

Hamilton Quaker Newsletter

June 2022



Marriage has always been regarded by Friends as a religious commitment rather than merely a civil contract. Both partners should offer with God's help an intention to cherish one another for life. Remember that happiness depends on an understanding and steadfast love on both sides. In times of difficulty remind yourself of the value of prayer, of perseverance and of a sense of humour.

Advices and Queries #23

Upcoming Events and Announcements

The summer meetings of the Reading group will be on Sunday, July 17 and Sunday, August 21 from 3 to 4 p.m. in our Zoom space. In July, we will be reading to the end of the “Picking Sweetgrass” section of Robin Wall Kimmerer’s *Braiding Sweetgrass* (pp. 82-117). Please contact Shirla (shirla766@gmail.com) to be added to the participant list.

Peace and Social Action Committee will be on hiatus for the summer; meetings will resume in the fall.

Sunday, June 26 at 12:15 p.m. there will be a presentation by Anthony Hill entitled “Positive Truth that has been Forgotten.” Please bring a brown bag lunch to eat in the garden after Meeting for Worship and before the presentation begins. This will be a hybrid presentation, and you are welcome to join us from home on our Zoom link.

Friends General Conference has announced that the **2022** gathering will again be virtual, on Zoom, and take place between July 3 and July 9, **2022**. The virtual gathering schedule can be found on the gathering website: www.fgcquaker.org The Young Adult and Youth gathering will be an in-person event from July 6 to July 9 at Radford University in Radford, Virginia. Additional information about this gathering is also available on the FGC website.

The next Meeting for Worship for Business will be held in person at the Meeting House on Sunday, September 11 at 12:30 p.m. This meeting will also be available to those at home on our regular Zoom link.

There will be a memorial meeting for Mona Callin on Saturday, September 24 at 2:00 p.m. at the Meeting House. A Zoom option will also be available for those who prefer to attend from home.

For those of you who picked up Vote for the Environment signs to display before the recent provincial election, you are encouraged to hold onto them and display them during the fall municipal election as well!

Quaker Peace Testimony

by Paul Dekar

First, a bio note: 50 yrs ago I stayed at Pendle Hill and subsequently subscribed to *PH Pamphlets* and started reading other Quaker books like *Speak Truth to Power* (1955), which showed the relevance of pacifism in the context of the Cold War and which I quoted in seeking conscientious objector status. Nancy's surrogate family was Quaker. We attended 57th Street Meeting near University of Chicago campus and Oxford Meeting on sabbatical, 1990-91.

In the Bible, peace is a complex word, signifying not only absence of conflict, but also conditions for a just world and processes by which one endeavours to achieve it. Early Christians were pacifist, a peace that was not simply a time without conflict, but a time of Justice and Righteousness. Key texts include Isaiah 9:6-7 in which the prophet envisioned a future of everlasting peace, established and upheld with justice and righteousness. Judges 6: 24 names God "Peace." Psalm 85:8, 10 characterizes peace as an outcome of salvation, a time when steadfast love and faithfulness meet, righteousness and peace kiss each other. Jesus' beatitude, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Matthew 5:9) fulfills the vision of Isaiah that the Messiah on whose shoulders all authority would rest would be named "Wonderful Counselor, mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (New Revised Standard Version)

After the conversion of Emperor Constantine, early in the 4th century, only a minority of Christians remained pacifist. There were exceptions including two one-time soldiers who, after their conversion, adopted pacifism: around 336, Martin of Tours declared, "I am a soldier of Christ. I cannot fight." In 1219, a crusader to the Holy Land, Francis of Assisi arbitrated a ceasefire between Muslims, Jews and Christians for which reason Franciscans have ever since been tasked with care of pilgrimage sites. The writings of the 14th century English cleric John Wycliffe and of Anabaptists (Brethren and Mennonites) in the 16th century upholding non-resistance and pacifism had an impact on early Quakers.

In January 1661, to make the Quaker position in relation to war and violence clear, George Fox, a leading figure among early Quakers, drew up and, along with a few other leading Quakers, signed a Declaration from the Harmless and Innocent People of God called Quakers, now known as the Quaker Peace Testimony. They issued it as their "testimony to the whole world." It reads in part:

We utterly deny all outward wars and strife and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretense whatsoever. And this is our testimony to the whole world... The Spirit of Christ by which we are guided, is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing as evil, and again to move unto it; and we do certainly know, and so testify to the world, that the Spirit of Christ, which leads us unto all Truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the Kingdom of Christ, nor for the Kingdoms of this world... Therefore we cannot learn war any more.

This Peace Testimony is perhaps the best known of the Quaker testimonies and the basis upon which the Religious Society of Friends, along with Mennonites and the Church of the Brethren, is known as a historic peace church. Quakers have adopted other testimonies, statements as to the manner in which Quakers aspire to live their lives. Along with Simplicity, Integrity, Equality, Community and the emerging testimony of Earthcare, the Peace Testimony is grounded in a belief that life should be lived in a spirit of love, truth and peace and from a sense of equality and compassion, answering that of God in everyone and seeing the sacred in all life.

Reviewing Peter Brock's *The Quaker Peace Testimony, 1660-1914*, I found various tensions and differences which led Quakers to dissent from other nonconformists (for example, early Baptist pacifists) and to emphasize the possibility of reconciling Jesus' teaching of peace, for example in the Sermon on the Mount, with the possibility of serving in government. Quakers tended to be more absolutist than Baptists, or the Anabaptists as to whether there might be exceptions permitting a Quaker to serve in the military during wartime. During the U. S. Civil War, some Quakers gave primacy to efforts supporting abolition of slavery and served with northern regiments. Generally, however, Quakers

remained steadfastly pacifist and some were influential in the formation of peace societies in both North America and Europe.

During the 20th century, Friends have generally seen pacifism as central to their Quaker faith. The British Yearly Meeting of 1912 accepted an address drawn up by its Peace Committee entitled “Our Testimony for Peace,” which argued that war, with the whole military system, is contrary to the Spirit of God whose name is love. During both World Wars, Friends were steadfast in supporting conscientious objectors, who either did alternative service or in some cases, went to prison for their convictions. A Quaker Herbert Hoover led relief efforts after WWI, a role that contributed to his election as President of the United States. In 1947, the English Friends Service Council and American Friends Service Committee shared the Nobel Peace Prize for their war-time relief efforts. In sum Quakers, along with Mennonites and Brethren, are identified as “historic peace churches.”

In *Advices and Queries*, it is written:

31. We are called to live “in the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars.” Do you faithfully maintain our testimony that war and the preparation for war are inconsistent with the spirit of Christ? Search out whatever in your own way of life may contain the seeds of war. Stand firm in our testimony, even when others commit or prepare to commit acts of violence, yet always remember that they too are children of God.
32. Bring into God’s light those emotions, attitudes and prejudices in yourself which lie at the root of destructive conflict, acknowledging your need for forgiveness and grace. In what ways are you involved in the work of reconciliation between individuals, groups and nations?

How is our Peace Testimony relevant today? Matt Legge, in “Alternatives to Military Violence,” *Quaker Concern* 48/2 (Spring 22) points out the need to support local people working for justice and peace; to promote creative noncooperation w/ systems of violence; and support for experienced negotiators who can push governments towards negotiation.

One area where the Quaker Peace Testimony is crucial is in protective accompaniment. On several occasions, I have participated in nonviolent peace teams, to ensure the safety of nonviolent activists. During my tenure on the board of the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), I journeyed three times to the island of Vieques, part of Puerto Rico, which the United States used as a bombing range. In April 1999, a Marine Corps jet inadvertently dropped two bombs off target, killing a civilian guard working on the bombing range. Though the Pentagon insisted it needed the range for combat training for Navy and Marine pilots, demonstrators persisted until the administration of George Bush ceased the bombings.

In addition to these protests, FOR's task force on Latin America trained volunteers, organized conferences for the health, environment and community development of Vieques and lobbied for a peace process that ultimately was successful (in part). As a FOR member, I participated in delegations to Colombia to support farmers seeking a fair price for organically grown coffee; and to Venezuela for the 2006 World Social Forum under the banner "Another World is Possible," (*Otro Mundo Es Posible*).

Beginning in 1998, I taught at Whitley College of the University of Melbourne. My original interest in Australia concerned a reconciliation process arising from the so-called stolen generation, a process that parallels our Truth/Reconciliation Process.¹ A visitor in the country, I did not risk being arrested but supported those involved in protesting uranium mining at Jabaluka in the Northern Territory. I also attended board meetings of one of the banks involved. The blockade began on 23 March 1998 and continued for eight months. It attracted

¹ I recommend the 2002 film *Rabbit Proof Fence*, based on the experience of Doris Pilkington Garimara. The film is available through the Hamilton Public Library system. The principal white character is A.O. Neville (played by Kenneth Branagh), who, in 1931, was the administrator of the relocation policies and something of an amateur eugenicist, with theories of race and breeding that would have won him a ready audience in Nazi Germany. As Roger Ebert observes in a review, "That Australians could have accepted thinking such as his, and indeed based government policy on it, indicates the sorry fact that many of them thought aborigines were a step or two down the evolutionary ladders from modern Europeans." <http://rogerebert.com/reviews/rabbit-proof-fence-2002>.

5,000 protesters and led to 600 arrests at various associated direct actions and was ultimately successful.

Another Australian campaign concerned efforts to protect the Franklin and Gordon Rivers in Tasmania. The following principles illustrate values of several campaigns, which led to significant gains and propelled the Australian Green party into several electoral successes.

On behalf of all caring people, we create the entire Wild Rivers National Park an inviolable International Park for all time. The 1st principle is that wilderness has values for humankind that no scientist can synthesize, no economist can price and no technological distraction can replace.

The 2nd principle is the principle of interconnection. We believe that all things are connected, that whatever we do to the Earth, we do to ourselves. We also believe that we should protect in perpetuity these wild places, not only for our own sake, but for the sake of the plants and animals and for the good of the sustaining earth: wilderness should exist intact solely for its own sake; no human justification, rationale or excuse is needed.

The 3rd principle is the indivisibility of ecological justice, social justice, and peace.

The 4th principle is the custodianship of the earth....

The 5th principle is resistance. (Tasmania, Wild Rivers Declaration, 1982, Sabbatical Report)

To conclude, the Quaker Peace Testimony is extraordinarily relevant at a time when nine states -- the US, Russia, the UK, France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea -- possess over 13,865 nuclear weapons. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, in 2019, Russia and the US collectively accounted for over 90% of global nuclear weapons and had extensive programmes to modernize their nuclear warheads, delivery systems and nuclear weapon production. Other nuclear-armed states all were either developing or deploying new weapon systems or had announced their intention to do so. Moreover, chemical weapons have been used by Syrian President Bashar al-

Assad, as in April 2017, and the Russia-Ukraine conflict threatens to expand to include both nuclear and chemical weapons.

The Doomsday Clock uses the image of apocalypse (midnight), and idiom of nuclear explosion (countdown to zero), to convey threats to humanity and the planet. It is a widely recognized indicator of the world's vulnerability to catastrophe from nuclear weapons, climate change and other challenges. The decision to move (or to leave in place) the Clock's minute hand is made annually by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists' Science and Security Board, in consultation with its Board of Sponsors. Earlier this year, on January 20, the Doomsday Clock was moved to 100 seconds to midnight—the closest it has ever been to apocalypse.² And this was before Russia invaded Ukraine on 24 February 2022.



² <http://opentextbe.ca/humansecurity/chapter/threats-human-security/> ;
<https://thebulletin.org/doomsday-clock/current-time/>

Letters Matter

While online activism often seems to be taking over from more traditional forms, letters on paper sent with stamps through the mail remain a useful form of advocacy. Here are a couple written by Jane Wright. Perhaps they will inspire you!

His Excellency Oleg V Stepanov,
Embassy of the Russian Federation in Canada
285 Charlotte Street
Ottawa, ON K1N 8L5

Dear Mr. Ambassador,

I write in great sorrow.

"The Russian army does not occupy Ukrainian territory and takes all measures to preserve the lives and safety of civilians," your Embassy stated. Reputable news agencies around the world provide daily evidence that this is false. It is your country which has attacked Ukraine and is killing civilians in their homes. As you know, millions have fled. Would you not agree that only a fearful and insecure government has no other way of working in the world than resorting to violence, especially violence against the most vulnerable?

I have travelled across your vast and beautiful country, and admire its formidable cultural achievements. I have read your authors, visited your great art museums, and rejoiced in the music, film and dance that your artists have created. I know the Russian people to be good and honourable. It appears that falsehoods and repression are needed to garner support for this iniquitous war. Your hard-pressed people will have to pay its enormous costs. I mourn the mounting deaths of both Ukrainians and Russians.

Your country has historic and profound Christian traditions. It has been reported that your leader Mr. Putin is a church-goer. Your government's attack

against Ukraine is incompatible with the Christian message. Your war is incompatible with what I know of the spirit of Mother Russia.

May God in His infinite mercy forgive you and your government for the deaths and misery you are causing. The carnage must stop.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Wright (Ms)

To the editor, Hamilton Spectator March 4, 2022

Re- 'Ukraine can only have peace through strength - Pacifism is not a language spoken by the Kremlin" by Geoff Russ, March 4, 2022

Dear Geoff Russ, pacifists are not the enemy. Vladimir Putin's regime and its irresponsible and obscene invasion are the enemy. Russ argues that only by picking up a gun will Ukrainians achieve peace. To do otherwise is to "surrender and submit to tyranny in the name of peace." Disputes are not solved by killing, however. Disputes are solved when the parties agree to stop killing one another. Aggressors have to stop when they run out of resources. This is what is being attempted by cutting off banking and business with Russia. The romantic notion of fighting to the death often accomplishes its aim, namely death. What does this serve?

I am very encouraged that scores of Ukrainians are peacefully standing up *en masse* to block the invaders, many of whom appear to be hungry youngsters who do not know why they are there. I am encouraged that Europe and North America have in one voice denounced the Russian government's blatant and destructive disregard for international order. I am encouraged that the government of Ukraine continues to engage the Russians in dialogue. I am encouraged that Ukraine's many neighbours have opened their borders to Ukrainian refugees. I am encouraged that NATO has chosen not to start bombing. This is what strength looks like.

At the end of the day the world has to live with the Russian people. They will pay for their government's tragic mistakes. Canadians need to stand firm and united in condemnation of armed aggression. I suggest that Russ direct his anger toward Vladimir Putin's government and the Russian people who support him, not blame 'pacifists.'

Jane Wright Hamilton, ON



Camp NeeKauNis
90th Anniversary

July 29 - August 1 2022

Come and join us for
**Camp NeeKauNis' 90th
birthday!**

Registration at
<http://www.neekaunis.org>
is open!

RSVP to:
neekaunis_90@protonmail.com

The poster features a circular logo for Camp NeeKauNis with a tree and the text 'CAMP NEEKAUNIS'. It also includes three circular inset photos showing a sunset over a lake, a tree by the water, and a group of people gathered outdoors.

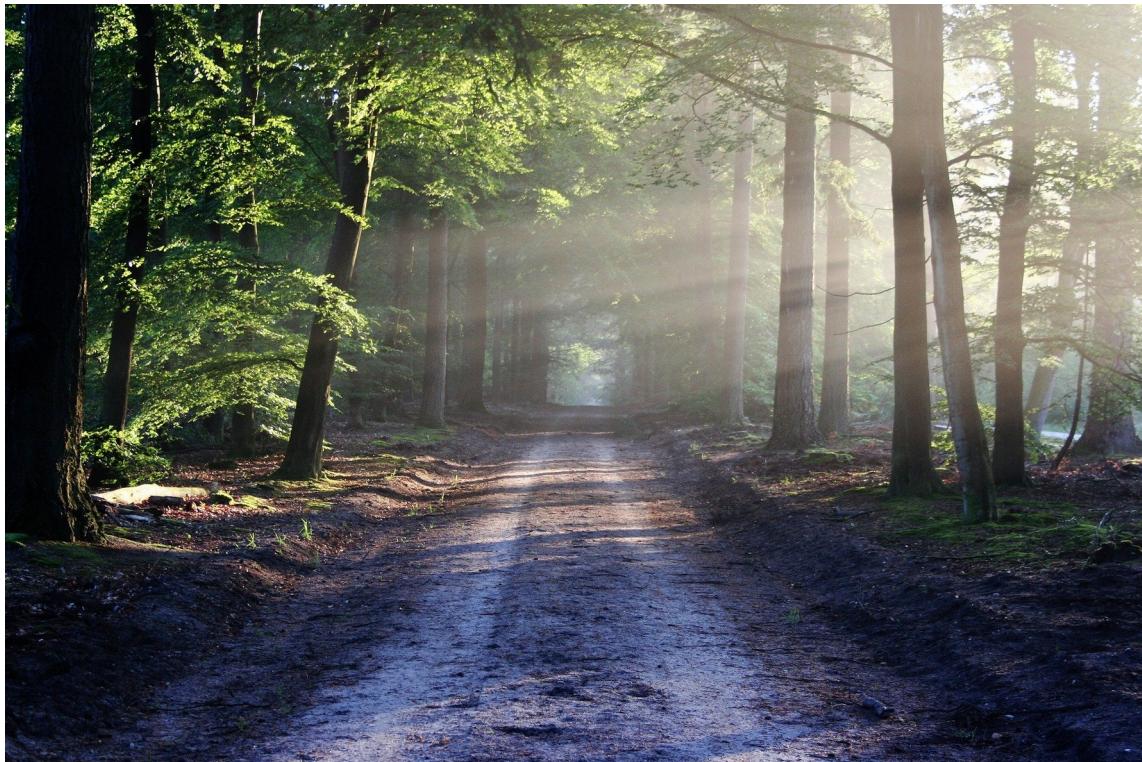
Shinrin Yoku

by Beverly Shepard

My cathedral –
vast and still
light streaming through latticed openings
censed with cedar, pine, and birch
choir and worshippers as one.

There is no priest
and God
not far and fearsome
is close about me.
I touch him in twigs,
in bark;
she comes to me in a butterfly
or falling leaf.

Praise the lord –
I am healed.



Serendipity and Re-Opening

by Darlene James

Meeting for Worship on Sunday May 29, 2022 felt like a momentous event, as HMM's Re-Opening Committee had given approval for Meeting to be held, not just at the Meeting House, but actually indoors, with appropriate precautions around distancing and masks. About a dozen Friends were able to attend in person, with a video-link via Zoom to create a bridge between in-person attenders and those worshipping with us from a distance.

I repeatedly felt prompted to stand up and offer two-word ministry: "Joyful Day!"....but it felt just, hmmmm....TOO simple, so I stayed silent, albeit very much aware of how different it felt to be present with others in worship. Gathering outdoors had been better than Zoom, but the sense of engagement and connection was, for me, so much more intense within those familiar four walls. They had been freshly painted, and the carpets cleaned, back in Spring 2020, and many Friends have not been able to be back indoors to see them.

My thoughts drifted to the upstairs "sanctuary space", and holding in the Light the many Ukrainian women and children fleeing their homes and seeking safe refuge in Hamilton and elsewhere in Canada. I recalled the immense work and preparation, lovingly offered way back when, to outfit that space for our Syrian newcomers. I wondered idly how they were doing.

About 15 minutes before the rise of meeting, the front door opened and I spotted someone with a bundle-buggy in the foyer. I slipped out, and.....there was Mamdoha, the matriarch of the Syrian family who had lived upstairs when they first arrived. She was beaming, just radiating love and delight. We whispered together a bit, then moved outside.

Mamdoha explained that the previous day, she had been preparing food for her family, and had a sudden recollection of her time with us. She said to me: "YOU are my family, too. THIS is my home." So she decided to drop in Sunday morning, with her shopping cart, an enormous bowl of tabbouleh and some

pastries, enduring an extended trip on the weekend schedule HSR; sounds like it was a two-hour odyssey due to transit delays.

I asked what brought her to us on *that particular Sunday*, with Friends actually present, inside, together for the first time; she seemed unaware that, had she arrived unexpectedly on a Sunday a week ago or 2 months ago, the front door would have been locked and the meeting room empty. She just repeated “You are my family; I need to feed my family.”

So my two-word “Ministry that wasn’t quite ready for Ministry” was shared in Afterword, amplified by the events of the preceding 15 minutes. We hastily moved outdoors to chat in the sunlight and enjoy a lovely time of fellowship. Such a delight. Joyful Day, indeed. I’m tempted to say Hallelujah....and that’s not like me.



Unspoken Depths

by Sheldon Clark

Quaker meeting occasions unspoken depths
Oceanic deep-down darkness
Wells to surface
White cap froth
Inhaled to cumulus heights
Perhaps perceived as storm or Light
To fall as dispersed rainbows which
Disappear into pitch and roll
Indistinguishable from
The Mystery of Being and Becoming
Part of the whole internal, external, cosmic
To be intuited, not heard
Felt in soaring twirling funnels
As visions melted into air, into thin air
Stirs ... swirls ... settles.
Quaker meeting draws ... lifts ... releases.



Hamilton Monthly Meeting

Vietnamese Family Sponsorship 1979

by Pete Cross

In November 1979, Hamilton Monthly Meeting sponsored a Vietnamese family who arrived at Mount Hope airport. Anh Nguyen arrived with her husband Chi, sister Xuan, two younger brothers, Phuc (now Phil) and Tho (now Tommy) and daughter Tuyet (now known as Diane or Diana, the third sister is alternatively Diane or Diana, I get them confused). The night they arrived was foggy. We had an interpreter whose English was not very good. In fact, Chi probably spoke better English than the interpreter. A few years later a story emerged from the drive home that night. We told them we were on the mountain and would drive down to the city. Tommy, the youngest brother, said to his family “I want to go home. We’ve never lived on a mountain. We don’t know how to live on a mountain.” Some mountain!!!

The first Sunday after their arrival the entire family came to Meeting. Chi asked if he could speak. By the time he finished there wasn’t a dry eye in the building. At least not mine!

The family were amongst the earliest Southeast Asian refugees to arrive in Hamilton. Their home became a gathering place. Frequently we were invited to parties. Of course, communications were difficult but everyone did their best to include us in conversations and explain what was going on.

Shortly after their arrival, Elizabeth was born, and not long after that a third daughter (Diane or Diana) was born. After a space of some years, son Calvin was born.

Betty worked hard to find them accommodation. I remember Chi being a little frustrated with the time they spent house hunting and saying “In Viet Nam we don’t worry about housing. We worry about food.” After several years Chi and Anh bought that house. They subsequently moved but kept that building and rented it out.

Almost immediately after arriving Chi found employment in quality control at Canadian Carbon Black. In Viet Nam he was an electro technical engineer. He had considered trying to get his engineering degree here but was given no credit whatsoever for his training in Viet Nam. After proving himself in quality control Chi was moved to the electrical department. While there, he studied to get his electrician's papers. Soon he was head of the department. Anh worked for many years at Voortman cookies in Burlington.

All three daughters graduated from university. The oldest is now living in France, and the other two still live locally. Calvin is living with Chi and I think works in construction. The sister and two brothers have all married and been well employed since their arrival. Unfortunately Anh passed away suddenly last May at age 62 from liver failure. Chi's vision has been deteriorating for some years and he can no longer drive. Several of the family live quite close to Chi and offer support.



Review of Tomson Highway's *Perpetual Astonishment: A Memoir*

by Dick Preston (part 1 of 2)

Sit back, close your eyes, and imagine a vast area – maybe the size of Belgium -- a land that is entirely white with snow, and entirely, utterly silent. Then add a dogsled pulled by eight dogs, carrying a man, his wife who is going into labour, and their 12 year-old daughter. They come to an island, put up a tipi, and Tomson is born.

Growing up Cree in subarctic Canada: He grows into a girlish boy, with no criticism from his family. At age 6, he goes gladly to a Catholic residential school where he is excited to learn, and to experience music beyond the Country music on the little transistor radio.. A wimp at sports, he is bullied by a boy who is good at sports. Glad to be home in the summer, with his beloved younger brother Renee. Then glad to go back to school and more discoveries.

His writing style is distinctive. Maybe it parallels Cree storytelling style, a somewhat run-on string of events – “which is to say...” – liberally sprinkled with Cree words. And there are little essays that tell us about birch sap... about loons... about travelling in a family canoe with just a 10 horsepower outboard motor... about going to confession...about being an altar boy... and so on.

When he is 10, his sister Louise is married, and all are welcome at the feast, and many hours of enthusiastic square dancing, which he describes. Later, his father obtains an accordion. It's too heavy for a 10-year-old, but it is his first experience with a keyboard. Then a sister-in-law brings and loans a smaller accordion, and he takes it into the woods and serenades the animals for hours.

Back at residential school, he is encouraged by a music teacher who gives him access to a piano, and his musical passion flowers. He loves to learn, and reads his textbooks at night in the toilet stall. He has very very high marks. And he names his molester, the “keeper” of the intermediate boys, who fondled many of the boys, waking and confusing them. He says someone else will have to write

about this. He practices a Clementi Sonatina in G major piece for the Christmas Concert, but a flu epidemic cancels it.

Back home, Highway works with his dad in the commercial fishing industry, and witnesses a festive gambling ceremony. At school, age 13, he is knocked unconscious by his older boy's keeper, a homophobic Saulteaux, whom he names.

The next installment will take us beyond the formative years of adolescence and into a remarkably gifted adulthood. He is launched on a career as concert pianist, composes a beautiful melodic piece in memory of Renee, tries his hand as a social worker on reserves, and becomes an award-winning playwright, founder of Native Earth Performing Arts, the author of several books, and a warm and friendly person.



About this Newsletter / Submission Guidelines

This Newsletter is a monthly publication of news and announcements relevant to Hamilton Quakers.

It is also a venue for members and attenders to share creative works or articles they have written on subjects that may be of interest to our Quaker community. As a general guideline we are looking for submissions that are inspirational and related to Quaker concerns, as well as announcements and news. Members and Attenders are encouraged to submit works for the newsletter.

Requests for newsletter items are announced after Meeting for Worship and/or via email during the week before Meeting for Worship for Business. They are due by the Friday before Business Meeting. Submission of materials implies permission to publish. Copyright for original material resides with the author.

If the person submitting the article is unknown to the editor or if there are questions as to whether the article will be appropriate for the Quaker newsletter, the editor will consult with the clerk(s) who will together discern what will be included. Written permission to publish must be obtained from the copyright holder if a submission is not the original work of the submitter, unless the works are in the public domain, or are covered under the creative commons license.

Hamilton Meeting reserves the right to edit submissions for length or content in consultation with the authors. When opinion pieces are included a line will be added indicating "Submissions reflect the opinions of their authors, and not necessarily of Hamilton Monthly Meeting".

Submissions should be directed to the current editor, Sîan Reid, daywitch@gmail.com.

We acknowledge the land upon which Hamilton Friends Meeting House is located as the shared traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabeg, protected by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt covenant. This historic peace agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy, the Ojibwe, and allied nations represents a commitment to share and protect the land, water, plants, and animals, with respect. It is the privilege of Hamilton Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) to share in the tradition of stewardship of this land, which has been the environment of human beings in this territory for thousands of years. We honour the original Peoples of this land and express a commitment to and gratitude for the opportunity to work together toward restorative justice and reconciliation.