

# THE CANADIAN FRIEND



**QUAKER NEWS & THOUGHT**

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## ABOUT

*The Canadian Friend* is the magazine of Canadian Yearly Meeting (CYM), published three times a year. It is paid for by donations and funds administered by the Yearly Meeting, to further the work and witness of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Canada.

**Any** interested member or regular attender of affiliated Quakers Meetings in Canada can be added to the **group subscription** at no cost. Donations to defray the magazine's costs are deeply appreciated from those with financial means to do so.

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## Dear Canadian Friend,

I read Bert Horwood's explanation of the Light with much appreciation,<sup>1</sup> but must respectfully disagree. The Light can, on rare occasion, manifest itself as an actual visual image seen with the inward eye, though it is also much more than that. It is an experience and, once it manifests, can never be forgotten.

Christianity in its earliest days was a mystical path. It is Protestantism that removed the mystery. The Eastern Orthodox

Church did not, nor Catholicism. Equating the Mystery as a possible absurdity is unfortunate. The Light, in my experience, is both a metaphor and a fact.

Sincerely,

**Kirsten Ebsen**

**Vancouver Monthly Meeting  
(an isolated Friend by choice)** 🐾

<sup>1</sup> "Listening to the Light: Absurdity or Mystery?" from the Spring 2022 edition (118.1)



## Name those Friends!

Sent by Rose Marie Cipryk

"I just came across this photo – which I like a lot – from Rep Meeting at Toronto Monthly Meeting, May 2004. I only can name Margaret Ford at the far left."

*If you can help identify more Friends, feel free to send their names to [editor@quaker.ca](mailto:editor@quaker.ca).* 🐾



### Welcoming our new Office Coordinator

Join us in welcoming Eva Lacelle, the new Office Coordinator for Canadian Yearly Meeting (CYM). She will be assisting CYM with the various office transitions we are undergoing.

Eva brings many years of experience working in finance and office administration. She spent more than 30 years as an Office Administrator in the Physics Department at Carleton University. She worked closely with graduate students, managed research grants, and oversaw the departmental operating budget. Eva has had the privilege to work as part of the team tasked with the expansion of the Nobel Prize-winning Sudbury Neutrino Observatory into a world-class, underground research facility now known as SNOLAB.

In her spare time, Eva enjoys cycling, kayaking and all things “crafty.”

Eva began working in July, and can be reached by emailing [cym-office@quaker.ca](mailto:cym-office@quaker.ca). 📧



### Welcoming our new General Secretary-Treasurer

Canadian Yearly Meeting is pleased to announce that Tasmin Rajotte will be our new General Secretary-Treasurer, a new position for our Quaker organization, which began 23 February 2022.

Tasmin is well-known to Canadian Friends. She is a member of Ottawa Monthly Meeting and currently attends Peterborough Monthly Meeting. She has previously served in several roles for the Canadian Friends Service Committee, including representative for the Quaker International Affairs Programme (which was laid down in 2011). She has over 24 years of experience working in the not-for-profit sector, including leadership for projects, teams, and organizational change. She brings a wealth of experience from strategic planning, budgeting, and human resources management to fundraising.

We are delighted to have her assist us with our changes and sustainable transformation.

Tasmin can be reached by emailing [cym-secretary@quaker.ca](mailto:cym-secretary@quaker.ca). 📧



# News from Peterborough Monthly Meeting

*by Martha Butler, Peterborough Monthly Meeting*

Not to be done in by COVID, Peterborough Monthly Meeting met in Friends' gardens. After summer, we met in the foyer of the Theatre Guild and in a hybrid meeting via Zoom. Recently, we found a more permanent place to meet for hybrid meetings at a seniors' centre: Activity Haven.

Some are not comfortable with Zoom, and some don't like to meet in person. It will be good to see one and all when this virus decides to leave! Being able to attend CYM via Zoom was appreciated.

We remind ourselves regularly of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. We have frequent opportunities to attend events hosted by the Indigenous community and by others, such as ecumenical justice organization KAIROS. There are three Indigenous nations here: Curve Lake First Nation, Hiawatha First Nation, and Alderville First Nation. Students from as far away as Australia study Indigenous Studies courses at Trent University. Some Friends attended Indigenous ceremonies and vigils with prayers for the people in Ukraine.

Ever-generous, Indigenous leaders have worked at letting us know their history, which has often been misrepresented by settlers. We have heard from Chief Dave Mowat of Alderville First Nation about the history of harvesting wild rice in local lakes. This practice had been guaranteed in a treaty but, like many other rights, it was violated by settlers. I found Chief Mowat's presentation fascinating, particularly as he harvests wild rice himself. There has been a lot of discord with cottagers over this treaty-guaranteed right.

Our Meeting held a games night over Zoom. One part involved sharing one's background and preferences. As a fairly new attender, I liked having a chance to get to know some Friends.

The war in Ukraine has given rise to some disturbing questions. Some want to send a letter written by CFSC to Minister Anita Anand and Minister Melanie Joly, suggesting that sending weapons is not the best way to defend that country. As a recent attender and also a longtime supporter of peace, I am trying to learn about this. I thank some local Friends for helping me to know about Friends' history regarding the Peace Testimony.

These are a few of our efforts to stay connected during these times. 🌱🌿





# Pelham Quaker Cemetery

## An Appeal & a History

### Greetings to Friends near and far,

On behalf of the Pelham Executive Meeting (PEM) cemetery committee, we are writing to our members and attenders – as well as others who may be interested – asking for donations towards the care of our heritage cemetery. Attached is a history of the cemetery.

Due to deterioration of trees and gravestones in the cemetery, we applied a few years ago for – and gratefully received – a grant from the Samuel Rogers Trust Fund for restoration or laying down of damaged stones, improved signage, and some significant arborist work. Through the years, our small Meeting has been able to cover the costs for seasonal grass-cutting. Recently, however, because of the great age of the trees and their vulnerability to storm damage, further significant work has been needed. PEM has dipped deeply into our finances to do this work and know that there will continue to be needs. Given the venerable age of remaining trees, we hope to replant and care for some new trees in coming years.



Thus, we are asking you to consider a donation towards the perpetual care of this historic Quaker cemetery under the ownership of Pelham Executive Meeting. The following link will take you to our donation page: [niagaraquakers.org/donate](https://niagaraquakers.org/donate).

Alternatively, you can mail donations to Cathy Jolliffe, PEM Treasurer, 425 McAlpine Ave N, Welland, ON L36 1T4.

Many thanks for any help you are able to give,  
Bev Jackson and Lisa Smith,  
Pelham Executive Meeting cemetery committee  
[niagaraquakers@gmail.com](mailto:niagaraquakers@gmail.com)

### A History of the Pelham Quaker Cemetery

This historic cemetery is located on the southeast corner of Effingham Road and Welland Road in the Town of Pelham.

It is owned and maintained by Pelham Executive Meeting (PEM), which was originally called Pelham Monthly Meeting from 1799 to 1911. Pelham was the first Monthly Meeting in Canada, established in October 1799 by Quakers migrating from New York, New Jersey, and the Bucks and Lancaster Counties of Pennsylvania. They were instrumental in establishing the foundations for education, peace, and justice in Canada.

The original colonial owner, Samuel Taylor, who was granted 200 acres by the Crown in 1798, conveyed the land for the cemetery to the Religious Society of Friends. A log Meeting House was built there in 1807. It was replaced by a larger frame structure in 1875 called “The White Meeting House.” It was moved to Fenwick in 1929 and is now home to a model railroad club.

A separation in the nineteenth century led to a group of worshippers establishing a Meeting House at the site of Pelham Evangelical Friends Church on Haist Road in Fonthill. This Friends Church is not affiliated with Pelham Executive Meeting, the owners of the cemetery, nor with Canadian Yearly Meeting.

The Quaker Meeting has cared for the cemetery through more than two centuries. It was closed for further burials in 2009. PEM has a mowing contract agreement to keep the site looking presentable. Occasionally volunteer work bees have been held to contain peripheral growth. The last one in 2008 included members of PEM, a cemetery neighbour, and members of Pelham Evangelical Friends Church. PEM members now are few and unable to join in such tasks.

Pelham is now referred to as an Executive Meeting, since the business of the meeting is discussed at the call of the Clerk rather than monthly. It meets for worship on the first and third Sundays at 11am at the Niagara Arts Centre in St. Catharines. During the COVID pandemic, meetings have been held by Zoom. 🌿

# archives

## re-opening

The Archives Committee is thrilled to announce that the Canadian Quaker Library & Archives (CQLA) has officially re-opened after an extended closure! On May 2, 2022, the committee held a virtual event on Zoom to celebrate this re-opening and to encourage Meetings, committees, CYM bodies, and individual Friends to deposit any materials that they may have been holding on to.

After an introduction to the Archives Committee members and the new archivist, a brief history of the CQLA itself was given. The 1984 donation of materials from Arthur G. Dorlandy (author of the 1968 book *The Quakers in Canada: A History*) was instrumental in the creation of the archives. In the following years thousands of other documents, books, oral histories, photographs, and even physical objects concerning Canadian Quakers have been collected and curated.

The CQLA owes a great deal of thanks to Pickering College, where both the Arthur G. Dorland Library and the Vault Collection are currently located. These are both climate-controlled rooms, which helps to keep these precious documents safe and easily accessible. While Pickering College is still limiting visitors due to COVID-19 concerns, we are hopeful that in the near future visitors will be allowed to physically access the archives once again.

While Friends cannot currently visit the archives in person, we would love to share some other ways in which we are serving the Quaker community. Part of our re-opening event touched on our Deposit Guidelines. These guidelines (available on our website at [quaker.ca/archives/research-inquiries-and-visits/deposit-guidelines](https://quaker.ca/archives/research-inquiries-and-visits/deposit-guidelines)) serve as general instructions for materials that Meetings, committees, and individuals can send to the archives.

For example, we hold minutes with backup documents, membership lists, marriage and Memorial Meeting records, publications, and meeting place photographs from many Monthly Meetings. Individuals have sent in letters, diaries, biographies, oral histories, and even multimedia items such as CDs or art pieces. If the items reflect

the experiences of Canadian Quakers both today and in the past, we would be very interested in preserving them. The library welcomes donations of books and articles about local, national, and wider Quaker life and work.

Anyone who is interested in making a deposit of any such records can check our current holdings to ensure they are not sending duplicates ([quaker.ca/archives/our-collection/current-holdings](https://quaker.ca/archives/our-collection/current-holdings)). We are also accepting inquiries and research requests. Again, as physical access for visitors is currently limited, some items may not be available, but we will make every effort to get the information you need.

In preparation for our official re-opening, we have been hard at work on a number of exciting things. We have made several technology upgrades which will not only make our work easier but will also make searching and accessing the collection easier for Friends! Our two much older desktop machines have been replaced by a laptop. This has let us organize and consolidate digital documents and emails that were split between these two older computers. We have purchased new software to organize our vault collection. This software, called ArchivesSpace, is an archives-specific program which allows us to better organize our holdings. In turn that makes it easier to search and make connections between all the interesting items currently in our collections. While we work to add our collections to this new software, our current inventories have been updated and are available on the CYM website ([quaker.ca/archives/our-collection](https://quaker.ca/archives/our-collection)).

Outside of technology updates, there is quite a bit of unprocessed material that accumulated during our closure, which is now being catalogued and sorted into permanent homes. We have already come across some fascinating and relevant material, including papers concerning the Doukhobors, early immigrants from Ukraine who were welcomed and supported in northern Saskatchewan by the Quakers Joseph Elkington and Eliza Varney.

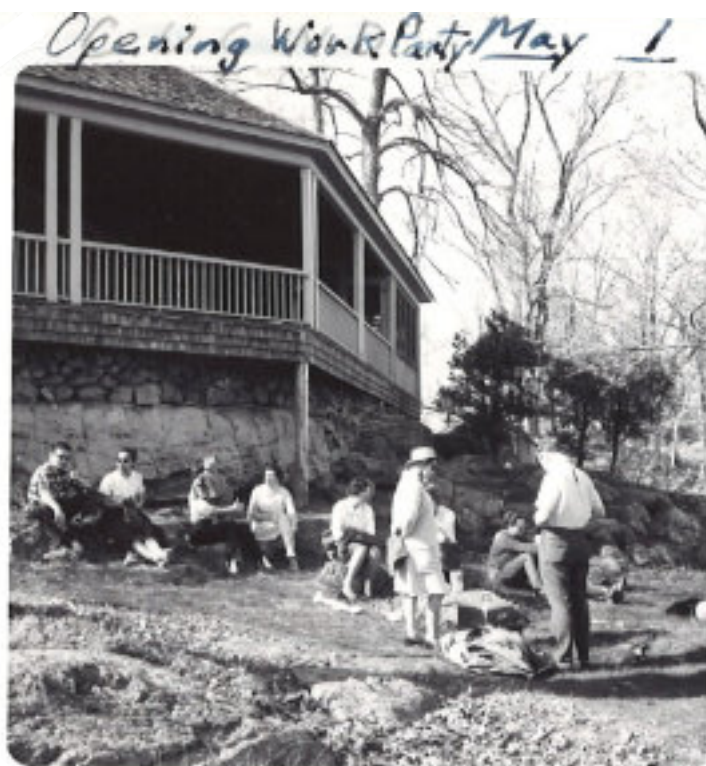




With the current Russian war against Ukraine, it is especially relevant to read about the immigration process and how Friends assisted them as they adjusted to Canadian life.

We have also already answered some inquiries and requests, including the scanning of documents related to Grindstone Island, a Peace Education Centre which was run by the Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC) from 1963 to 1974 in the Rideau River near Ottawa. A researcher from Wilfred Laurier University is writing a book on this project and has found the resources in our collection invaluable to their writing process. The image included with this article is from the Opening Work Party on May 1, 1964 at Grindstone Island. The original caption reads: “Friends from Ottawa and 1000 Islands Meeting pay a brief survey visit to the island after Worship at Smiths Falls – Preparatory to the Opening Workcamp May 15th.”

To find more information about our deposit guidelines, examine our current holdings, or learn more about the CQLA, please visit our website at [www.quaker.ca/archives](http://www.quaker.ca/archives). We look forward to sharing more and serving you soon! 🌿



## AROUND THE FAMILY

### Friendly Fridays with the Canadian Friends Historical Association by Donna Moore

In October of 2020, Gordon Thompson, former Co-Chair of the Canadian Friends Historical Association (CFHA), began hosting “Friendly Friday.” The sessions are an outreach program of CFHA, consistent with our mission; “to preserve and communicate the history and faith of the Religious Society of Friends in Canada.”

We are currently reading Chapter 5 of *The Journal of George Fox* (John Nickalls edition) as a group. The text has been divided into short manageable sections, which are displayed on-screen. Each passage is read aloud by a participant, and each reading is followed by a period of reflection, consideration, and comment.

We have found that a deep and patient listening to Fox spoken aloud tends to flow naturally into personal insight and comment that has much in common with worship-sharing. Collectively we come to a deeper understanding of the profound ministry of Fox and the early Friends and are encouraged to consider how this ministry may provide instruction and perspective to our contemporary experience.

Gord Thompson passed away in January of this year, and we miss his contribution very much. However, we know that Gord would be pleased that we are continuing with the program, offered every two weeks for the foreseeable future. New participants and visitors to Friendly Friday are always welcome.

For more information including registration, email Donna Moore at [friendlyfriday@cfha.info](mailto:friendlyfriday@cfha.info) or visit [cfha.info](http://cfha.info).

#### GLEANINGS & QUOTATIONS

“It is impossible at one and the same time to confess the God-Christ, the foundation of whose teaching is non-resistance to evil, and yet consciously and yet calmly labour for the establishment of property, tribunals, kingdoms, and armies.”

— Leo Tolstoy, *What I Believe* (1884, translated by Mayo & Fyvie, 1902).

## Shared Sorrow

*by Beverly Shepard & Peter Cross, Hamilton Monthly Meeting*

We two have known each other for 45 years, but we just recently discovered that we share a particular concern: that is, a lack among Friends of trust in each other. At the December 2021 Representative Meeting, we both – independently – became frustrated with the meeting's process. We both left early, again independently. When we discovered, during a conversation on a recent Sunday, that our feelings and responses had been the same on this occasion, we realized we might not be the only Friends to be worried about this trend.

We are well aware that the Quaker method of decision-making is one which tries to determine the sense of the meeting, that is, a shared understanding of the issue and of the way to proceed. To this end, matters of significant business generally come to the full business meeting for a final decision, even when they have been considered and discerned by the committee or working group. Sometimes, however, the committee or working group has been tasked with proceeding on a matter once sufficient consideration has been given.

At the December meeting Friends were considering the report "CYM Staffing Changes from the Clerk of Personnel Committee and the CYM Presiding Clerk." What particularly distressed us was the long and sometimes almost combative response to the plans devised and actions taken by the Friends to which CYM had previously entrusted this work. Rather than a Quakerly discernment, it felt more like an adversarial discussion. The tone of the proceedings did not seem to reflect what Friends regard as good Quaker process.

Just as important, perhaps, was the fact that much of what Friends raised as objections was entirely out of place. After all, the Personnel Committee had undertaken difficult and sensitive personnel work with care and caring – and with approval from the CYM Trustees, who had previously been tasked with the responsibility for oversight of personnel work.

Friends did not find unity in their response to the report. We are both very saddened by the fact that Quakers seemed not to trust one another.

Certainly the discussion (which is what it amounted to, despite Friends' insistence that "discussion" is not what we do) did not match the vision portrayed in the reading that the Clerk did at the start of the meeting:

"Strongly held opposing views tied together by trust and love are truly creative. As the process of loving outreach dissolves the areas of brittle antagonism, legitimate differences are recognized as a stimulus and broadening influence."

— Hugh Campbell

Brown, collected in 3.40 in *Canadian Yearly Meeting Faith & Practice*.

What has happened to the loving and quiet attention with which Friends used to hear each other? Why do we attack decisions and actions that we have asked Friends to make on our behalf?

We need to call up the trust in divine leading and love for each other that we say we hold dearly. That is when opposing views can be heard in openness and gentleness. And when we have entrusted certain matters to able Friends, we must believe that they have done just as they have been asked, and their decisions should be accepted with gratitude. 🌿





## Western Half-Yearly Meeting *by Ro Fife, Saanich Peninsula Monthly Meeting*

Despite some hopeful thoughts about resuming in person meeting, Western Friends again gathered online for their fall half yearly held over the Thanksgiving weekend, October 8-11.

Quakers from BC, Alberta, and Saskatchewan (as well as some Friends farther east) converged in our virtual meeting space for fellowship, learning, and community building.

Ironically there were more west coast Friends participating than typically attend the fall session when it is hosted in-person in the prairie provinces. Those of us that benefit from the non-travel aspect of on-line sessions realize that their benefit comes at a price for those with young families and others who miss the communal exposure to Friends at an in-person gathering.

Worship sharing was expanded to provide this opportunity all three mornings. It is often the first time some F/friend have met and creates a meaningful touch point for Friends.

Meeting for Worship for Business was thoughtful, well-clerked, and limited in scope – we actually finished well before the allotted time!

Zoom breakout rooms were offered often at the end of scheduled sessions, as a way to create conversation and connection points.

A highlight of Saturday was the evening learning session, which was a knowledgeable panel about Afghanistan and what Canadian Friends can do to assist in this most challenging time for both Afghani folks here and those still in

Afghanistan. While a daunting topic, the panelists endeavoured to identify concrete actions to draw folk in Canada into the work.

Special interested groups included a thoughtful discernment around ways forward and hybrid future gatherings that would mix in-person with some on-line access.

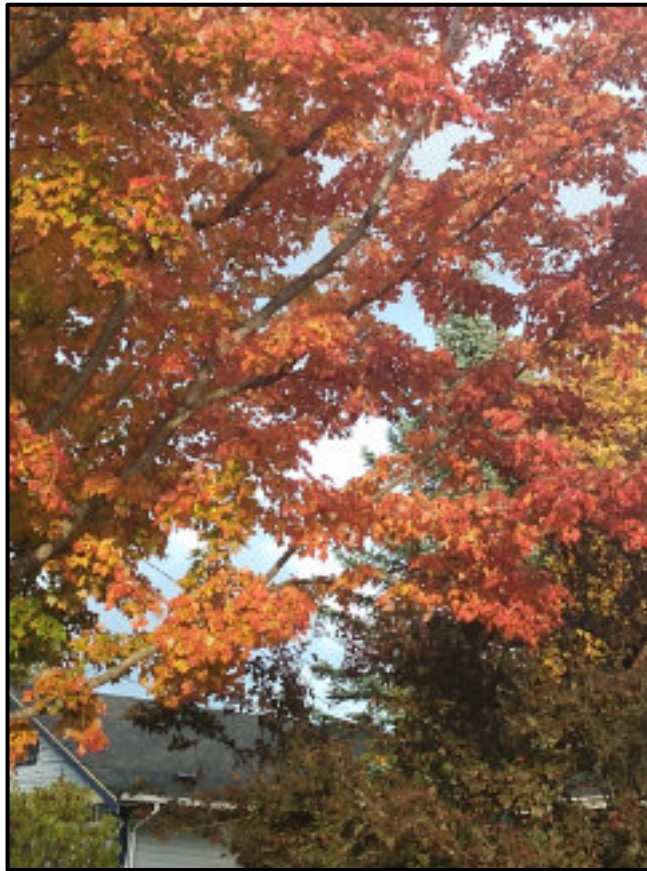
We all are aware that moving forward to the resumption of in-person gatherings will have many gains, such as the return of impromptu conversations and opportunities to connect off the Zoom-scheduled sessions.

But as a half-yearly meeting that covers literally half the country, travel distances are a *huge* barrier for some of us.

When I lived in northern Alberta over 30 years ago my partner and I would joke that we had cross the equivalent of Germany to go to "town" (i.e. Edmonton) for a weekend.

Distances are great and many of us struggle with the costs (financial, familial, and environmental) with traveling for gatherings. Friends will need to hold each other with care as we step forward and attempt to return to our "normal" ways.

There is a query that ends with the reminder that we should "meet new ideas with discernment." Western Half-Yearly Meeting seems to be well on that path. I look forward to finding a way to stay involved, albeit as a virtual participant as we move forward. 🌿



Photos (facing page and above) by Ro Fife

# Reports from the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) Section Meeting

*by Glenn Morison, Winnipeg Monthly Meeting*

While the pandemic has taken away many opportunities, it has also provided some. In 2019, only one Canadian registered for the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) Section Meeting. In 2021, six Canadians registered.

The FWCC Section of the Americas mission and vision, as described on their website, is

“Answering God’s call to universal love. FWCC brings Friends of varying traditions and cultural experiences together in worship, communications and consultation, to express our common heritage and our Quaker message to the world. We envision a thriving and integrated network of Friends from the Arctic to the Andes, woven together in transformative faith, learning to love, listen, and witness.”

I asked the Friends who attended this year to share their experiences.

**Ellen Helmuth** from New Brunswick Monthly Meeting wrote:

I found my attendance at the FWCC Section of the America’s to be enriching, especially to be in the presence of so many different groups of Quakers. Whether programmed, unprogrammed, conservative, or evangelical, they all brought gifts to share. I was inspired by the daily devotions led by Mey Hasbrook.

The morning sessions always opened with music. One morning, Lavonne from Kansas played two very meditative pieces of music on the piano and as I listened very closely, an image of my mother’s face came to me. It was a very distinct image, even though she had aged considerably from when I last saw her when she was still here on this earth. And it brought back my precious childhood memory of her playing piano as I would go to sleep each night. The image lasted for the entire time of Lavonne’s playing. It was as if my mother was paying me a visit. I was in tears. I could not talk about it for quite some time, as it was so emotional. I was raised in a Mennonite family, and we sang hymns a cappella in our church services with four-part harmony. It was bonding and harmonious.

**Barbara Aikman** from Annapolis Valley Monthly Meeting shared:

I attended a study group called “Supporting Clearness and Faithfulness” that was facilitated by Marcelle Martin and Jorg Aruz, both from the Philadelphia area. The session was filled with organized factual insights and practical procedures for setting up either of these two types of groups. We also broke into

pairs with opportunities for experiential learning – for example, practicing deep listening and asking evocative questions.

The Faithfulness group was a new idea for me. I know some Friends in CYM meet regularly with the same small group of Friends, some over many years, to share their spiritual journeys, seeking support and to be challenged in living their faith. Both groups have an atmosphere of holy accompaniment and an intention to support clarity, trust, faith, and faithfulness.

The Faithfulness group was described as 3-7 people, meeting monthly for 2 hours. In rotation each person has one hour of the group’s focus. Some desired outcomes are responding to God’s call, acknowledgments of giftedness and grace, and identifying impediments to following God’s will and allowing them to be removed.

Why am I led to share this with you? I have been feeling stuck, empty, lacking purpose since my retirement. This idea of a faithfulness group, where we are accountable as well as supported, is something I think would be beneficial. It takes things deeper from our Sunday worship and study groups and is personal.

I found many sessions of the FWCC section meeting very inspiring. There were messages of hope, calls to plant new seeds, and experiences of being held in love. My faith to allow things to unfold and know I am not alone are blessings from the gathering.

**Gwen Anderson** from Winnipeg Monthly Meeting, wrote:

The online section meeting was pitched to our Meeting in this covid-season as an opportunity that may not come again: this unfolding of the FWCC tapestry in our own homes.

I registered with trepidation. Canada has a liberal, unprogrammed Quaker culture and the Winnipeg Meeting, I suspect, is a liberal among liberals. I am homosexual. I don’t seek spiritual connection with folks who are guided by religious teachings to draw a divide between us – the gay and the straight. But: the unfolding tapestry in our own homes, and so on. I thought it true that this year’s online Section Meeting may be the only one I’m able to attend.

I attended delicately. No wading in for me. I did not make time for the Bible Study, though among less conservative company I likely would have. I skipped the first Home Group meeting but at Glenn Morison’s urging, I attended the second.



I also attended the Opening session, and my workshop session, “Connecting with Indigenous Peoples Through the Land” with Pamela Parker.

The sessions I attended made me appreciate Quaker process – the patience that sits in in any Quaker gathering, especially in the non-simultaneously translated sessions. I enjoyed those most – witnessing while speakers adjusted themselves to the pace of the translator; listening to their words and then listening again to them spoken in a language which to me is all cadence and occasional familiars.

I met familiars, also, in all the breakout rooms in any of the sessions. People like me – these liberal, these conservative – peering into our computers, self-self-conscious of the connection we were making.

There was controversy in my chosen workshop – Connecting with Indigenous Peoples Through the Land. Here in this workshop were those of us who possess the land together with those who no longer do. An eloquent and passionate Black woman reminded us not everyone comes from people who in one way or another sought land. It was uncomfortable-making in the good way a Quaker gathering can be.

If I attend future Section Meetings, I’m sure to come again with my delicate feelings. I am too old to willingly stand the disrespect of someone or another’s god. That’s not company I seek. But I was enriched by this session. I’m grateful to have had the opportunity.

### And I share two highlights from my own experience:

I very much enjoyed attending a presentation on the “[Right Sharing of World Resources](#)” work with women’s groups in Kenya, India, and Sierra Leone. In particular, I appreciated hearing about the way it has evolved by close attention to what has and what has not worked so well.

The presentation by Jerry Knutson on “Personal Spiritual Discernment,” based on his writing of [Pendle Hill Pamphlet #433](#), was a delight. To try and describe it briefly, we were encouraged to bring a personal issue of choice and then to imagine voices embodied in a group around you. These might be your body, your mind, your inner critic and such. After you have heard from all of them, a wise, loving, and lovable clerk speaks. I was surprised as the tone of my “inner critic” was much more forceful and aggressive than the gnawing and oblique tone that I normally experience with my inner critic. And the wise clerk did indeed end by posing a question I had not thought of.

*For more information on the Friends World Committee for Consultation, please feel free to contact your representative, me, [glenn@morison.ca](mailto:glenn@morison.ca) (204) 298-7859 or look at the world website ([www.fwcc.world](http://www.fwcc.world)) or the Section of the Americas ([www.fwccamericas.org](http://www.fwccamericas.org)). ☺*

## Yonge Street Half-Yearly Meeting

*by Rosemary Meier, Toronto MM*

Friends from three southern Ontario Monthly Meetings – Yonge Street, Hamilton, and Toronto – zoomed together on Saturday morning to the Fall Yonge Street Half-Yearly Meeting. It featured a workshop on Peaceful and Clear Communication within Meetings, facilitated by Matt Legge from Canadian Friends Service Committee and two members of the CFSC Committee: Trevor Chandler (Interior BC) and Christina Tellez (Halifax MM). All three led breakout rooms.

The program was organised by Toronto Monthly Meeting Planning Committee and produced by the TMM Zoom Committee, who set up the online framework and provided tech support. The day began with Meeting for Worship, included an update by Lyn Adamson on her Kitchen Table Climate Conversations, and ended with Meeting for Worship for Business. There had been no call for a virtual children’s program, but the customary sharing at lunchtime continued, arranged through familiar voice communication and augmented by virtual zoom visits.

Many had read Matt’s recently published book *Are We Done Fighting Yet?* He reminded us of the “worshipful attention” which enables us to be present in a situation, to venture beyond our comfort zone, and to avoid bringing baggage from previous situations to the present conflict.

Matt referred also to non-verbal communication of ideas, which includes silence, and to Thomas Kilmann’s Five Styles of Conflict and Conflict Mode Instrument. He reviewed a range of human behaviours during conflict, from assertiveness to cooperativeness, which included directing, avoiding, collaborating, accommodating, and compromising. He then posed several questions – which we began to share reflections on, one to one and in small groups – and emphasised the importance of using these skills.

The breakout rooms after lunch provided more practice in respectful dialogue, with active listening and “time to listen between pauses.” There was also the intention to have “purposeful communication” in discussions with disagreement where we say “I am glad to know (your view): I am not there but know where you are.”

Matt gave us a quotation by Quaker [ecumenist](#) Douglas Steere: “to listen another soul into a condition of disclosure and discovery may be almost the greatest service that any human being ever performs for another.”

## *Metamorphosis: My Path to Transformation*

### A Book Review

*by Linda Taffs, Cowichan Valley Monthly Meeting*

Friends believe there is that of God in everyone. Sometimes that is hard to see. And for some people, that of God is hard to access within themselves. This was the case of convicted murder Yves Côté, who spent 32 years in jail. Recently he wrote *Metamorphosis: My Path to Transformation*. He did this with the help of criminologist Alana Abramson, who combines Yves' memoir with academic writing about the Canadian (in)justice system.

This thought-provoking autobiography is definitely a story of hope. It is a story of a child who was abused from the age of five, after his mother died and he was placed in foster "care." Fortunately for his readers, Yves spares us the graphic details of his many years of abuse.

He is frank about his crimes, however. Yves doesn't make excuses about why and how he became a killer that spent 32 years in jail. Eventually he came to realize that his childhood trauma led to his criminal behaviour, and he managed to metamorphize himself into a kind and gentle man.

Yves gives a lot of credit for his transformation to the Alternative to Violence Project (AVP), a project started by Quakers in 1975 in New York State. Yves is now one of the AVP volunteer facilitators, and he regularly speaks to school students about his experience. I met Yves when he facilitated an AVP training that I attended in Vancouver in 2019.

*Metamorphosis* is a story of how childhood trauma can have a profound effect on a person. It is also a story of daily life behind bars. Yves does not dwell on the violence, but he does talk about the cruelty of long prison sentences. He asks the question. "Is it worse to keep a man in a concrete box for 25 years or give him a lethal injection that will end his life?"

"The psychological impacts of incarceration are torturous for both humans and animals," he concludes. Yves' survey of 'lifers' while in prison found that, if they had the choice, they would prefer a lethal injection than "the slow death within a tortured mind." This is definitely a plea for restorative justice.

With the help of the academic writing by his friend Alana Abramson, Yves' personal story gives the reader a clearer picture of the Canadian prison system – plus how easy it is to be retraumatized and the difficulty of re-entering society when released from incarceration.

This man's story is incredible. It shows how a person can change from being a killer to a caring husband and grandfather, and a compassionate, productive member of society. Reading this book has given me much hope for humankind, and I am sure anyone reading this book will feel the same. 🌊

## *Living in the Tall Grass* by Chief R. Stacey Laforme

### A Book Review

*by Beverly Shepard, Hamilton Monthly Meeting*

I've just read a small book that I recommend to Friends – or anyone, for that matter. It's called *Living in the Tall Grass: Poems of Reconciliation*, and it is by Chief R. Stacey Laforme of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

It is designated a book of poems, but in fact I would say a number of pieces are prose-poems: more prose-like in wording but arranged as poems. That, however, is irrelevant to the significance of this book. Chief Laforme has had a difficult life but has overcome his disadvantages to get an excellent education and to expand his vision to encompass all his people and their history.

The poems in this collection are imbued with this knowledge and the way it affects him and his brothers and sisters.

Whatever you might think of his style, I think you cannot fail to be moved by his message. In words full of concern, empathy, caring, and hope, he lets the reader know where the failings are, where the injustice lies, what the hope is, and what our work must be. The book is available from most libraries, I suspect, and is for sale through Amazon and bookstores. Chief Laforme informs me he is at work on a second book. I look forward to it! 🌊



# Are you a Quaker without knowing it?



**Experience rather than  
prescribed belief?**

**Non-violence?**

**Direct, unmediated  
experience of the Sacred?**

**Non-hierarchy?**

**The transforming power  
of silence?**

**Community?**

**Integrity?**

**Social action grounded  
in spiritual practice?**

**Simplicity?**

**For more information:**

**[quaker.ca](http://quaker.ca)**

**Created by Steve Fick**



“Turbulent Times expresses a grateful appreciation of nature and cherished memory. Seeking a peaceful spirit, the author is ‘Open to what wisdom is there.’”

— **Colin Morton**, winner, Archibald Lampman Award for Poetry

“This is a work of deep introspection and contemplation which relies on strong natural images – particularly apt for a time of pandemic.”

— **Ronnie R. Brown**, winner, People's Poetry Award

“Grounded in Quaker sensibility, Caroline Balderston Parry has gifted us with poems full of clarity, whimsy, delight, and joy. At this time of upheaval, we need the calming presence of her words to help restore a sense of inner peace.”

— **Valerie Brown**, author of *Hope Leans Forward: Braving Your Way toward Simplicity, Awakening and Peace*



Caroline Balderston Parry died on Feb 11, 2022, after which some of her dear friends assembled and published *Turbulent Times* posthumously. This book is a labour of love, just like Caroline's life.

Caroline was a Quaker, poet, celebrator, artist, writer, and educator.

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This book is generously supported by Ottawa Quakers and blessed by her children, Evalyn and Richard. All proceeds will go to a project selected by Ottawa Quakers to honour Caroline's divine spirit. Donations are welcome.

Inquiries to: [turbulent.times.poetry@gmail.com](mailto:turbulent.times.poetry@gmail.com)

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# Review of Caroline Balderston Parry's *Turbulent Times*

by Beverly Shepard  
*Hamilton Monthly Meeting*

Friends in many parts of Canada, the US, and abroad were saddened to learn of the death of Caroline Balderston Parry in February. We have felt keenly the loss of her smile, her enthusiasm, and her strong spiritual connection with Holy Spirit: around her, within her, and in everyone she met. Fortunately for those who miss her, she has left an enduring part of herself, through which we can experience those beloved qualities.

Before she died, Caroline began to work with Susan McMaster, a Friend in Ottawa Monthly Meeting, to organize and publish her poetry. A few of her poems have been published over the years, but most have not, and there was a treasure trove of verses to be collated, curated, and shared. A committee of caring and appreciative Ottawa Friends (plus myself, a friend-in-poetry from another Meeting) has worked for months to perform that loving service. The result is *Turbulent Times*, a collection of poems from many years and eras of Caroline's life on earth.

This is, of course, not a thoroughly impartial and dispassionate review of the book. I knew Caroline and loved her; we worked together in various arenas, and I have been part of the production of this book. However, I am also a poet, viewing the poetry of others with a discerning eye, and able to see the value and impact it may have for readers. For those who knew Caroline, her poetry will be comfort in our loss and an expression of the spirit we loved. For those who did not, it will offer an avenue to knowing a woman of soul and spirit: a journey definitely worth taking.

Some of her poems are light-hearted and playful:

"Have you made friends with words  
and found – on certain days, in special ways –  
words will sing and fly and play with you?"

"Pack the trunk, check your bags, stow my luggage;  
stash stuff overhead, under the seat: off we go!"

Some are sombre and reflective:

"This is a dim, yet holy, reflecting time.  
My digital clock glows the minutes by,  
while I lie wakeful, waiting for dreams,  
inwardly counting all I am grateful for,  
like so many wandering sheep."

There are poems in flowing free verse and others that are rhymed and metred. Sometimes she has used rhyme schemes that are all her own, and other, unrhymed poems may yet

have regular metre. There are short poems that capture a mood and longer, many-versed poems that take the reader on a meandering walk – or a purposeful one. Caroline was skilled in many forms, which she used to express the many aspects of her explorations and discoveries. The reader, I predict, will be as engaged and affected as she herself was, both by the world that surrounded her and the world that existed within her.

I recommend this book to anyone who appreciates poetry, nature, the Spirit, or Caroline herself. Whether or not you knew Caroline personally while she was alive, you will know her once you have read *Turbulent Times*.

## A note from Susan McMaster, editor of *Turbulent Times*

When I was asked to assist in the production of this book, I immediately felt it was the right thing for me to do. Caroline and I have been friends since we both had preschool children around the same age, and we have known each other in a variety of contexts – Quakers, camp, cooking, poetry, singing, labyrinths. She appreciated life – hers and others' – at many levels, even as her illness worsened, and her death left me feeling loss at all those levels.

To work on this book was to restore my sense of Caroline's involvement, connection, caring, and passion. Her poetry tells us about her deepest self. I have felt her presence as I read it, thought about it, considered where each poem would best be placed. She has been beside me through this work. It has been not just a labour of love. It is a labour of life. 🌿



**Meeting for Worship is a Lake**

Meeting for worship is a lake  
Fed by tributaries from a universal spring.  
Each worshipper is a tributary,  
Carrying Light from the source  
to the meeting.  
Ministry can be a leaf,



Seton Lake, Lillooet BC

Photo: Sarah Chandler

Or a petal, carried lightly on the surface.  
It can be a stone,  
Cast into the water,  
Quickly sinking to the bottom.  
It can be a message in a bottle,  
Meaningful to one who finds it,  
It can be soluble,  
Enriching the whole as it moves forward.

*Sarah Chandler, Interior BC Monthly Meeting*



## The Gathered Meeting

I thought of the Holy Spirit  
as a spider (I love spiders)  
spinning a web  
somewhere in the universe,  
the filaments of which  
connected her to me and me to her.  
Her silken threads connected everyone present,  
each to the other  
and each to her as well.  
Filaments floated too, beyond the walls,  
connecting Friends to each who was prayed for, hoped for,  
remembered.  
I think the spider's name may have been Indra,  
if not God.

*Sarah Chandler, 2021*  
*Interior BC Monthly Meeting*  
*(Remembered from a gathered meeting at Hampsted Meeting*  
*House, London, 1996)*

## Weighty Quaker

When will I let the Light  
float me to Love's Lightness?  
  
My treasured thoughts  
on all matters weighty  
  
bind like the cables  
securing down the lighter-than-air ship...  
  
So at last I wait upon  
the way to open,  
at last jettisoning the binding ballast.

*Roger Davies*  
*Halifax Monthly Meeting*

When I am small and petty, let me be generous.  
When I am scornful, self-righteous, or judgmental, let me  
be curious, understanding, and compassionate.  
When I am angry, let me be forgiving.  
When I am afraid, let me be courageous.  
When I shut out the pain of others, let me open myself.  
When I hide my pain, let me share my burdens with those  
who love me.  
May the Divine Light within me shine bright.  
*Mark Stanley*  
*Saskatoon Monthly Meeting*

## Salvage

Rescue  
Reuse  
Reclaim  
Retrieve  
Recover  
  
Save from oblivion something of value  
  
Cars, food, construction materials, clothing  
Scrapyards, Habitat ReStores, used clothing outlets,  
Reduce, re-use, recycle  
Plastic, metal, glass, paper  
  
Picking sprouts off potatoes  
Making applesauce from apples starting to "go"  
Trifle, soups, buying culled "imperfect" fruit and vegetables  
Quilts, cutting down clothes to fit someone else  
  
Time  
Conversations with strangers and reading  
In waiting rooms  
Cellphones during long commutes (reclaiming private space?)  
  
Space  
City parks in small nooks  
Provincial and national parks preserving wilderness  
Chapels in airports  
High-rise gardens  
  
Memories  
Getting names on unlabelled photos  
Remembering some things forgotten  
Laying to rest some things remembered  
  
Relationships  
Listening to the other side of the story,  
to the spirit behind the words  
Remembering the parable of "The Blind Men & the Elephant"  
Appreciating mitigating circumstances  
Giving the benefit of the doubt  
Picking up the pieces (realizing it's not "all or nothing")  
Forgiving and asking for forgiveness  
Banishing perfectionism, (we are *all* groping)  
Looking for the good in each person

*I read a quote a few months ago to the effect of, "All things are  
broken and all things can be fixed."*

*I try to believe this on my more optimistic days but think that,  
even (and especially) in difficult times, the effort to fix, to  
restore, to salvage, is a worthwhile one.*

*Brent Bowyer*  
*Wingham/N. Huron WG*  
*Kitchener MM*



## Our Meeting's Collaborative Poem

*by Steve Ginley, Peterborough Monthly Meeting*

On Sunday October 3, Peterborough Monthly Meeting's after-meeting program was writing a collaborative poem after a sensory walk where we focused on the sounds around us. After the walk, we gathered on a videoconference and all worked on one document at the same time – writing our poetic expression of sounds and shuffling them around, so that your couplet flowed into my line which was followed by a whole other person's thought, without marking whose was whose.

This activity was borrowed from a recent CYFYM virtual retreat, where it was facilitated by Ada Bierling. Friends present were: Margaret Slavin, Steve Ginley, Rosemarie McMechan, Sheila Nabigon-Howlett, Ruth Kuchinad, Mary Conchelos, Greg Conchelos, Anne Trudell, Yangyi Wang, Donna McDougall, and Nathan Noseworthy.

One Friend noted of the experience that they felt “a connection but not an attachment” to the sounds around them. It was an overcast, lightly-raining day.

Crescendo, diminuendo, rising pulse of car motors  
A line of cars gliding on the edges of puddles in the road,  
Whoosh of constant cars  
Beep beep beep of panic button!!  
Kicking up some of the contents that fall in a wet heap back on the pavement  
Shoes scraping asphalt  
boots on the pavement

Mist accumulates on trees, makes a staccato of drips like melting snow  
Sound of Rain

Raucous birds at the top of some trees my eyes can't reach  
High-pitched, constant tweeting interrupted by a lower, throaty, crackle  
A child called his mom  
Teens chatting – only yes/no questions allowed  
Toddler squealing after his ball on tennis court  
“Good-day” from purple jacket on trail.  
“Miaow, miaow, miaow” from Bella.  
Voices high and tentative with new connection

Bang bang bang of a machine pounding  
Poundcrash poundcrash poundcrash  
Jackson creek gurgling merrily along  
Rush of waters from the Otonabee coming through the hydrodam  
Small plops of rain already fallen, making its way to lower leaves and to the ground  
Whisper of wind on water  
Forced air coming from multi-unit building.

A bird chirp far away  
Bouncing sound I think comes from Quaker Oats gets cut off “Bloing Bloin-”

Muffled television or radio sounds from inside a house  
Pound (echo) pound (echo) pound (echo)

Low idling hum  
Gravel crunch and crack  
Leaf rustle  
Door bang, click

Creaky front door. Old-fashioned car sounding its horn.  
Excited bluejay announcing his presence, water dripping off trees, more cars on gravel road, more blue jays and now a crow joining the tune, my footsteps on the gravel driveway, a lone chipping sparrow, a red squirrel announcing its presence and now a black squirrel sounding the alarm. Water from black locusts dripping on the camper roof

Sharp scree of some bird  
Whisper of raindrops on water  
Heavy footsteps from kids in rainboots, chatting about invisibility  
Water dripping from the rain barrel

Arrogant wheels  
Crush down the rainy street  
Then the street hisses back  
No smiles

My footsteps crunching on wet gravel  
Meaty crunch of pebbles into damp but drying mud  
Bird calls from across the canal, muffled by the fog and the water  
Blue jays, chickadees, crows calling

Unrecognized sound from across the canal, amplified by water  
A race car speeds by, sounds like a motorcycle

Rustling water over rocks  
Sparrows cheep, cheep  
Crows KA, KA like a sentinel  
Warblers, zipped notes from deep within the bush  
The soft cooing of doves  
A chorus of Canada Geese punctures the silence  
A platinum grey sky, rain threatens  
A golden universe

Orange/yellow trees  
Rain pitter-pattering on leaves  
Black squirrel happily munching on several black walnuts  
Damp smell  
Corn ready for harvest  
Walnuts dropping – plunk, plunk

My footsteps on my gravel driveway  
Raindrops hitting the tree leaves  
A siren up and down but not nearing  
The pile driver on the Otonabee, a steady pound  
A dog barking, once, twice  
Plink-plink-plunk of raindrops rolling from one metal roof to another  
Bird tweets in the trees (calling birds from the ground)  
Returning from the trees, my shoes sound a soft squish

Boots step on the falling leaves 



## Zoom Meeting Poems

by Janet Lehde, Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting

As a remote Friend, Zoom has been a blessing and pure irony of the covid pandemic, bringing Quakers from across Canada into my home near Sointula, BC, on Malcolm Island, off the NE coast of Vancouver Island. I've attended regular meetings for worship on Sundays and Wednesday noon worship sharing with Vancouver Island MM, Wednesday morning CFSC worship sharing, two Western Half Yearly Meetings, and this summer CYM, where I particularly felt deeply gathered during Worship Sharing and the Quaker Study, all via the wonders of Zoom. Last Spring I also worked with two friends in Victoria on the VIMM State of Society Report for CYM.

My life is enriched with the renewal of old and new connections with Friends, and this is a delight as travelling to a Sunday meeting would entail an overnight trip to Nanaimo (a six-hour trip with ferry and driving) or to Victoria (a very long day trip of ferry and driving another hour and a half).

The "new normal" is here in my life as my reconnecting with Friends after many years of living and working in remote areas with no Meetings nearby is simply fabulously serene and peaceful in my life.

I'm very grateful for the Friends who host the meetings and to those who send us off us to 'break-out rooms' as needed.

*In Peace,  
Jan in Sointula*

### Off in the distance... Part I

A flute plays a delicious concerto  
Which reminds me of the soulful beauty  
and resonance from music.  
The toddler taps a cup, giggles as her mother snuggles at  
her small neck.  
What place is this meeting's hearts quiet  
In their Zoom squares?  
Across the hundreds of miles, with hundreds of gigabytes  
Tossing my image to others?  
I see a checkerboard of faces sitting with me and  
I feel the Love and Peace of us all waiting, experiencing,  
that of God in everyone.  
I'm not sure if God could play checkers on the 29 squares,  
of those gathered this morning.  
Yes, I feel most happily grateful to be present and joined  
in love of God, etc, resonating through my every cell of  
being this day, sitting under the roof,  
embracing the rainstorm.

### off in the distance... Part 2

Flute and toddler giggles – was that someone slurping tea?  
God has a lovey sense of humour this morning...  
Our hearts are provided with experiential ministry from  
God, etc, from these delightful sounds.  
Is the sound of a rainstorm on my roof likewise such a  
presence of Love?

*Sointula, BC  
During Sunday meeting, Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting  
(Zoom)  
Feb 21/21*

### Query for the Eagle

Rain sheets waft past my windows  
as the storm of early spring sounds like  
the chatter of children at their recess.

My thoughts are calm and still  
yet the words "Love lifts us up where  
we belong, as the eagle flies to the  
mountain high" appear in my knowing.

I envision this mountain is a height,  
a place of splendor in the view of all that lies below,  
yet, the Eagle has travelled to this peak alone.

Does she land there for safety or for the thin, crisp, cold, air?  
Maybe she is seeking where to make her  
nest, where she will invite her mate to lay their eggs;  
to feed and nurture their eaglets?

With wonder I can feel her seeking in  
my heart, today; tender knowing of the  
peacefulness of solitude.

The glorious solitude that has shed  
the presence of others, though I am never  
truly alone.

The strengthening of solitude whereby I am.  
Simply present in this moment without thoughts  
or feelings that would sway my serenity.

The eagle reminds me that all is well as  
I seek the home that is in my heart;  
this place of contentment from sitting, not flying,  
in worshipful meditation.  
Is the Eagle, then, my spirit joined with Mother Father God?

*Sointula, BC  
Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting (Zoom)  
Feb 21/21 🌧️🕊️*

## Suggestions for Living with a Pandemic

by Joy Conrad-Rice

Do one action at a time. Observe yourself doing it. Do it slowly with appreciation.

In the early morning, drink water.

Then make something to drink, something to help alert you to the world.

The next day at the same time do the same routine again, slowly with appreciation.

Don't do social media. Ever.

Stop reading messages from your Meeting about virtual engagement. Notice, when you are sent an invitation for a virtual Meeting for Worship or Business, how you feel after you don't open it and don't read it.

Take quiet time every day, at the same time, if possible, in a quiet place and by yourself. Look out the window of wherever you are living and wonder.

Wonder about the light, the air, the trees, the birds, the bats, the bushes.

Feel yourself sitting in your chair. Notice how your eyes adjust to whatever light is coming into you. Breathe slowly and deeply.

Do not fuss about not being able to go someplace or do something during lockdown, during quarantine. Accept it as temporary. Get your COVID vaccines.

If someone you are living with is mean to you, write about it with brutal honesty. Consider sending it to a Quaker magazine signed Anonymous.

Be smart about what you eat and drink.

Move your body somehow every day.

Call or write to a friend.

Say hello or wave to someone you see walking on the other side of the street.

Stand up straight.

Do not wear the same outfit two days in a row. Smile at your old tops, your bottoms, your slippers, your boots. Women, wear a snug camisole, not a bra. Men wear pants with drawstring at waist, not a belt.

On a walk, wear gloves, carry a plastic bag, and pick up trash. On a scenic drive, carry a large plastic bag and pick up cans and bottles. Put them in a recycle bin for later.

Read a book.

*Joy Conrad-Rice is a free-floating Friend, floating between the USA and Canada during COVID.* ☕

## Yesterday's Grapes

by Laureen van Lierop, Halifax  
Monthly Meeting

Dear Myself:

Behind me is a used couch, covered in sewing projects, a quilt, art from an exhibition that needs to be put away safely, a burst bag of elastic scraps, and a lovely green partially-knit sweater. I can't look behind me or I will run from this room, a room meant for creative process and eventually, completions.

Before I started writing this, my head was in my arms, despair leaking in between the cracks of my sweater and disabling me. Everything surrounding me is a roadblock, projects from the past, something unfinished, something once really important to me, and now a device for freezing me. I feel a responsibility for everything I've started.

Maybe some things could be put in a box to join the other boxed items I gave myself permission to leave behind. Maybe some things could be quickly attended to and I could move on. Maybe I could blow it all up – in a Quakerly, non-violent way.

In this pile are several writing projects that I know really are important to me. I've dedicated years to two of them; they really do need attention because they once gave me great joy. I want to turn them into today and tomorrow's adventures, but I can't seem to make the effort.

I was very sick for nine months and am currently working on stamina – and I realize emotions are part of that work. I hate moaning but also recognize that there can be real reasons to moan. An unfinished knitting project isn't one of them. Or is it?

Piles of responsibilities, in the form of concrete tasks to complete or obligations to others or promises made to ourselves can evoke the same emotional morass as the sweater. It doesn't help that I made an impulse buy and bought wool in a green that I love but never wear. That detail makes picking up the work even that much harder.

I watched a de-cluttering video that wittered on about sentimental attachments and usefulness. Despite sneering at the idea that a Monopoly game can generate feelings of nostalgia, I did consider that usefulness is a good indicator of whether something could be set aside or picked up.

Which of my responsibilities are useful to either myself or to others? How much of the load of feeling responsible is actual and how much is imagination? Or sentiment? Or vanity?



Running through a checklist of Quaker values: what is complicating life, what is causing war or violence in my thinking, what is challenging my integrity to my priorities, what is harmful to community or earth care? Taken in view of this handy list, it becomes a little easier to confront that some of my responsibilities are not actually mine.

The items on the couch can be a metaphor for whatever ails us in a current world, where we have let go of so much that gives us joy and kept so much that is needful and essential. There really is no comparison between a gathering of friends and writing up a report on plumbing.

Returning to the couch, the quilt can be boxed away – it is an easy project to pick up when I need something mindless to work on. The green wool could be re-wound and offered to a number of different knitters who would love it more than I do, a nice gift. The exhibition does require action. To treat it well is to give myself respect, acknowledging community and

the work that was done, the work that went into the exhibition and the work of the others who participated. A new baggie takes care of the elastic scraps; it is earth care to not throw them out. They do get used.

What's left? Of course, peace. And love. Are they ever separate?

What do I love most about this room? Coming in here, sitting on the couch, looking out at the garden, and starting to write. Writing involves time spent on editing, finding publishing opportunities, illustrations, promotions, blah blah blah. An artist knows this exists but is very good at avoiding it. So, I'll make some tea, turn on some light music, and clear that couch.

Still yesterday's grapes but with a beady eye on tomorrow's adventure.

Yours truly,  
Yourself. 🐞🐞

## Reflections from an informal gathering of Seekers

*Compiled by Members & Attenders of Halifax Monthly Meeting*

Starting in 2020, a small group of Friends in Kijipuktuk (the Mi'kmaw name for what we now call Halifax) began to meet for an informal Quaker Study Group. We gathered in person, and then virtually, and we provided support and inspiration to one another. Sometimes we had a theme, and sometimes a theme emerged through our meeting. We used silent worship to help guide us. It was a sweet time together.

Here are some of our shared reflections that we hope you find spiritually nourishing:

- "Seeing that of God in everything – making it a dominant perspective takes some work."
- "The joy of playing comes from laughter. There is something sparkly about laughing."
- "Sometimes I'm worried what I might hear when listening in Quaker silence."
- "Surround yourself with people you want to be, not with people you don't want to be."
- "Listen in tongues."
- "In what ways am I an injustice collector? The trick is to let it go. I don't want to become bitter."
- "I'm attending to how I'm oppressive to myself as a way to understand how the reinforces how I oppress others."
- "My anger is a gift from me to me to help tell me what to do. Anger can be an instrument of justice."
- "Quaker testimony – you may receive something that is for you alone or you may receive something more like 'no, this is for others and I'm a channel.' Love and truth are necessary for discerning testimony."
- "I put a sign up in my house that reads 'Today's adventure is...'"
- "What am I grateful for today? Right now?"
- "Notice 'ugly thinking' and notice 'pretty thinking'."
- "Love is a motivator for change. Love grows into a passageway or a door."
- "There can be profound communication in silence. Silence can be a teacher."
- "Each of us are both the wave and the ocean. We are walking side by side with one another."
- "Take prayer into daily life. To pray about any day's work does not mean to ask success in it."
- "I am starting to see self-care as creation care. I am a steward of my body."
- "I want be more grounded and act out of my own values."
- "Not knowing is a very Quakerly skill."

## Reflections on Grief & Grieving

by Bert Horwood, *Thousand Islands Monthly Meeting*

My profound experience with grief was foreshadowed by events shortly before Lyn, my wife of 63 years, died. It was no longer possible, even with all available outside aid, for me to meet the increasing demands of her dementia. I had reached a worrisome stage of exhaustion. We placed Lyn, against her will, in a long-term care home.

Within hours I was experiencing the ironic chaos of conflicted emotions known to almost everyone who has walked this path. There is guilt at the violence done to the beloved's will; there is joyous relief from the endless burden of care; there is discovery of forgotten liberty, and there is grief at the loss of the loved person's presence at table and bed.

Everyone makes adjustments to changed circumstances in life. Both Lyn and I adapted to this taste of what was to come. Regular, but not exhaustive, family visits in her new home helped soften mutual absence. She negotiated living conditions pretty well with the help of a caring and competent staff. But she became less and less able to eat or drink. After about three months she died in my arms on a sunny winter Sunday afternoon after Meeting.

I thought I knew grief from the deaths of parents and from the experience with placing Lyn in care. Those griefs were to this one as a light breeze is to a hurricane. The experience of deep loss is common enough, and I offer this set of reflections as comfort to fellow mourners and for simple early warning for those who have yet to be grieved. I hope they may be helpful. (Or maybe they won't, because one thing I've learned early is that no one can write a fail-safe map for another person's grief journey.)

The customary funeral rites of one's culture and faith are a good place to start. The advantage of these is that they provide familiar territory for mourners to catch their breath and hear the well-meant kindness behind trite words of condolence. Mourners can learn to face people again without bursting into tears, and because the rites, customs and ceremonies are well-known they can be practised automatically without thought.

There is a catch, however. The delivery of comfort is proportional to the extent to which mourners have faith in the narrative the ritual words tell. If a funeral ceremony describes detail of an after-life that is a central part of the mourner's faith, then it will be a comfort indeed. But ceremonial or other references to an after-life which mourners consider nonsense can do more harm than good.

A Quaker Meeting offers excellent occasions to share and compare hopes and beliefs about the afterlife. Because we can never know for sure, considering the widest possible range of

speculation is helpful. Conversations about after-life theories are essential for future comfort when bereaved. Some people may resist participating. My experience is that it is much better to be clear-eyed about this one inescapable fact of existence: Everyone will die. Getting used to the idea and making preparations helps.

Biblically-based religions are among those with paradisaic systems that promise everlasting joy and eternal light in a perfect realm in the sky. This world may be balanced by a punitive hell, sometimes described as filled with lakes of burning sulphur to make it both searingly hot and unbearably smelly. (I daresay that not many know what burning sulphur smells like these days, which may help explain why threats of hell are losing effectiveness.)

Several world religions espouse reincarnation of each indestructible personal soul. At death the human soul is reassigned to another creature based on one's spiritual success in the past life. The wheel of existence is repeated endlessly until one reaches the ultimate. The Hades of Greek mythology has elements of both eternal punishment and selected reincarnations. Indigenous spiritual systems often tell of an after-life that may be consistent with its creation narrative, or may depart into entirely new ideas.

Both Lyn and I were unable to believe her ancestors' conviction (based on love of the hymn "I Walk in the Garden") that they would spend eternity walking and talking in a heavenly garden with Jesus. We came to believe differently: that death disembodies us. The physical "us" rejoins Earth, cycling elements in the biosphere. The spiritual "us" rejoins the universal Spirit in all or any of its manifestations. This accords with Quaker conviction of the inward Light, "that of God" within every person.

At this point our narratives diverged. I do not expect to maintain individuality when what is now "my" spirit returns to its source. Sorry. No meeting with old friends and relatives.

Lyn was pretty sure that her spirit would find a home among the wild things she deeply loved. Retaining personal identity did not interest her either way. In light of her after-life narrative I found it striking (and something of a comfort) that when she exhaled her last breath, a large blue jay flew from the feeder and fluttered at her window.

The one thing that most funeral rites have in common is the necessity for plenty of good food. My own grieving was moved forward by a fine buffet and open bar after a Memorial Meeting. Friends, neighbours, and relatives met each other and spoke easily, naturally, about memories of Lyn, the good, the bad, the comical, and the tragical.

We managed to get this in just before the pandemic put an end to such events. I think that many people's mourning has been handicapped by pandemic protocols restricting gatherings.

Western peoples, where Christianity of various colours is the dominant religion, have experienced loss of intimacy in funeral rites. The change in location of death from home to hospital, and the associated rise of a professional mortician class has come to mean that bereaved persons do not see the dead until they have been prepared for public viewing. Mourners do not participate until essential work with the body is done.

I did not think of it at the time, but I would have liked to have washed and dried my Lyn's body, closed her openings, arranged her limbs and brushed her hair. Not everyone would want to do this, but I think now that I missed an important part of my grieving.

It has not helped me to think of grief as an illness.

Grief, at least mine, is not something to be healed, like poison ivy or a broken arm. Instead I think of it as something that should be lived out. In the same way I prefer to call death what it is and eschew pretty death-denying euphemisms like passing, crossing over, falling asleep, etc.

The various stage theories of grief have not helped me either. There certainly are different emotional states but they happen to me repeatedly in random order, at least in the 15 months since Lyn's death. I am no longer surprised that the smell of a pot of soup, or a happy dance tune starts me weeping. I've learned to welcome tears as one of the things that "living out" grief means. It also means normal attention to memories, not obsession, especially in conversation with others.

I was blessed by a quotation (with various attributions) that was offered as ministry in a Meeting for Worship for Grieving.

"Grief, I've learned is really just love. It's all the love you want to give and cannot. All that unspent love gathers in the corners of your eyes, the lump in your throat and the hollow in your chest. Grief is just love with no place to go."

My critical mind, trained in physiology, reacted badly to this. But my emotions jumped with the joyful discovery that this is exactly my condition. Once again the hot tears of stopped up love streamed down my cheeks. And I marvelled at the mysterious ability of words to touch deep inner springs.

This quotation, like many on grief, omits the reverse proposition. It is one I feel keenly. My grief is not only love in me that no longer has a target – it is also my loss of being a target for Lyn's love. In short, I miss being loved in the way that only comes from being mated with a person for most of one's life. A well- and long-practiced love has ended. And my life is impoverished.



"grief and loss" by Thomas8047 (Creative Commons/flickr)

The mechanics of managing post-mortem arrangements were easy for me: We had a practice over many years of Samhain ceremonies largely focusing on death and dying. These led us to pre-arrange funeral and burial rites that could be called on in confidence that they had been fully discerned. I had a highly supportive daughter and son-in-law. The communities of Friends, extended family, and neighbours were fully engaged in memorial events. The first pandemic lockdown severely limited any further ceremony. Lyn's ashes were buried on a lovely May day in a cemetery we both knew well. A tree will be planted in lieu of a headstone, so her earthly shell is marked by natural beauty close to four generations of her kinfolk.

Her spirit, I think, is similarly returned to its source in the Power of the Universe. It is possibly part of the creative forces at work making life go on another planet. What fun!

I found that disposing of Lyn's personal items was more helpful than distressing. We talked about her love of certain pieces of jewelry as these were distributed among grand-daughters. We laughed at her peculiar ways of managing purses. Her financial affairs had already been seconded. Most of her clothing was welcome in the stock of spares in her last home. It felt proper that a tidy person should leave no messes.

I do not expect to be free of grief. Rather I expect that welcoming it, however painful at first, will allow exploration and spiritual growth. Just as my tongue insists on investigating the empty socket where a tooth has been extracted, so my meditations and increased time in silent worship will reveal new insights into this part of the human experience. Unlike the tooth analogy, I do not anticipate a replacement. 🌿



## Quakers Past and Present

*by Daniel Alexander, Coldstream Monthly Meeting*

In 1984 I saw an ad in the religion section of the *London Free Press*. It was for Coldstream Quaker Meeting, and for some reason I felt a compulsion to call the number. George Webb answered the phone, and we had a short conversation that left me with an appointment to meet a lady named Elsie Cutler. She would provide a ride from my home in downtown London to the Meeting House and back again.

For the first time in my life, I looked forward to a Sunday morning. I was 26 at the time, so when Elsie appeared she seemed a most ancient creature. I had no idea what to expect. I was raised without any real experience in “church.” Sunday morning usually meant hangover not church when I was young. But I was looking for something. I had gone by myself for many years to any church close enough and sat and watched, very judgmentally, as they proclaimed how dirty and shameful we all were and that they and they alone could fix that. Then they passed the hat like a busker to keep the show going.

My first memory of a Quaker Meeting is that I took money, expecting a collection – that’s what churches did. You always had to pay for the show. When I got home with my crinkled five-dollar bill I had a lot to think about. I had never experienced anything like it.

Over the next year I managed to arrange between George and Elsie to attend as often as possible. It was revelation and an education. I was probably the most annoying attender they had ever met. I remember calling the God of the Old Testament a warlord in one conversation and a very, very, very long silence ensued. Another time when one very weighty Quaker lady was giving a lesson on Paul of Tarsus, I said he was an irrelevant misogynist. Again there was a very long silence.

This was the first chapter in my Quaker story, and it ended with a whimper, not a bang. My life then was gay bars and AIDS funerals. I had just begun a relationship with a man who had been severely damaged by a religious upbringing, and my visits to Coldstream became an interesting memory.

In 2010, I began a small organic produce business on a friend’s farm with that same man, 26 years after my first experience at Coldstream. We found a new farmers market that had been started in Coldstream. They needed vendors and we needed buyers, so we decided to try our luck. It was a bucolic setting on the edge of the conservation area and the locals seemed very intent on making it a success.

We didn’t make any money. We spent a lot more than we made –and I would do the same again tomorrow.

There was a lot of down-time at the market, waiting for someone who wanted an heirloom zucchini. I began to go for walks in the down time. I ended up venturing across the bridge and down Quaker Lane. Of course I came upon the Meeting House and went in and sat down. I found I didn’t want to leave.

In 2018, I became a member of the Religious Society of Friends.

In 2014, my sister became a great-grandmother, and I began to think of doing a family history. I felt so much had already been lost to time and indifference. Still, it felt like I could give my little great-grandnephew a sense of where he came from. That would be a gift that nobody else would think of. So I began a journey for little Zane that became a search for not just the root of our family, but my Quaker journey to understanding the history of my world.

So now settler guilt raises its ugly head. My family arrived in North America in 1682. This was the first pulse of Quakerism as it fled the oppression of England for the freedom of America. We were supposed to create a new world, but it already existed. The new kingdom of god had no patience for the kingdom they found, and they quickly set about demolishing it. My ancestors played a pivotal role.

In my researching the family history, I came upon what for me were some startling facts. My mother (maiden name Cooper) had said very casually that some of her ancestors had been Quakers. I doubt she even said it to me – it just somehow came up in conversation with someone and I, ever the curious child, registered it. So when I followed the Cooper name I quickly came up with names and the names led to records of Monthly Meetings in Ontario then Philadelphia and New York that corresponded to names I could connect with my family.

James Cooper was a member of the committee sent from Philadelphia to Yonge Street Meeting to examine its request to become an Approved Meeting in 1801. He must have liked Canada because he later brought his family to Prince Edward County and became a member of West Lake Meeting. His son was disowned for marrying my great-great-great grandmother, who was a Methodist. They moved to North Dorchester and never looked back.

All these generations later the Quaker genes seem reawakened in a most unlikely candidate – me.

In my research I came upon early records that mentioned my family. It seems they were pioneers in Pennsylvania in the mid-1700s. A suburb of Philadelphia, Coopersdale, is named for them. Coopersdale has some amazing archival material. John Cooper, (father of the aforementioned James) a member of Philadelphia Meeting, is mentioned. The reference was disturbing. It seems that this John Cooper committed a crime – a crime which became a mere footnote in the history of the area.

John was out with another fellow when they came upon an “Indian” man in a canoe, peacefully fishing in the river. John shot and killed the man. No explanation is given, and I can only assume none was needed. The records say many people in the neighbourhood were upset because the Indian was well-known and liked in the area. They were not upset enough to pursue any charges, although a murder most foul had occurred in their midst. A murder committed by a pacifist.

James Cooper remained and died a respected member of the Quaker community. I am his descendant.

So settler guilt should come very naturally to me. I should feel shame and disgust. I am the product of an unjust regime that clothed itself in godly talk and murderous acts. But I don't.

Why you ask?

I grew up and have lived my life in a very different world than my ancestors. I didn't even know they existed until I went searching for them. I grew up in a world where Indigenous kids in my neighbourhood were my friends and playmates. The pain our Indigenous relatives have suffered is real. I have witnessed it all my life. And that is my point: my life, the life that I can effect change in, is my focus. I cannot change the past. I can change the future.

Becoming a Quaker was part of seeking the truth. I don't own truth and despite my best intentions I sometimes have trouble practicing it. But I know it when I see it. I am not solely the product of another generation. I am an entirely new person. My Quakerism is my own and it opens my world to include all people. I don't see an Indigenous person and assume I know them. They are an entirely new people with each generation, and they are finding themselves in the same way that I am. Warts and all.

Guilt is not a useful thing when one seeks change. It can be the impetus but beyond that it has no other purpose than to distract and delay the real work of decolonization. Once again, the story becomes about me and the real stories that need telling are overshadowed. Settler guilt feels like white privilege writ large to me. 🌱

## CYM and Me

*by Sheila Havard, Contributions Committee*

Most likely, you have encountered attempts by NGOs or Quaker bodies to persuade you to donate monthly. I certainly have – and I have always resisted, stubbornly arguing that, as my monthly income fluctuates wildly, I cannot make any such commitment. Oh yes, but monthly giving makes things easier for the organization to which you are donating – say, CYM – continues my fundraising F/friend. Well, I can certainly see that having a predictable cashflow is helpful, but that is not enough to make me change my mind, at least so far.

Now CanadaHelps is offering an online course, thankfully through emails and not videoconferencing, on the benefits of monthly giving. And I'm half persuaded already.

On average, monthly donors give twice as much per year as one-time donors and they give for an average of five to seven years. Because of the long-lasting relationship built up, monthly donors become more committed to the organization than one-time donors, making communication with them easier. With the confidence of a regular monthly inflow of donations, organizations can engage in long-term planning and need to spend less time and money on soliciting donations.

Now all this obviously deals with “what is in it” for CYM and not “what is in it” for the donor. However, since we care for the sustainability of the Yearly Meeting, perhaps we one-time or occasional donors should at the very least consider switching to monthly donations.

*To make a monthly or one-time donation, turn the page or visit [quaker.ca/contact/donate](https://quaker.ca/contact/donate). 🌱*

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“Those seeking a more minimalistic punk offering will find respite in the music of Quaker Wedding, whose 2019 Demo finds its strength in aggressive, electric guitar-driven songs and frothy vox. Recorded and released in February of last year, the immediacy in its release is instantaneously felt; tracks are concise, appropriately discordant, and without any unnecessary bells and whistles, perfect listening for fans of groups like Japandroids or Fucked Up. Give it a spin below, and see Quaker Wedding at the Windjammer on January 12th.”

— the deli: emerging music from your local scene  
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