

HAMILTON MONTHLY MEETING
of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
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NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2008

REFRESHMENTS FOR MEETING FOR WORSHIP

UPCOMING DATES

13 December: Cookies and Carols. Join us at the Meetinghouse at 10:30. We will divide the cookies onto plates to give to Friends who have difficulty getting to Meeting. If you have questions, contact Dick, Betty, or Robbie M.

21 December: First Day School Christmas programme and carol singing lunch potluck.

23 January: Film, "Forgiveness", to be confirmed

FIRST DAY SCHOOL NEWS

Hi everyone, here's an update on things that are happening with the First Day School.

1) Our theme for the year is "Stories That Inspire Us!", and we have been reading and sharing such stories at First Day School. One of the stories that inspired us was the story of a girl who gave a great deal of time and thought to helping other children (foster children) who were less fortunate than her. It has inspired us to undertake our own initiative this year.

The First Day School children are inviting everyone involved in Meeting to bring a donation of either cash/cheque (tax deductible) or a new or lightly used toy when you attend Meeting on December 21st. The money we are raising will go towards the CHML Christmas Tree of Hope campaign, which provides key funding to numerous agencies that support the needs of Hamilton's children. The toys will go via the CHML "Toy Truck" to less fortunate children across the area.

2) The date of our First Day School Christmas performance (which we are very much looking forward to!) will be Sunday December 21st.

3) in the new year, we will be looking for Friends to take turns to come in to First Day School for a 15-30 minute chat with the children. This will give the children a chance to get to know each of you and vice versa, and also give you a chance to share with us a story that inspires you. The story can be about some aspect of Quakerism or its history, some other religious or non-religious story, or something out of your own life.

The first and third Sundays are when we meet, and if you're interested/available to

come in and meet with us in 2009 then please pick a date and sign up (by giving me a call or sending an e-mail).

I'd like to close by thanking the many people who pitch in and help ensure that there's hot chocolate and tasty snacks after Meeting. All of the children find these to be great for morale!

Wilf

DONATIONS FOR 2008

Those Friends who have not yet made their donations to the Meeting for 2008 are reminded to make their payments before December 31st so that income tax receipts can be issued in the early part of 2008. Please make cheques payable to "The Religious Society of Friends" and place them in the donations box or in the treasurer's file in the lobby of the Meeting House.

Hamilton Monthly Meeting Meeting for Worship for Business Sunday, 7 December 2008

Present: Helen B, Rex, Mona C, Christina, Blair, Glenna, Brian (invited visitor from OPIRG), Andy (Clerk), John, Beverly, Carol Leigh (Recording Clerk), Don

- 1 Meeting began with **worship** at 12:35
- 2 **Minutes of the Meeting of 2 November 2008**: approved as read
- 3 **Business Arising**
 - 3.1 Hand Towels for the flu season. We will continue to maintain a single towel for communal use for those who don't mind this system, and will provide single-use towels for those who wish them. Christina will initiate and maintain this system for the present time.
 - 3.2 Quaker Quest – should we pursue this avenue for outreach? A Young adult Friend who was formerly an attender at Hamilton Monthly Meeting, Jaya, is trained to teach how to do Quaker Quest and would like to do so. Both some interest and some reservations were expressed, including wondering whether this truly is effective as outreach in terms of bringing continuing fresh involvement. We will contact FGC to ask for a facilitator for May 9 (as our first choice of date) and Jaya as our first choice of facilitator, and have this be our spring Meeting retreat. We will leave the choices of date and facilitator, and the final arrangements, to Ministry and Counsel, who will report to Meeting on the actual arrangements.

3.3 Date for Meetinghouse Cleanup: we will have a clean-up day on the afternoon of the third Sunday in January (Jan 18) - we will request a coordinating group through the newsletter, after-meeting announcement, and separate email.

4 Reports

4.1 Yonge Street Half Yearly Meeting: The Clerk read a written report from Jesse, attached to these minutes. We thank Jesse for the report, and Mona for verbal clarifications. The first of the two items for discussion, that of the manner of dating of our minutes, is laid over.

4.2 Treasurer: (Blair) We received an update from the treasurer on our present status. Donations are significantly below projected amounts; expenses are also below projections, so we are not dangerously out of balance, but Friends may wish to keep this in mind. The "relief of local hardship" donation will be sent to the same organizations as last year (Out of the Cold, Good Shepherd Centre, Wesley Centre & Mission Services; each group will receive a cheque for \$175.00). We thank Blair for his report.

4.3 Maintenance: the Clerk read an (emailed) report from Reuven, of Maintenance Committee. Reuven reported on summer grass cutting and winter snow removal and the related costs. Snow will be cleared from the sidewalks. We do not have a contract to have the driveway and parking lot cleared of snow. (Report attached)

4.4 Nominating Committee: Glenna reported for Nominating Committee. John has confirmed that he is continuing on Maintenance Committee, and Don has agreed to serve on Maintenance Committee. Approved. Nominating Committee also asks whether a substitute Friend is needed for Ministry and Counsel while Roberta M is absent in China, leaving the group reduced. Meeting affirms that another Friend to serve for that time is needed, and asks Nominating Committee to find a suitable Friend.

5 New Business

5.1 Energy Issues and the Meeting House: Christina reported on Bullfrog Power, recommending converting to it for the meetinghouse. Helen spoke about solar panels, hoping that we will be ready with solar panels when the "smart metres" are ready to feed back into the grid. She described a new company making solar panels more efficiently, which might be ready when the metres are. Helen also spoke of the advantages of on-demand water heating. Information on recovery of capital costs was not available. Several questions were raised, some of which require further research. Friends are asked to consider and discuss these proposals for decision in January.

5.2 Potlucks for the New Year: A film titled *Forgiveness* was discussed; we will acquire it if possible (Helen and Don will investigate its availability) to view at a potluck Friday, January 23, to be confirmed at the January M4W4B. Other potlucks for 2009 will be discussed at the January M4W4B. One possibility is to invite Anne Mitchell (of Toronto MM) to come to talk to us about CELAP, on environmental issues.

5.3 Spring Retreat (M& C) (See 3.2 above)

6 **Correspondence**

6.1 C'n'R Implementation Committee laid over to January (as Business Arising)

7 **Next Meeting** – 4 January 2009

8 **Worship**: Meeting ended at 2:45 in worship.

HAMILTON MONTHLY MEETING
REPORT OF THE MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE
4 DECEMBER 2008

Grass cutting last summer was "on demand", usually at intervals of about ten days. There were 14 mowings @ \$25. Total \$350. The last mowing was free (by me because it was cool enough).

Snow clearing of the path and sidewalk has been arranged at \$375 for the season. This does not include the driveway and parking lot. If there are other cheaper suggestions for next summer, please let these be known. I don't know whether the grass-cutting can be repeated as on-demand.

Someone thoughtfully filled the mower gas container in the shed. It is now nearly full, but the gas will be stale by next spring, and is best emptied into a vehicle.

Cheers, Reuven
- formatted by Andy

REPORT TO HAMILTON MONTHLY MEETING
ON YONGE STREET HALF YEARLY MEETING
NOVEMBER 1ST, 2008

On the 1st day of the 11th month, Friends met in fellowship for Yonge Street Half Yearly Meeting at the Simcoe-Muskoka Meetinghouse. Members from Hamilton Monthly Meeting attending were: Mona C, Jesse, Carol Leigh and Glenna. In the absence of a designated delegate, Jesse volunteered to serve.

We gathered in spirit of warm friendship, with good attendance despite the long travelling distance for some Friends. During the morning session, we were blessed to be lead in an enriching workshop on Indigenous spirituality and the medicine wheel. After a warm lunch of soup and sandwiches, we convened for a lively and deeply lead business meeting. We celebrated the work that enabled us to meet in fellowship and fun as part of the Friends World Committee for Consultation, Section of the Americas Gathering in September. We also received a deeply felt report from Judy Gilbert on the current status of the American war resisters who are seeking to remain in Canada.

Two items of business were raised that require some consideration by Hamilton Monthly Meeting before the spring meeting:

1. We are asked to consider whether we, as Friends, wish to continue the traditional Friends' practice of dating our minutes with numbered dates, or whether we wish to establish a practice of using secular date names.
2. We are encouraged to consider recommendations C1, D1, D2, and D3 from the Yearly Meeting Report on Consultation and Renewal, and to set aside a designated time to discuss these recommendations. We are asked to take extra care to include Young Friends in these discussions.

Following Business meeting, Friends took part in tours of the newly established Foxfell housing units. The care and attention to forming strong community amongst the families living there, and the effort to institute good environmental practice in the construction of the housing was evident. It was joyful to see the fruit of this long-tended project. Friends departed after a shared meal in good company.

- Jesse

STUDY OF PEACE TAKES MANY FORMS - It's not just for nations – its up to each of us.

-Ray

Many thoughtful speakers believe the world is entering a moment of great hope. That conclusion was clear from the Seventh Annual Peace Education Conference at McMaster, which outlined progress in many areas.

From Alberta, Senator Douglas Roche suggested there is a gradual awakening of Global Conscience. He said “humans are becoming more and more aware of the need to be responsible for each other and for the planet.” His words outlined a clear path, away from violence and warfare, towards human survival and international peace.

Closer to home, a more individual kind of peace education was presented by Larry Fisk from Edmonton who explained how ‘Social Intelligence’ is helping to improve inter-personal relations.

This approach was echoed by Ted Kuntz, a psychotherapist from Vancouver, who reminded his audience that even well-intentioned people often don't know how to act

peacefully. While everyone tries their best, inner anger and passion can engender angry responses. With his concept 'Peace Begins With Me' his talk outlined ways for ordinary folk to find more inner peace and personal joy.

Transforming society from a culture of war to a culture of peace was the theme of Julie Hyde, an inspiring young teacher at McMaster who is also a graduate of the University of Peace in Costa Rica.

Two hundred of her first-year students were present in busy classrooms to explain to visitors the contemporary social problem they had chosen to study. Topics included: Terrorism; Human Slavery; Structural Violence; Genocide; Poverty; Nuclear Weapons; War on Women; Human Rights; Racism; Religion and Environmental Change.

The subject of rape and women's rights was addressed by Krista Warnke of Hamilton's Sexual Assault Centre. This often taboo subject revealed the deep-seated violence of much masculine culture and the damaging concept that 'girls must always please the guys'.

A different take on peace education came from Erica Barnes, a fourth-year engineering student who revealed how much she had learned during her summer spent in Africa with 'Engineers Without Borders' helping non-government organizations drill and maintain deep wells in Malawi villages.

Saving the planet by reducing one's carbon footprint was addressed with much humour by David Masters. Originally a novice on environmental issues he gave up his job as a stockbroker and went back to his family property because his father was sick. Once there he became a convert, building himself an eco-friendly lodging in the family woodlot where he now runs a business demonstrating low cost solar and wind power systems.

Steven Staples, president of The Rideau Institute of International Affairs in Ottawa, provided a glimpse of how Canadian non-governmental organizations are working together to tackle climate change and stop the diversion of scarce funds from social programs to the military.

David Jacobs warned that the 'Responsibility to Protect' doctrine was now being used as a cover for military aggression. In his view peace activists who call for troops to be sent against failed states are in danger of encouraging cures that are often worse than the disease. He cautioned that humanitarian aid can quickly turn into a new form of colonization.

Graeme MacQueen, founder of McMaster University's Centre for Peace Studies, posed the need for academics to study and challenge the accuracy of government statements. Citing the collapse of the twin towers he reminded his audience that by any standards it was a major crime. Yet within twelve hours, the horrendous crime story was explained away as an act of war by Al-Qaeda. "Why didn't the police continue their investigation

and tell us exactly who did what?”

Though the road is long, Peace Education is slowly growing in Canada. While Hamilton is the first to host seven annual conferences, Calgary has now hosted four, and two have taken place in Quebec.

A lot of credit for this growth must go to Robert Stewart, a McMaster graduate who has devoted much time and money to peace issues. His latest venture is promoting the idea of Peace Cafés as centres for peace education. The first such café was opened in Hamilton last year at the Skydragon Community Cooperative downtown.

Today's vision of peace education is something everyone can take part in. Many see it as a major step on the road to human survival.