

Hamilton Friends December 2019 Newsletter



Advices and Queries

39 Consider which of the ways to happiness offered by society are truly fulfilling and which are potentially corrupting and destructive. Be discriminating when choosing means of entertainment and information. Resist the desire to acquire possessions or income through unethical investment, speculation or games of chance.

Coffee List

December 1 Janis Muller
December 8
December 15 Chris/Selena
December 22
December 29



Friends, this coffee list is mostly blank! The Mullers braved the inclement weather on the first of December and brought muffins to an empty Meeting House, so we had them to serve on the 8th -- thank you, Mullers! But what about the 22nd and the 29th? If you're not away for the holidays, and *especially* if you don't usually sign up for the coffee service, *please* pick one of those days and sign up to provide the refreshments and make the coffee that day. It isn't hard, and coffee time is so meaningful for most of us, with its opportunities to talk with other Friends and get better acquainted, as well as to share joys and concerns, that we should all be helping to support it. Instructions are in the kitchen -- just be sure that milk and cream are available. It's easy!

Calendar

December 15: Christmas Carols after Meeting for Worship

December 21: Memorial Meeting for Ray Cunnington at 2 p.m.



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

January 5: Meeting for Worship for Business

Jan 12: First Day School Presentation at end of Meeting for Worship

Jan 12: Following the presentation: Threshing session to discuss the requests in the letter from the Ad Hoc Committee on Financial Sustainability of CYM.

Jan 26 12:30 pm: Potluck and Truth and Reconciliation presentation: viewing a portion of "Hear our Voices" video followed by a discussion.



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

In memory of Ray Cunningham, one of his writings is being reprinted along with a review of his book.

- submitted by Paul Dekar

By Ray Cunningham

Why the Culture of Peace is a Local Issue for me

Sometimes, when I yearn for society to change, I forget that the only person I can change is myself. And doing that is no easy task. What follows is a personal reflection about the Culture of Peace as I gradually recognized its potentials.

The U.N. General Assembly did something special when it proclaimed the year 2000 the 'International Year for the Culture of Peace'. Instead of speaking to nations, it asked all the people in the world to treat each other better by following six paths of action. These six pathways were drafted by Nobel Peace Laureates with the help of researchers in UNESCO. Across the world seventy-five million pledged to follow this advice.

In Hamilton , several members of the local United Nations Association in Canada welcomed the new initiatives and formed the Hamilton Culture of Peace Network. The group held public meetings and wrote articles for the paper, working to apply the six recommendations locally and make them better known.

Personally, although I supported the UN initiative, I was concerned whether a few headings could make much of a dent in the armaments industry or stop tyrants from attacking their enemies. Words like 'Respect all life', 'Share with others', 'Preserve the planet', 'Reject violence', 'Listen to Understand' and 'Rediscover solidarity' seemed altogether too flimsy to stand up against powerful interests determined on waging war.

It has taken me many years to understand the power of these ideas. A Culture of Peace is not created by rulers, but by people! Peace generally runs from the bottom up. A community can develop into an oasis of peace if its members want it. So my path to a more peaceful world starts right here in Hamilton!

The way our city functions depends on everyone; all of us are part of its culture. While Hamilton seems peaceful enough on the surface, looking deeper we find plenty of casualties from a hidden kind of warfare; young and old living precarious lives, afraid to speak, suffering abuses like harassment, poverty, racism, bullying, addictions and violence.

This kind of war does not begin with guns and marching men but with unjust traditions and inflexible attitudes. Violence against women and children can't be stopped simply by orders from Council or the Police, but by helping family members and the whole community to build a less angry, less adversarial culture; one that works to reduce social friction, violence and the use of force.

Here's where the Culture of Peace comes in: it offers simple actions that anyone can follow. Unlike laws which everyone must obey, these are voluntary, no one is going to be punished if they don't do them. Orders telling people what NOT to do aren't very helpful. They don't teach anyone how to make society better; whereas the six paths suggest many ways to make a positive difference. Each pathway helps to reduce the Culture of Fear and Compulsion that underlies the road to war.

The term 'culture of peace' also gives a collective name to the concerns of dozens of smaller groups working for social values all over the city. Individually most of these entities could easily be dismissed as 'special interest groups' but when taken together they form a considerable segment of the population. Though the words 'peace culture' may not be how they think of their activities, there is a common bond that connects compassionate folk with concern for others, whether it is through faith groups, women's shelters, food banks, social agencies, health promotion, youth gyms, immigrant services, anti-bullying programs, poverty reduction, equitable city planning or whatever; they are all striving for peace at a local level. Thousands of good people are attempting to reduce violence and build a better society. Such combined energy shows us what a culture of peace could really be.

For Hamilton the UN pathways provide six domains where the city can measure its human pulse - something very different from its finances.

Each pathway leads to improving a particular area of concern; hence each domain becomes a convenient reference point. By checking and charting these six areas on a regular basis it becomes possible to see whether the society is becoming more accommodating or more adversarial.

Over time, the value of such information could prompt Hamilton Council to be the first in Canada to set up a Culture of Peace Commission. Our task, as I see it, is to follow the U.N.'s pathways and find new ways to pass them on. This could be a lasting gift to the Hamilton community.

The Culture of Peace Pathways and the Domains they
Cover Domain: Concern for each other's life and wellbeing.

Respect All Life:

Respect the life and dignity of each human being
without discrimination or prejudice.

Domain: Concern for those who are afraid of violence or threats of being
harmed.

Reject Violence:

Practice active non-violence, rejecting violence in all its forms:
physical, sexual, psychological, economical and social, in particular
towards the most deprived and vulnerable such as children and
adolescents.

Domain: Concern for maintaining an environment that provides food and
sustains life.

Preserve the Planet:

Promote consumer behaviour that is responsible and developmental
practices that respect all forms of life and preserve the balance of
nature on the planet.

Domain: Concern for coming generations and those who feel alienated
or need help.

Share with Others:

Share my time and material resources in a spirit of generosity to put
an end to exclusion, injustice and political and economic
oppression.

Domain: Concern for other people's views in our conversations and attitudes.

Listen to Understand:

Defend freedom of expression and cultural diversity, giving preference always to dialogue and listening without engaging in fanaticism, defamation and the rejection of others.

Domain:

Concern for better cooperation with other people in public and private life.

Rediscover Solidarity:

Contribute to the development of my community, with the full participation of women and respect for democratic principles, in order to create together new forms of solidarity.

-Submitted by Paul Dekar

Towards Less Adversarial Cultures, by Ray Cunnington
(Hamilton: CreateSpace, 2016) 93 pp, \$13.16 at www.Amazon.ca

Ray Cunnington pleads for readers to free themselves from “the grip of culture.” At a boy's boarding school in England, he resisted the traditional masculine culture that ultimately led to World War II. He evaded combat by volunteering to serve as a medical orderly with the Royal Air Force. “This step has affected my life, jolting me to search for better ways to handle conflict and understand how cultures gradually change.” (p. 8)

After the war, Cunnington moved to Canada, raised a family, had a career and became a mover and shaker with Culture of Peace Hamilton. In part as a result of his efforts, city council has declared Hamilton a City of Peace. Among other projects, Culture of Peace members have installed a peace poll at City Hall, helped beautify a peace garden and started a \$25,000 fund at the Hamilton Community Foundation to ensure the city always has a group committed peace builders.

According to **Ploughshares Monitor** (Autumn 2016), wars abound and climate change is upon us. Cunnington asks, can humanity work together to address these crises? How much depletion of the earth's

bounty will occur before human greed is satisfied? Will nations fight to the last fish, tree and piece of earth? or can common global problems engender learning to share and care for what remains? (p. 13)

This book invites readers to reflect on such questions. Cunnington proposes recognition that, “God or Nature has provided each of us with the incredible gift of choice. Even if we can’t always love our neighbours, at least we don’t have to hurt them.... we don’t have to fight each other to get our needs met. We can become more caring, less judgmental. For the sake of our wonderful planet and everything we hold dear, we can refuse to be each other’s enemies ... A less violent world is possible. It is in our hands.” (pp 85-6)

Now 96, Cunnington weaves a readable account his journey to find alternatives to the adversarial, wasteful culture that leads to war. This book is suited for discussion in groups such as the Hamilton Peace Think Tank that meets several times a year. Appendix I provides the text of the United Nations Manifesto 2000, and a helpful list of resources.

Reviewed by Paul R. Dekar, a founder of the Centre for Peace Studies at McMaster University. Retired, he teaches, writes and volunteers with organizations including Dundas Community services, the Fellowship of Reconciliation and Canadian Friends Service Committee.

Friends, Elizabeth Doxtater's cornhusk art is again being featured at the Woodland Cultural Centre in Brantford (really nearby for Hamilton folks!).

This is what was posted about the opening reception:

"I'm just honoured to be a part of something that celebrates our stories in a really traditional manner. My understanding is that cornhusk is a protector, since the time of creation it's protected every kernel on every corn field, and it continues to do that. What I try to do, is use that cornhusk to try and protect the stories," - Elizabeth Doxtater

Elizabeth shared some beautiful words at the Opening Reception this weekend about the significance of corn to the Haudenosaunee people.

Each piece in the new Exhibit does tell a story.

Frazer Sundown, following the path of his elders and ancestors brings a fresh, young, and vibrant perspective to the art of cornhusk.

"Proud to have this among the work of Elizabeth E.F. Doxtater! Working with corn husk also brings people together where language, culture, and history is passed on orally. That being said, working with corn husk is not only a revitalization of weaving, however it brings our culture alive in its truest form." - Frazer Sundown

From the Hands of our Ancestors: The Art of Corn Husk is open now until Feb 15th.

See more information about the exhibit on our website: <https://woodlandculturalcentre.ca/new-exhibit-from-the-han.../>

It opened on December 7 and will be on until February 15; I plan to go, and I hope others will, too!

Carol Leigh



Claremont United Methodist Church in Claremont, California

The theological statement posted with the nativity: In a time in our country when refugee families seek asylum at our borders and are unwillingly separated from one another, we consider the most well-known refugee family in the world. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, the Holy Family. Shortly after the birth of Jesus, Joseph and Mary were forced to flee with their young son from Nazareth to Egypt to escape King Herod, a tyrant. They feared persecution and death.

What if this family sought refuge in our country today?

Imagine Joseph and Mary separated at the border and Jesus no older than two taken from his mother and placed behind the fences of a Border Patrol detention center as more than 5,500 children have been the past three years.

Jesus grew up to teach us kindness and mercy and a radical welcome of all people.

He said: "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me." Matthew 25:35

In the Claremont United Methodist Church nativity scene this Christmas, the Holy Family takes the place of the thousands of nameless families separated at our borders.

Inside the church, you will see this same family reunited, the Holy Family together, in a nativity that joins the angels in singing "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace and good will to all." Luke 2:14



-Submitted by Carol Leigh Wehking

Making the Season a little Brighter for the Newcomer Family

Dear Friends,

We would like to give the the Syrian Newcomer Family that our Meeting has been sponsoring a little brighter Holiday season. The family could use a little boost.

If any of you would like to contribute money or small gifts towards this we will make sure that appropriate gifts of toys, food, clothing, diapers, formula or needs are purchased.

Subhi's debiliatating stroke has been difficult for all of them but especially Subhi. He is home now and continuing to work hard at Physio 3 times a week.

Nisreen had a lovely baby girl, Noura, in July. Adjustment to Canada for Nisreen has been very challenging.

Leyla, the four year old is loving junior kindergarten and learning English quickly.

Mamdoha, even though she has health issues of her own, is very busy looking after the needs of the whole family.



Mamdoha said that they had a Christmas tree in Syria so we are looking into at least having a loan of a tree and decorations have already been donated.

Please let anyone of the following know by Sunday the 15th if you can help. Thank you.

Betty Preston < bettypreston@cogeco.ca>
Harriet Woodside <woodsideh@gmail.com>
Shirla Schellenberg <shirla766@gmail.com>

Contributions are still being accepted so please contact Harriet or Shirla OR bring your contribution to Meeting for Worship. Thank you for the many donations that have come in.

RUBBLE

When we glance at all the rubble
of our everyday affairs,
And we wonder if it's worth it
all the tension
all the cares ...

Remember to pause long enough
to hear the pulsing sound,
reminding us that
detritus ...

May still be Holy Ground.

As temples of the Spirit
there's a fountain in our souls,
If we look into each other's hearts
there's fire to make us whole.

Neil Paul/November 19, 2019

-Submitted by Sheldon Clark