

HAMILTON MONTHLY MEETING
of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
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NEWSLETTER APRIL 2009

REFRESHMENTS FOR MEETING FOR WORSHIP

5 April: Christina; **12 April:** Louise; **19 April:** Mona C; **26 April:** Chris; **3 May:** Glenna; **10 May:** Betty; **17 May:** Ruth

UPCOMING DATES – PLEASE COME!

12 April: Cambridge Worship Group; **19 April:** Quaker 101, after Meeting for Worship; **26 April:** Quaker 101, after Meeting for Worship; **9 May 2009**, 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.: HMM Retreat, “Reaching Out & Reaching In” at Cedar Haven near Freelon.

5 – 7 June: Yonge Street Half-Yearly Meeting, “Finding our Faith, Engaging our Diversity”, at Camp NeeKauNis near Midland. (Other info can be downloaded at <http://www.hwcen.org/link/hmm/events.html>) For the Young Friends’ Program, please contact Sandy Duckworth for more information. sandsduckworth@sympatico.ca

Fall 2009 (exact date TBA): HMM hosts Yonge Street Half-Yearly Meeting. Friends are asked to bring a proposed program topic to the May Meeting for Worship for Business. **If you have a program topic for consideration, please let Christina know by the 14 April.**

QUAKER 101: Two brown bag lunches to explore Quaker faith and practice

When: April 19 and 26 2009 following Meeting for Worship. Approximate time: noon to 2 pm

Where: Hamilton Monthly Meeting (HMM)

2nd floor

Facilitators: Don and Harriet

For whom? We remember that many things were mysterious when we started coming to Meeting for Worship. We’d like to make your experience a little easier. We encourage anyone who is fairly new to our Meeting to come. We hope that Quaker 101 will be a fairly informal opportunity for exploring

some of the basics of Quaker faith and practice.

Topics: We will talk about Quaker history and the testimonies on April 19th. Our plan is to focus on Meeting for Worship and Quaker decision-making (including how things move along at HMM) on April 26th; however, we are open to other topics that come up at the first lunch and will try to discuss what interests the group when we meet for the second time.

Format: We will present information but that won't take the whole time. We hope you will bring questions because there will be time for discussion. Our hope is to have a format that is comfortably structured.

If you are interested:

If possible we'd like to know if you are thinking of coming; however, if you show up without advance notice that won't be a problem.

Coming twice is best but once is okay.

Tell us in advance about anything you'd like us to try to include.

Invite anyone to join us.

Think about attending the March 27th potluck on silence.

Think about attending the May 9-10th retreat.

ORGANIC PRODUCTS AVAILABLE

Tony and Fran McQuail, members of Lucknow Worship Group, own and operate Meeting Place Farm. They raise wonderful organic products and deliver to this area for a small fee if pick-up is difficult. Have a look at their website: it's time for the spring meat orders. Website:

www.meetingplaceorganicfarm.ca

Email address: mcqufarm@hurontel.on.ca Phone: 519-528-2493

NEED MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS BUSINESS MEETINGS?

You can find Minutes from previous Meetings for Worship for Business, as well as other information on things Quaker at the Hamilton Monthly Meeting web site, <http://hwcn.org/link/hmm>

GARDENING AT THE MEETING HOUSE

Contact Jean to find out how you can help our garden thrive.

FEBRUARY POTLUCK ON QUAKER DIVERSITY AND CHRISTIAN ROOTS

Three Friends presented to the gathering: Beverly, Christopher and Jesse. The following are excerpts from notes I received. More on Quaker Diversity and Christian roots can be found in the

December 2008 *Canadian Friend*.

From Beverly:

Canadian Quakers are a highly diverse group theologically, including some Friends who don't even relate to the word "theology". In most situations most Quakers are not comfortable talking about our differences. In particular some of us are disinclined to discuss with each other anything that has "Christ" or even "Jesus" in its name, aware of how far apart the views may be in any given group of Friends. As the Consultation and Renewal Working Group's (C'n'R) report put it: "...we tend not to engage with our diversity. We keep our points of view to ourselves because we fear unpleasant or hurtful responses when we share....".

Why are we so uncomfortable with these topics? Why did the C'n'R group find "that tension between Christian and non-Christian Friends has created difficulties in many local meetings and that the Christians are the ones leaving?" Those who attended the Christian roots Special Interest Group (SIG) came together ready to "listen in tongues", "listen to where words come from", and "sense the feelings under the words". Although we recognized too that there is "a way of communicating and learning that has nothing to do with words", we had of necessity to share our thoughts and feelings by means of words, and we did this with tenderness, honesty, and joy. ...

We recognized a huge diversity - in belief in (or not in!) God, Jesus, Jesus as Christ, religion, and more - but a good deal of common ground as well. We began to feel that much of what we may view as conflict is appearance and not reality. For one thing terminology is a problem. Words seem at best insufficient and at worst deceptive to some of us when speaking and hearing about the numinous. What makes us all Quakers is *unsaid*. ...

We insist we aren't creedal, and for good reason. The old spoken creeds of the traditional Christian denominations are all about the birth and death of Christ, and omit His teachings altogether. Some creeds in fact seem almost contrary to them. Yet we do have beliefs. ...

What do those traditional Quaker sayings really say to us? They were the distillation for those first Friends of what Christ was teaching His people. Never mind the language - what did they mean? What did Christ teach His people? This body of instruction - the peace testimony, that of God within, continuing revelation, equality, and all the rest - this is what we can hold to, and this is what we can affirm to others and teach to our own young people. This is what makes us Quakers, whether or not we're "Christians" and whatever sort of Christian or not-Christian we may be.

From Christopher:

"The Lord taught me to be faithful in all things, and to act faithfully in two ways...inwardly to God and outwardly to man." George Fox

Religion to Fox was a twofold relationship: "a vertical relationship to God a horizontal relationship to other people" Lenard Kenworthy

Challenges:

- How to relate the Light of Christ Within to the historic Jesus
- Many Quakers maintain their heritage by maintaining the light but no longer relating it to the Christ

“Quakerism is a big tent and if so it must provide an unobstructed view for everyone”

Jesse shared her personal journey - as a child growing up in Meeting and the path she is now on.

HAMILTON MONTHLY MEETING
MEETING FOR WORSHIP FOR BUSINESS
SUNDAY, 5 APRIL, 2009

Present: Andy (Clerk), Betty, Dick (acting Recording Clerk), Jean, Christina, Wilf, Chris, Beverly, Don, Helen, Mona C

Regrets: Carol Leigh, Glenna

1. Meeting started in silence at 12:25.
2. Minutes of the last meeting were approved, subject to the inclusion of names omitted.
3. Business arising:
 - 3.1.1. **Half Yearly Meeting delegates:** We name Jean as our delegate and Beverly as alternate.
 - 3.1.2. **Fall Half-Yearly Meeting:** We are responsible for publicity and program. This includes choice of the topic. We ask Christina, Wilf, and Chris to be the working group with Beverly as a consultant to report back to our May meeting.
 - 3.2. The **State of Society report** was read for the final time and the phrase “and slipping away from us.” is deleted. The State of Society report is approved.
 - 3.3. **Naming committee** to nominating committee: Chris has accepted to be on this committee, and we will ask Ruth (subject to consent) with Ruven as alternate, should Ruth decline.
 - 3.4. **Potlucks:** The March potluck was lovely, small, and included very good food. Topic for April potluck: Islam. Beverly will contact Syed Jafer about a good date in April. May Potluck: Ann Mitchell; Mona will confirm. June Potluck: Food sustainability. Gathering at Ian's. Chris will contact
 - 3.5. **Cleaning the Meeting House:** We ask Don & Harriet to work with Tony to find the best way to proceed.

4. Reports:

- 4.1. **Nominating committee** recommends that our outreach committee be reactivated with Beverly and Paul.
- 4.2. **PSAC**: We agree to Dick's request that \$150 from the PSAC budget be donated to the Canadian Department of Peace initiative. The donation can be made at departmentofpeace.ca and will be tax receipted.

5. New business:

- 5.1. **Hosting FGC development committee**. (See note on April MWB agenda) asks for an indication of interest in hosting them - perhaps 17 people. Beverly will contact Michael Wajda and express our interest with the reservation that we must first determine that we can find billeting for 17 people in the Fall of 2010.
- 5.2. Beverly spoke to HMM being asked for a position on whether **Representative Meeting** should reduce their meetings from two to one per year. About 30-35 people usually attend. Teleconferencing or Skype with that many people is awkward. Having a small number of representatives-of-representatives has been tried during a year of budget crisis. Face to face meetings are very important, but the cost of travel for 2007 was \$9714, about a sixth of the CYM budget. The environmental costs are a concern. We recommend the solution of reducing the numbers of representatives at one or both of the annual meetings. We leave the decision as to the number of smaller meetings and the means of selection to Representative Meeting.
- 5.3. Wilf speaks to the request for **support for Abousfian Abdelrazik**, who has not been treated in accordance with the rights of Canadian citizens to rule of law and to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Wilf asks that HMM join the list of endorsing groups and approve his continuing to update us by email. He would appreciate support of Representative Meeting and CFSC. He would also appreciate a letter from our meeting to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

We approve the following steps:

- HMM supports Wilf's work on behalf of Abousfian Abdelrazik
- HMM endorses the campaign to bring him back to Canada, and will add HMM to the list of groups supporting this action.
- HMM will send a letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The letter will be written by Wilf and Andy.
- Wilf will keep us updated via email.
- HMM will forward this supporting minute to Representative Meeting and CFSC, for both CYM and CFSC to take a position on this.
- We recognize that Wilf may be charged for disobeying Canadian law, and we will support him and his family.

6. Letters:

- 6.1. We have received a letter from **Wilf applying for membership**. We name a visiting committee of Beverly, Betty, and Andy.
- 6.2. We have received from **Shirla applying for membership**. We name visiting committee of Don, Jean and Dick.

- 6.3. A letter announcing an **open house at St. George's Church** is passed on to the Outreach Committee.
7. Next Meeting for Worship for Business is May 3rd.
 8. Meeting close in silent worship.

Dick, temporary recording clerk