ca) as they are completed.
- Next year's Rep Meeting will try meeting online in fall 2019 to approve a budget, with a fuller in-person meeting in early 2020.

<sup>1</sup> This means the position will end at Yearly Meeting in August 2020.





Beverly Shepard (CYM Clerk), Sheila Havard, and Joyce Holwerda in the foyer of Victoria Friends Meeting House during Representative Meeting. Photo: David Cheatley.

## Spiritual Element

Did the Spirit move this Rep Meeting? For the most part, not much. The only bout of real ministry of the day stemmed from a letter from Vancouver intended to be received without needing a minute. As beautiful as the ministry was, many in the room felt that the entire subject shouldn't have been open to the floor and that no minute was to be crafted besides receiving the letter. Other moments of ministry and humour were there, but felt a bit rare.

And so it was that the day ended with the program committee report, which was quite simple: the Clerk reported that for the past five years, CYM has lacked ministry in its business meetings. Like Jesus on the cross, one can ask, "Why has the Spirit forsaken us?"

Representative Meeting is a strange beast. It is hard to describe the warm atmosphere and how good it is to see these wise and weighty Quakers who are a second family to me. It is also hard to describe the way the air is sucked out of the room the moment the business begins.

I am no purist – I think the weightiness of the meeting should reflect the weightiness of the business. Practical items don't require the solemnity of a funeral. But the Spirit was not with us and the words were little rooted in love, even from members who love our Society and love each other. It is a strange phenomenon, but it is part of my faith to be part of it and to work with it.

The reflection I took away from Representative Meeting of 2018 is that business meeting is not easy – it is easier to pray alone, to care for others, to hold them in the Light than it is to talk about money and personnel policy with spiritual grounding.

One final thing deserves mention: When the business was over, as is our Quaker way, eyes were rolled, complaints were aired, sarcasms were uttered – and then we ate and loved each other again, our hearts renewed, our rancor (mostly) forgotten, the past in the past (mostly). The hospitality from Victoria Friends was impeccable and generous and that reminded us who we are.

Our patience had been tested and I left the Meeting House that Saturday evening thinking that we came out victorious.

## “How should I support CYM?

*Through donating to my Meeting, or individually?”*

At November 2018 Representative Meeting, those attending passed a minute to ask Monthly Meetings to consider increasing their contribution to Canadian Yearly Meeting (CYM). This is one way to increase Canadian Yearly Meeting's income. Increasing individual contributions is another.



Getting some support at Canadian Yearly Meeting 2018. Photo: Cam Fraser.

Contributions Committee has heard that it's not necessarily clear to CYM members how they can discern their contribution to Canadian Yearly Meeting. Some have wondered if it is 'right order' to be asked to donate both as a member of a Monthly Meeting and as an individual.

In many ways, it does not matter whether funds come from an individual or a local Meeting: the individual still receives the tax deduction and CYM receives funds. However, as Quakers have a strong commitment to follow Spirit through right relationships, it is important for members to know that there are good reasons to consider donating to CYM both through their Meeting and individually.

The benefits of CYM are available to both Monthly Meetings and individual Friends, after all, so it makes sense for members to consider donating separately, even if their Monthly Meeting sends funds to CYM.

When you donate to your Monthly Meeting, you support its discernment process in allocating funds. CYM is extremely grateful for the funds that are submitted through Monthly Meetings and we recognize that it is in right ordering for Monthly Meetings to support their Yearly Meeting in such a fashion. However, we also recognize that Monthly Meetings must meet their own responsibilities first – for upkeep or rental of their premises, and other essential expenditures to maintain the Monthly Meeting. Their ultimate responsibility

is to ensure their Meeting continues and members of Monthly Meetings are called to ensure they do their part.

Monthly Meetings do not have the ultimate responsibility to maintain CYM: the members of CYM have that responsibility, as individuals. The truth is that support from Monthly Meetings is simply not sufficient to maintain CYM

even with the proposed increase. Meetings have been asked to increase their donation by 10%. That is very helpful, but not enough to make the budget sustainable.

Our Committee focuses on individual Members – helping create methods and information to best enable increased individual contributions. The role of Canadian Yearly Meeting is often invisible and it can be hard to understand why members need to donate to maintain its existence.

Ultimately, Canadian Yearly Meeting exists to enable relationships. And after all, the foundation of Quakerism is relationships: relationship to the Spirit within us all and relationship to other Quakers.

“Through CYM, I find I meet inspiring people. You can discover untold riches amongst people you have not met before.”\*

Canadian Yearly Meeting is what allows us to have relationships with other Quakers across the country. National and regional gatherings, along with engaging in committee work, all give us an opportunity to ‘be Quaker with Quakers.’ This can in turn foster our relationship to the sacred.

“My sense of being a Quaker gets nurtured most when I'm in Meetings for Worship with other CYM Friends. ... At my first CYM gathering in session I felt as if I went through a layer of common air, to a sacred space.

\* All quotations are from members of CYM and shared with their permission.



The beauty shook me. Gathering with a large number of Friends is the most solid sacred space I've ever gone into."

Members have consistently told us that their Friendships – 'capital F' friendships – are a major joy they derive from their commitment to Quakerism. Calculating the worth of those relationships is impossible. So we ask members to consider the relationships with Friends you have outside of your Meeting when thinking of supporting CYM as an individual.

"When I receive *The Canadian Friend* and meet Friends in large groups, I am inspired to feel the breadth of similar people across the country."

There are also many ways CYM supports and furthers the work and witness of Canadian Quakers on a national stage, internationally, online, and among wider Quaker and religious bodies. Most of our work is done by volunteers, with no paid ministers, but this work still requires certain financial resources and some staff support.

As we do this CYM work, we have an opportunity to put our ideals and faith into practice, relating to one another in peace, equality, simplicity, and truth – even as we attend to practical

and sometimes vexatious questions.

"Our process where people disagree – it's magical. We are at our most powerful being in Meeting for Worship for Business with Friends across the country."

We ask members to reflect on the benefit of having a national Quaker organization. And, if you can afford it, please consider contributing financially.

To help put CYM on solid footing, contributions would ideally be ongoing regular donations, as fits each person's financial condition. All support is appreciated.

Over the next while, Contributions Committee will present members with information about why and how to contribute to Canadian Yearly Meeting. Please let us know what we can do to help you understand various aspects of our beloved Canadian Quaker community.

Contributions Committee

George Web, Fran McQuail, Kerry MacAdam, and Penni Burrell (Clerk)

[contributions-clerk@quaker.ca](mailto:contributions-clerk@quaker.ca)

## Canadian Charitable Status for Monteverde Friends School

*by Kenna Manos, Monteverde Monthly Meeting (Costa Rica) and Halifax Monthly Meeting*

Monteverde Friends School (MFS) is thrilled to announce that we can now receive donations and provide tax receipts for Canadian donations (of more than \$20). This can be done through our partner foundation in Canada, the Monteverde Cloud Forest Educational Foundation. Many of you will know Steve Abbott, Don Tanner, or Susie Washington-Smyth, who are among the directors.

MFS, a small bilingual Quaker School in the middle of the Costa Rican Cloud Forest, was founded in 1951 by Quaker families who left the U.S. in search of a non-militaristic society.

Thanks to its strong ethics, excellent curriculum, and the dedication of the community,



Monteverde Friends School students working on a garden project.  
Photo: Susie Washington-Smyth

the school has grown to its present size of 120 students, from pre-K through Grade 12.

Most of our students are Costa Rican and native Spanish-speakers, although some students from North America join us on exchange or study abroad programmes.

More than half our local students receive significant financial aid, as we are firmly committed to serving the community – in fact, the school is the major ministry of our Monthly Meeting.

Thanks to the generous donations of our supporters, all students who wish to receive a Quaker education can be admitted, regardless of financial circumstances.

For more information about MFS, including how to make a charitable donation, please visit our website at [www.mfschool.org](http://www.mfschool.org).

## Atlantic Half-Yearly Meeting

### The Inaugural Meeting of Atlantic Half-Yearly Meeting *by Ellen Helmuth (Clerk)*

The first Meeting for Business for the newly established Atlantic Half-Yearly Meeting took place at Open Sky Farm in Upper Sackville, NB, on November 10, 2018. Friends travelled from Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and New Brunswick to celebrate and strengthen the bonds of our faith tradition.

The day was fraught with inclement weather, so we were grateful for safe travel for all. We were also so happy to once again have the presence of Susan Holtz with us. She returned to the Atlantic region last fall after living in Ontario for twenty years. A potluck lunch provided wonderful food and camaraderie. And as usual, we ran out of time to just sit and visit and have conversation.

We shared the thoughtful greetings sent by Yonge Street Half-Yearly Meeting and from CFSC, delivered by Dick Cotterill.

To Friends in Atlantic Half-Yearly Meeting  
From Friends in Yonge Street Half-Yearly Meeting:

We send our greetings and welcome you warmly to the growing family of Half-Yearly Meetings in Canada. Indeed, we want to assure you that gathering together as a Half-Yearly Meeting is just as rewarding as gathering as a less formal group, with the added satisfaction of participating in the business of Quakers in Canada after the manner of Friends. We feel sure that Atlantic Half-Yearly Meeting will be valued both by Friends who are part of it and by Friends across Canadian Yearly Meeting.

In the Light,  
Beverly Shepard and Ruth Pincoe,  
Co-Clerks, Yonge Street Half-Yearly Meeting

We covered the basics in our Meeting for Business: approving officers, closing and opening bank accounts, forming the planning committee for our spring gathering, considering our web presence, and sharing our visions for outreach. Our intent was to keep our slate simple, only adding work to do as way opens and we are led.

There was enthusiasm for the work to be done and folks cheerfully stepped up to fill the needed spaces. We are well on our way to fulfilling our mandate for Friends in this Half-Yearly Meeting.

The Half-Yearly Meetings of Canadian Yearly Meeting are composed of the members of the constituent Monthly Meetings, Worship Groups, and individual Friends in a geographical area. They are designed to bring together Friends from a wider area in a bond of fellowship for inspiration and counsel, and to provide an opportunity for united consideration of matters that concern the Society. Their purpose is to strengthen the life and work of Meetings and Friends groups in the area and to facilitate communication between Friends in that area and the Yearly Meeting. In a country as large as Canada, the Half-Yearly Meetings perform a valuable function of creating and sustaining the bonds of fellowship.  
— Canadian Yearly Meeting's *Operation & Procedure*

**Ellen Helmuth, Clerk of Atlantic Half-Yearly Meeting, reads greetings from Yonge Street Half-Yearly Meeting. (From l-r, Daphne Davey, Keith Helmuth, Ellen Helmuth, Martha McClure, Carol Bradley, Doris Calder). Photo: Penni Burrell.**





## Western Half Yearly Meeting Epistle

Friends gathered in Camp Valaqua for Western Half Yearly Meeting over the Thanksgiving long weekend. It was a deeply raw, healing and informative weekend, which focused on spiritual growth, family, and Truth and Reconciliation.

As Friends trickled in from all over the western half of the Canada, there was an overwhelming spirit of family, both in the more formal sense, and the family represented by loving familiarity and conviviality. Many young families attended our Meeting. At our greatest number, we had four babies, whose attendance at Meeting was welcomed as a reminder of the Light we came here in search of.

Friendships spanning decades and those spanning short hours make up the spiritual fellowship that unite us Friends. Quaker Meetings are our respite from the challenges of the greater world, and in our pursuit of spiritual growth, intense vulnerability and honesty are required. This openness is the catalyst for strong bonds, both with the community and with our individual fellows.

The human bonds that are the strongest can leave us the most wounded. This year, our community lost some important F/friends who were loved deeply. Grieving with the support of one's spiritual fellowship is an important step for some in our community. This meant opening up some of the wounds in hopes that we can grow with the strength of remembrance and Spirit in a meeting for memorial.

With this same spirit of healing, and carried by the theme of

vulnerability and grief, our special interest group on healing in interpersonal relationships was the vehicle for honesty and growth for many members of our community. As we heal as individuals, we are more able to work on healing in the community.

Barbara Heather and Rachel Yordy each shared presentations about their research on what we could do both as individuals and as small Quaker communities to heal the intense damage done by ongoing and ancestral violence against the Indigenous people of the communities and country we live in.

Other highlights were the exceptional food organized by a talented Friend, the traditions of balancing and Family Night, and special interest groups that were held on the topics of #Metoo and Right Relations, healing with Indigenous communities, and parenting today with respect to sex and sexuality. The children were a part of making stone soup, and enjoyed both the foosball and ping pong table that Camp Valaqua has. Some Friends mentioned that they felt a deep spiritual connection to the land, and some went on walks where they appreciated the possibility of non-human spirits being attenders of Meeting.

Our spiritual journey is process, not outcome-oriented. In one weekend we haven't healed all of the wounds of a trying world, but we're all coming out of the weekend having grown, and ready to take on more challenges in our lives and communities. We have felt the Light in ourselves and in each other, and are once again ready to head back to our complex and sometimes difficult lives.

### THREE TALKS ON RELIGION & QUAKERISM

It's been a long time coming, but audio recordings of the three talks Jeff Dudiak gave at Yonge Street Half-Yearly Meeting (in October 2017) are now available at: [quaker.ca/resources/audio-and-video](http://quaker.ca/resources/audio-and-video).

The three talks are titled: "Does Religion Have a Future?" "The Essence of Quakerism" and "The Future of Quakerism."

Jeff is an Associate Professor of Philosophy at The King's University College in Edmonton. He grew up in a Friends' Meeting in the Niagara Peninsula, which declined to join Canadian Yearly Meeting (CYM) at the time of unification in 1955 because it feared that CYM would not be sufficiently Christocentric. He has also been a member of Edmonton Monthly Meeting, which is part of CYM, for many years.

As such, he has said "I am very interested in inter-Quaker issues, and one of the things I do is to try and identify issues on which Friends of different kinds have divergent, and often antagonistic, views, and to try and understand what is going on there, and how that might be more fruitfully addressed."



## ABOUT

*The Canadian Friend* is the magazine of Canadian Yearly Meeting (CYM). It is published three times a year under the care of the Publications & Communications Committee ([pubcom-committee@quaker.ca](mailto:pubcom-committee@quaker.ca)). It is funded by Meetings and members of CYM, with assistance from funds administered by the Yearly Meeting, to further the work and witness of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Canada.

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Speak to your community; be part of the conversation among Canadian Friends. Please submit articles between 500-1200 words long. Submissions on any topic of potential interest to Canadian Friends are warmly welcomed, as are photos, art, and suggestions and submissions for "Meet a Friend" (an interview of a Quaker) or "Gleanings & Quotations" (i.e. funny, interesting, or inspiring quotations).

The next issue of *The Canadian Friend* is scheduled for July, with a final due date of **6 May 2019**. The due date for our Autumn issue is **30 September**.

**Submit to:** [editor@quaker.ca](mailto:editor@quaker.ca) or Canadian Friend Editor c/o CYM Office, 91A Fourth Ave., Ottawa, ON, K1S 2L1.