

**Hamilton Monthly Meeting**  
of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)  
7 Butty Place, Hamilton, Ontario, L8S 2R5  
[www.quaker.ca/hamilton](http://www.quaker.ca/hamilton)  
[quakers@hwcn.org](mailto:quakers@hwcn.org)  
905 523 8383

## NEWSLETTER APRIL 2006

### **Refreshment List**

The new sign up list for providing refreshments for May- August /06 is in the foyer. Please sign up if you would like to participate in this opportunity for service. If you are relatively new to HMM this is a great way to get to know people. I will be happy to fill you in with what needs to be done to do the job and link you with the support you need to feel confident. Christina – Housekeeping; mcee (at) cyg.net;

Apr 23 Harriet  
Apr 30 Janis  
May 7 Lenny  
May 14 Sybil  
May 21  
May 28 Bev

### **Upcoming Dates**

April 22 Spring Retreat  
April 29 Spring Cleaning  
May 28 Memorial Meeting for Bea Fletcher  
June 2-4 Half Yearly Meeting at Camp NeeKauNis

### **Addresses**

Lenny's email address was incorrect in the last newsletter. Please change it from to [lashton1](mailto:lashton1@cogeco.ca) (at) cogeco.ca; apologies.

### **Needed**

Friends to help Carol Leigh and Glenna with the children's program at Half Yearly Meeting at Camp NeeKauNis, June 2-4

## **Hamilton Monthly Meeting State of Society Report, 2005**

Members of Ministry and Counsel of Hamilton Monthly Meeting are concerned to return to the original purpose and intent of a State of Society report, as described in Organization and Procedure of Canadian Yearly Meeting (2002), section 7.8, namely, to be "a searching self-examination by the Meeting and its members of their spiritual strengths and weaknesses and of the efforts made to foster growth in the spiritual life". Accordingly, this report will not attempt to catalogue all of the activities we have engaged in during the past year, but rather will mention only those deemed to be closely

relevant to our spiritual strengths, weaknesses, and growth.

We feel that one measure of the spiritual health of Hamilton Meeting is our adherence to Quaker testimonies. It is not possible to list these testimonies or describe them definitively, because they develop and grow with our corporate life, but certain ones are both historically rooted and widely accepted in the present day.

Simplicity is a long-standing testimony which challenges modern Friends. In Hamilton Meeting many of us find ourselves attempting to simplify the physical aspects of our daily lives, by, for example, driving our cars as infrequently as possible and taking passengers, or eschewing car ownership altogether; buying food which is organically or locally raised; residing in homes with simple furnishings, dressing simply, and refusing the dictates of materialism and fashion; and other measures. However, we do not, for the most part, live simple lives when it comes to activities and causes. Most of us are involved in committees within our own Meeting or Yearly Meeting, peace and justice groups, education, and services in the community. We feel that these tasks express our beliefs, and we support each other in such service, but we also recognize that our energy as individuals and as a Meeting is limited, and we question whether it is spiritual wisdom to extend ourselves to or beyond our limits. On the other hand, we recognize that energy and spirit are different, and the fact that we seem short on available energy in HMM does not necessarily mean that our spiritual health is compromised.

We recognize but do not always honour the fact that integrity means not just honesty but wholeness. Too many responsibilities and tasks may fragment a person; too many overextended Friends may fragment a Meeting. We are questioning whether everything we do is necessary or the best way of using our gifts. Sometimes the truest way of serving God is to live our lives day-to-day in the best way we can: protecting and conserving nature, promoting peace, treating others respectfully, and answering that of God in everyone - being responsive to the Divine in others. Such a way of living is not always compatible with the demands of a Monthly Meeting with its many committees and offices. Yet our Meeting - both the weekly worship and the continuing community - forms a base of support and restoration for Friends, who are enabled to carry out their many tasks faithfully, in a way that nourishes the spiritual life of the whole Meeting. Our Young Adult Friends, while often only infrequent attenders of Meeting, are living as Quakers, exemplifying our testimonies in their daily lives, and are a force for good to be reckoned with.

Peace and community are well-maintained in Hamilton Meeting. Our numbers have diminished slightly in recent years, but this has not meant a diminishment of spirit. Meeting for Worship and our Meeting community sustain and nurture us; Meeting for Worship is a vital part of the lives of individual Friends, and individual Friends are vital to Meeting for Worship. We are considering the state of our Meeting for Worship for Business, which often seems to us to be afflicted with long agendas and can be more draining than sustaining. Human society as a whole seems to us to have lost its natural rhythm, and we must guard against allowing this to happen to our business meetings. We ask: does our Meeting for Worship for Business do just what is essential? What IS

essential to our Meeting? If the essentials are to maintain the life of the Meeting and to do the work of our faith, then we must examine all the things that appear on our business agendas to see whether they advance the essentials and thus serve the Meeting that is our spiritual home. That is, we need to make careful choices as a Meeting as well as individuals.

Meeting for Worship for Business has demonstrated some of the stresses we feel as individuals and as a community. Attendance is often small enough that those present question whether they are able to discern God's will for the whole community. Finding Friends willing to serve full terms as presiding Clerk has been a challenge, resulting in a new model for clerking Hamilton Monthly Meeting: there is a Clerk of the Meeting who is a continuing presence and the contact point for all groups and individuals within and outside our Meeting, and there is a series of "Clerks for the Month", charged with preparing business agendas and presiding at monthly meeting. Although only in place from September, this model appears to be successful in reducing stress on Friends and acquainting more Friends with the joys of service as Clerk.

Throughout the year our community has held a variety of events intended to strengthen us spiritually and advance our testimonies. A highlight of our year was a weekend retreat in the country with Margaret Slavin, travelling in the ministry with Canadian Yearly Meeting support, at which we considered spirituality, creativity, and social action. A summer wedding brought us together in a celebration of love and joy. The Quaker Studies classes facilitated by one member have provided food for contemplation and spiritual growth. Two deaths toward the year's end united us in a sense of loss, mutual comfort, and gratitude. One Friend has inspired us all with her faithful visiting over the past several years of one of the Friends who died and her graceful gift to us of that Friend's farewell to the Meeting.

Near the year's end, we continued our tradition of Cookies and Carols for our less-mobile members. This occasion always gives us – and, we hope, those we visit – a spiritual boost; this year it was particularly enlivened by the presence of children. The children also reminded us of the basis of our faith with a moving Christmas presentation. It is simple but significant activities such as these which keep us grounded, help us to grow, and allow us to give of the fruits of the spirit.

### **Seeds of the Future**

As many of you know, Anna Peters Wehking spent last summer as head gardener for an organic garden in Kelowna, BC. The garden was very successful, and after the harvest she carefully collected and preserved seeds of many different varieties of vegetables, herbs, and flowers.

She is planning to return to BC for studies in permaculture and eco-friendly building. To help finance the trip and the studies, she is selling seeds. They come labelled, and packaged in eco-friendly paper with a hand silk-screened (by Anna) design (by Anna) on the packet. She also has hand-made soap for sale; it's a skill she learned through the autumn in BC, and the soaps are lovely.

Anna will be bringing the seeds and the soap to the Meetinghouse for Friends who wish

to have organic seeds for her garden, or who wish to support her trip, to purchase. she has seeds of the following sorts:  
calendula, cornflower, morning-glory, zebra mallow  
dill, spinach, peas, radish, cilantro, chives, basil, lettuce, spelt  
and the grass and grass-substitute:red clover, fall rye  
and also tiny amounts of some other seeds to share: lavender, plum,  
fairytale eggplant, Romano beans, Dutch golden carrot, cocoa beans  
venture beans, summer savoury  
ask Anna if you are really really interested in her few seeds for  
nasturtiums, arugula, Irma's foxglove, selfheal, lupin, white columbine, milk thistle.

### **Memorial Minute for Larry Pogue**

Born March 18, 1916, Died 2 November, 2005

Lawrence Arthur Pogue was born on the 18<sup>th</sup> of March, 1916, in the town of Berlin, Ontario, now Kitchener. He attended the Ontario Agricultural College at Guelph, Ontario, and graduated from there with a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture in 1940. In December of that same year, he married Gwelda Sutton in a church in Wellandport. He farmed land owned by his father until 1968, when he moved to Dundas. He attended Teacher's College in Hamilton and taught for a year after obtaining his certificate. He then attended a real estate course in Lake Couchiching and afterwards used his teaching skills to teach the real estate business to others until his retirement.

He was involved with the United Church in Dundas and with the United Church's retreat centre, Five Oaks, at Paris, but in the 1970s he began attending Quaker Meeting in Hamilton. He became a member of Hamilton Monthly Meeting in 1999.

Larry and Gwelda had four children, Ronald, Robert (deceased), Linda, and Laurel. Larry contracted Parkinson's disease and became severely disabled. For the last few years of his life, he and Gwelda lived in an apartment in West Hamilton, and in his last few months, he lived at Wentworth Lodge, a retirement and nursing home. Larry died on the second of November, 2005.

Hamilton Friends remember Larry for many things: in particular his warmth to newcomers and loyalty to friends, his gift for gardening and his undying concern for the environment, and his immense courage in the face of a tragically debilitating illness. The rosebushes in our garden were given, planted, and to a large degree tended by Larry, even when his illness meant he had to use the hands of younger, stronger Friends to do the actual work. The bench which Hamilton Meeting had placed on the Waterfront Trail, with the legend, "Live Simply, That Others May Simply Live," is there because of Larry's inspiration, determination, and generosity. He was a tireless supporter and booster of the Bay Area Restoration Council and talked enthusiastically about conservation achievements - about the return of the trumpeter swan, the harbour restoration, and the way nature can be helped to heal itself after human-inflicted wounds.

One Friend who experienced Larry's welcome when he first came to Meeting has said, "It was Larry Pogue who offered to show me around to see some of the wonderful

ecological sites he knew so well. At that time he was still driving, and he took me to the Red Hill Valley, Princess Point, the Desjardins Canal, and introduced me to a few of the many trails he loved.” Another recalls, “My first visit to the Meeting House at 7 Butty Place is memorable because of you, a man by whose large hands my own small one was engulfed in a warm welcome... because in your kind face I can discern none of the possibility of judgmental appraisal I so fear in others, I often come and sit with you.”

Continuing to participate in Meeting and other activities even when badly crippled by Parkinson’s Disease, Larry got around by DARTS (Disabled and Aged Regional Transit System), taxi, or the kindness of friends, using a walker or sometimes a wheelchair indoors. He undertook the annual walk for Parkinson’s and signed up most of Meeting to sponsor him, which Friends did both gladly and humbly, knowing it was Larry who would do the walking, hard as it was for him.

Larry had the strength to face up to harm he had done. He had the courage to let others know of his broken deeds and the grace to work on redeeming his life through study, prayer, and making amends where he could. Sharing this part of Larry's life was for others a profound and sometimes sorrowful path; his faithfulness brought hope and comfort to Friends who travelled with him on this part of his journey.

Through all his struggles, pains, and joys, Larry remained connected in a deeply spiritual way to the natural world. One Friend recalls a First Day morning when he stood and proclaimed, “Friends! [his usual way of beginning ministry] Good news! The robins are back!” Another Friend says, “One spring morning, your voice rises up, tremulous among the dust motes dancing in sunshine. And then, the Meeting room is full of silence... And the silence is full of the words you have uttered:

*Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; and let them say among the nations,  
‘The Lord reigns.’ Let the sea roar, and all its fullness; let the field rejoice, and all that  
is in it. Then the trees of the woods shall rejoice before the Lord; Oh, give thanks to the  
Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.”*  
(1 Chronicles 16: 31-34)

The words express his joy in nature and God and serve as a fitting reminder of the worthy efforts of his life. In the words of the Friend who became his unofficial chauffeur to Meeting in his last years, “My last glimpse of Larry was at Wentworth Lodge, shortly before he died. He was asleep, out of pain, a child of God..”

Hamilton Monthly Meeting Ministry and Counsel  
Beverly, Carol Leigh, Rex, Roberta

### **Book Review**

Going Home: Jesus and Buddha as Brothers; by Thich Nhat Hanh c 1999  
Submitted by Don W

Thich Nhat Hanh has written a sequel to 'Living Buddha, Living Christ'. It is a series of talks given at Plum Village, his retreat centre in the south of France, at Christmas. It is clearly written from a Buddhist perspective, but he is very sympathetic to Christianity. He outlines a series of deep philosophical differences between the two, but says if we look deeply, the differences are not real. He says that each of us has a child waiting to be born, a child that is beautiful and in touch with the deepest truth. He talks a lot about God; he quotes Andre Gide, who said, "God is available 24 hours a day". He separates the phenomenal, conditioned world, which he likens to the waves of the ocean, from the noumenal, eternal world, which is like the water. The waves are like horizontal theology in Christianity, the truths about the 'interbeing' of all of us, and the effects everything has on everything else; while the vertical dimension is the water, God, the unconditioned source. We are each waves, and it is important that we understand the difference between the interaction with other waves, and with the water which is our very substance. If we can't love plants and rocks and people, he can't see how we can love God. More than that, we really can't talk about God; nothing in our language is up to it. "it is wise not to say anything about God". He does go on to quote Christian theologian Paul Tillich, who said, 'God is not a person, but not less than a person'. TNH thinks Christians waste a lot of time talking about whether God is a person.

He talks about how mindfulness, one of the key factors in Buddhist meditation, is a light shining on our thoughts and deeds, and is like the Holy Spirit, the energy of God. If we practice mindfulness well, we will see that nothing is born and nothing dies, and that takes away the fear of dying and becoming nothing. When we relate on a deep level to other beings, when we see a person not as an idea but in their reality as part of 'inter-being', then we meet Buddha and we meet Christ. We are born several times a day. This is resurrection.

We all need a home; for Buddhists, Buddha is home, and for Christians, Jesus is home. We are lucky to have concrete human representations like Jesus and Buddha; a notion of God is too abstract for a home. We need to cultivate our home. If we look deeply into ourselves, we will see everything, and it brings us home. "The most important practice of our time is to give each person a home".

**Hamilton Monthly Meeting**  
**Meeting for Worship for Business**  
**Apr 8th , 2006**

**Present:** Mona C, Blair, Dawn, Christina, Ian (recording clerk), Nicki, Helen B, Harriet, Dick, John, Jean, Don W (Clerk), Bev

1. Meeting began with Silent worship at 7:30pm.
2. **Minutes of Mar 5th**, Meeting for Worship for Business (M4W4B): Minutes were accepted as read.
3. **Agenda** was prioritized.
4. **Continuing Business**
  - 4.1 **Budget 2006.** Blair distributed a final budget spreadsheet showing no

changes. We thank Blair for the revised format showing 2005 actual net income of \$6 318.56. Excluding a special one time donation, 2005 general donations were down by 17%. We noted with interest that electricity usage dropped significantly while KWhr charges increased by 30% over 2003.

We approve the budget, energy summary and donor trends report with thanks.

**4.2 Meeting Retreat** Carol Leigh reported that the date of retreat is Apr 22<sup>nd</sup>. The theme is ‘the challenge of the testimony of simplicity’. Program will begin 8:30am for breakfast and end after an evening session. Three meals are included. A registration fee of up to \$25, based on personal situation, is requested in advance. We want you to come, the fee should not prevent anyone from attending. Please send or give your registration and fee to Bev.

**4.3 Memorial Minute** for Larry Pogue. Bev read the memorial minute prepared in celebration of Larry’s life. We are deeply touched and accept this minute with love in our hearts.

## **5. Business Arising from the minutes**

**5.1 State of Society Report** Bev read a final draft of the 2005 state of society report for Hamilton Meeting. We approve this report with gratitude. The report will be read at Meeting for Worship in the near future.

**5.2 Nominating Committee Report.** John reported that a report for recommended nominations for HMM positions is not yet ready to present. We are reminded that our Discipline prevents us from naming representatives to outside bodies who are not members of the Society. We recognize that our limited membership is constraining our ability to fill positions in Yearly Meeting. We are reminded that M&C approaches candidates for membership from time to time to explore their leading in this regard.

**5.2 Response to Canadian Forces in Afghanistan.** Bring forward to future meeting.

**5.3 Quaker Ecology Action Network.** Bring forward to a future meeting.

## **6. Reports.**

### **7. New Business**

**7.1 Committee for Clearness for marriage.** A letter has been received from Dawn and Ryan, who propose to marry under the care of the meeting in late June 2006. We accept the names of John and Dick to serve as the clearness committee. Don will approach Carol Leigh for her willingness to serve. Jean is the alternate to Carol.

### **8. Other Business**

**8.1 Wissa Family** Louise reported that an Afghani family has been in refugee camp in Holland for 7 years, and HMM has been a co-sponsor of their application for permanent residency in Canada. Immigration Canada has rejected their application and notified us in a letter of March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2006. We recognize the constancy that Louise Trepanier has shown in maintaining communication with the Wissa family and thank her for it. We would like to discuss at the May meeting whether to donate to Wissa family

some or all of the \$3000 we have had earmarked for their welfare.

**8.2 Meeting in the Garden.** Jean proposed that we hold a meeting for worship in the garden of the Meetinghouse on Sunday Aug 13<sup>th</sup>, followed by potluck. We are open to worship in the garden as the Spirit leads us this summer.

**9. Correspondence**

None presented.

10. **Date and time** of next Meeting for Worship for Business: Sun May 7, 2006 at 1:00 pm

11. The meeting ended with silent worship at 10:00pm.