

**HAMILTON MONTHLY MEETING**  
of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)  
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**NEWSLETTER MAY 2007**

**Refreshments for Meeting for Worship**

May 27 Robbie M June 3 Darlene

There are still spots that need to be filled in June. Please sign up in the foyer at Meeting! If you need further information please contact Christina or Nicki.

**Upcoming Dates**

June 1-3: Half Yearly Meeting at NeeKauNis , Quaker camp near Midland

June 7, Thurs at 7:30pm Meeting for Business

June 17 Sunday 11:00am Garden meeting at Brink's followed by potluck.

**Half Yearly Meeting**

Half Yearly Meeting is being held June 1- 3 at Camp NeeKauNis. The theme this year for the children is based on the life of John Woolman. Yonge Street Monthly Meeting will be providing leadership for this segment of the weekend. Simcoe - Muskoka Monthly Meeting are preparing the adult program which will explore diversity from a Quaker standpoint. Our responsibility this year is to provide food. We are needing people who can help in the kitchen with food preparation, cooking, serving and clean up. About 75 people are expected so we need a team of volunteers to make this a pleasurable weekend for our group. Please let Bev or Christina know if you are able to help.

**A June Wedding Celebration**

Dawn and Ryan invite all of us to a celebration of their wedding. The celebration will be on Saturday, June 30, 2007, at 7 p.m. at the Meeting House. Dawn and Ryan were officially married on the first of September, 2006, in Rochester, New York.

Jesse, Jean and Harriet are handling the arrangements for this happy event. We would welcome volunteers on June 30th especially to help with clearing up after the guests leave.

Financial donations for the reception following a Meeting for Worship to celebrate the marriage and for a gift from our meeting can be given to Jesse, Jean or Harriet. Ryan and Dawn have asked that we make a donation to the Canadian Friends Service Committee in their names; we will be giving them a small

personal gift from all of us as well. If you would like to give an individual gift, we have a list of ideas.

Dawn, Ryan and their Arrangements Committee hope to see you on June 30th.

Submitted by Jesse, Jean and Harriet

### **Change of address**

Ian, Donna, Kelly and Kendra  
No house phone # as yet, use cell.

### **Report from Representative Meeting, Hamilton, May 4-5 2007**

Dawn, HMM Representative

In the library are materials from Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC), Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) and Nova Scotia. CFSC is requesting donations. The FWCC package contains study materials related to this summer's Triennial event (Virginia Dawson and Rick McCutcheon are the Canadian delegates) and an appeal for monies for a Section of the Americas capital fund. If you are travelling to CYM gathering this summer you might be interested in the Nova Scotia tourism books.

The final report of the Consultation and Renewal Working Group (CnR) of Canadian Yearly Meeting is available. A single copy is in the Meeting House library and more copies will be coming out before Yearly Meeting sessions. As well, it is on the quaker.ca website ( <http://www.quaker.ca/cnr/index.html> ).

Canadian Yearly Meeting Gathering will be in Windsor, NS from August 4 to 11. Please register early if you have trouble navigating stairs. The SPG Lecturer is Christine Davis of Britain Yearly Meeting. The Programme Committee (which organises the annual gathering) is still working to procure a site in southern Ontario for 2009's event.

Representative Meeting has given its approval for the draft 2008 budget. A deficit of about \$2000 is projected. Changes resulting from the CnR report may improve or worsen that amount. Our Meeting is asked to contribute \$5000 to CYM in 2008. Individuals are also asked to give directly to Yearly Meeting.

There is an opening for a Canadian Quaker to serve on the Friends General Conference Central Committee. The position is for one year, with the possibility of renaming for a second, full term. FGC would prefer to have an Adult Young Friend fill this role. If this position interests you, please speak to someone on our Meeting's Nominating Committee (quickly). FGC Central Committee oversees the work of FGC – an annual gathering, Young Quakes Conferences for teens, a bookstore, travelling ministries, anti-racism efforts, religious education, couples' enrichment, and so much more.

Privacy concerns have been raised at previous Representative Meetings, and with the adoption of a privacy policy, they might now be laid to rest. Beginning this year, individuals must consent to having their name in the Yearly Meeting Directory. The directory will never be put on the website. The Yearly Meeting website has some password protections in place, and you need to contact the Website Oversight Committee to get a password. This is a reminder to our Yearly Meeting delegate: you are responsible for gathering the births, adoptions, marriages and deaths amongst Hamilton Friends, and you must have permission of those involved to share that information.

Representative Meeting asked Don W (as clerk of the ad-hoc committee on war tax concerns) to contact the members of that committee and continue work on the issue, if possible, and to report on their progress to the yearly meeting. We confirmed that we still support the principle of not paying for war and are in agreement with the changes proposed in the current draft legislation.

The next meetings of Representative Meeting will be in Toronto on 16 - 18 November 2007 and 2-4 May 2008.

Thank you ever so much to Friends who fed, billeted and drove our guests. Our out-of-town visitors appreciated the hospitality shown to them by Hamilton Friends. They raved about the Meeting House, the garden and the food.

### **Meditation on the labyrinth walk during our retreat:**

by Dick

“Mine has been a life of unsuffered consequences.”

There is no task more fundamental to our spiritual lives than that of being present where we are. One of fifteen on the same ancient, turning, turning path, each with our eventual separate ends. But in the present, we are together in spiritual community. I hold each person in my care, and wonder at their experience of this walk.

Till by turning, turning, we come down right, for each of us, in this present moment. What a great good fortune we have this day.

### **Laughter, April Fools and everyday foolishness as teachers: some Trickster basics**

by Dick

The statement that engaged me first in becoming a friend:

Quakers believe that there is that of God in every person. We do not know that this is true, but we have found that, if we act as if it is true, our trust is justified.

For guidance on what this statement of faith in human nature means, we put our

faith in the spirit of Christ, told to us by Biblical stories of the man Jesus the Christ. His person is the exemplar of living a Godly life, and in this way is the teacher of how to live a moral life. Other religions; other exemplars.

The odd thing is that our exemplar is portrayed as leading an INNOCENT life. Innocence seems to be the essence of human nature. In Genesis it is Adam and Eve, until the apple is eaten. In the New Testament the essence of human nature is created and formed by the divine; this innocence is embodied in the Virgin mother and her baby. Animals are not a part of this moral, exclusively human world. H'm.

Jesus emphatically does not embody the "seven deadly sins": 1-Lust 2-Gluttony 3-Greed/Avarice 4-Laziness/Sloth 5-Wrath 6-Envy 7-Pride/Hubris

Instead, our image of Jesus embodies Pope Gregory's seven virtues:

1. Chastity (purity, opposes lust) — Courage and boldness. Embracing of moral wholesomeness and achieving purity of thought through education and betterment. Practicing sexual abstinence.
2. Abstinence (self-control, opposes gluttony) — Constant mindfulness of others and one's surroundings; practicing self-control, abstention, and moderation.
3. Liberality (will, generosity, opposes greed) Willingness to give. A nobility of thought or actions.
4. Diligence (ethics, opposes sloth) — A zealous and careful nature in one's actions and work. Decisive work ethic. Budgeting one's time; monitoring one's own activities to guard against laziness.
5. Patience (peace, opposes wrath) — Forbearance and endurance through moderation. Resolving conflicts peacefully, as opposed to resorting to violence. The ability to forgive; to show mercy to sinners.
6. Kindness (satisfaction, opposes envy) — Charity, compassion, friendship, and sympathy without prejudice and for its own sake.
7. Humility (modesty, opposes pride) — Modest behavior, selflessness, and the giving of respect. Giving credit where credit is due; not unfairly glorifying one's own self.

The virtues sound very, very good. They are more or less universal to religions and to groups within religions, including exclusivist and fundamentalist groups, who energetically seek out the sin (evil, satan) in others. It seems that these very good truths are also simple truths. Truths, but TOO simple. And when held up to our experience of everyday life, almost too good to be true. This may be a serious failing.

And, there are some aspects of life that seem to have been left out. In this Christian myth, our sinful world is redeemed by a helpless infant. And the infant sets the tone for the ideal personal character of the Christian person. The infant is innocent and good. In contrast, the "fallen" world is guilty of all manner of

failures in human relationships, and bad. Think of war, rape, pillage, abuse of children, slavery... in a word, doing harm. [WHY are these harms NOT found in the list of deadly sins?]

What falls between these Manichean extremes of evil (fallen) and good (divine)? Quite a lot that we value very highly in our lives and in the lives of those around us. 1-The joys and passions of love, 2-The pleasure of eating well, 3-Nurturing our imagination in creative arts, 4-Enjoying leisure, 5-Thinking, speaking and acting with critical intelligence, 6-Emulating an admired person (e.g.:Jesus), 7-Taking pride in a job well done. [WHY are these not among the virtues?]

Curiously, Humour is absent in all this; not found among the virtues, or vices, nor is it much mentioned in the synoptic gospels. Did Jesus ever laugh? We are given one example, and it is sardonic humour. This is extraordinary. It is also the opening for foolishness, and for the mythic arch-fool – the trickster.

Nor is there any room for these facts:

- that most human emotional states are ambivalent mixtures of feelings, not simply good or bad,
- that much of human experience is known “through a glass, darkly”, beyond our grasp,
- that our ability to “imagine others” beyond what we know allows us to be friends and lovers,
- that the world that we live in is fast moving, open ended and complex beyond imagining,
- that the consequences of any person’s actions may not be what was intended,
- that cunning and stupidity also characterize quite a lot of human (and animal) experience,
- that we share a common nature with other animals, especially with other mammals.

All animals, including humans, pose us with not only their own appearances, actions, and intentions, but also with their contrasts between species, so that we may see in them (if we will) a sort of de-culturing transformation of ourselves, into a lower common denominator of creatures, somewhat blindly striving to satisfy our urges for food, for mating, for mastery – the essential animal in each of us – the animal in each of us – from which we (and they) have our spirit and our life, but which we must not allow to overturn our moral relations with each other and thereby fall into raw opportunism.

Other animals, too have their self-control and their social consciences in relations with others of their species. We can see the life affirming self-control in a mother’s risking of her own life in defense of her young, the coordinated sociality, and the nurturing of each other in myriad other ways.

We can see indifference or even insolence in the treatment some creatures

receive from others; dominance between males in the mating competition and social organization of most animals, casual brutality in many carnivore's treatment of their prey. We consider this to be the dark side of animal nature, including human nature.

Now, about this mythic trickster. Trickster is different; being neither innocent nor evil. He is found in the mythic traditions of most, perhaps all the world religions (except the patriarchal ones) as the arch-fool, and in his way is a different kind of exemplar, from whom we learn what NOT to do. He is often an animal in appearance (coyote, raven, monkey), and in the low cunning of his attempts to gratify himself.

He is a mythic competitor with Jesus, claiming to be the primal, universal and absurd essence of human nature (rather than a pure divinity). Gradually, as Trickster learns from his mistakes to be more self-aware and competent, his various appearances and motives become less absurd and damaging. He makes us laugh because his absurdity is immediately recognizable in our experience of everyday life. If we did not behave ourselves, we could be like him.

We would do well to regard direct confrontation with the mythic Trickster as a dangerous event, and would certainly not want to invite him to be our houseguest, what with his embodiment of lust, gluttony, and the other dangerous "deadly sins". But alas, we have no choice in the matter.

There is that of the trickster/transformer/teacher in every person. We all embody some measures of folly, cunning and stupidity, and the ability to unwittingly effect changes in our world, and most importantly, the ability to learn from our foolish experiences and the foolish experiences of others. When we laugh at him, he grins back at us, because we are the joke.

**Hamilton Monthly Meeting**  
**Meeting for Worship for Business**  
May 17, 2007

**Present:** Mona C, Ian (recording clerk), Glenna, Andy, Bev (presiding clerk), Carol Leigh

**Regrets:** Helen B

- 1 The Meeting began in silent worship at 7:30 pm.
- 2 **Agenda** reviewed for order and approved
- 3 **Minutes** of April 5 were approved, with correction to spelling of Janis Muller's name.
- 4 **Continuing Business**

- 4.1 Potluck for May and June. The May potluck took place with Jack Valentine on May 10<sup>th</sup>, in lieu of the story-telling program. The June potluck with story-telling program is now proposed for a date later in the year. No preparations have occurred to date. Bev will contact Harriet and Wilf.
- 4.2 June calendar. The YSHYM weekend at Camp NeeKauNis is June 1 – 3. We will forgo a potluck in June. The Meeting for Business will be Thurs. June 7<sup>th</sup> (Andy clerking). The outdoor Meeting for Worship in the Brinks' garden will be June 17<sup>th</sup>, subject to confirmation on May 20<sup>th</sup> at M4W and with the Brinks. Carol Leigh will bring this forward. We note the wedding celebration is scheduled for June 30<sup>th</sup>.
- 4.3 October History and Archives Potluck. C/F

## 5 Business arising

- 5.1 Representative Meeting – support for CO bill. Approval in principle was given at Rep meeting (RM 0705-17) and Don is asked to revitalize the ad hoc committee on war tax concerns and report at the 2007 Yearly Meeting in Session as to next steps for carrying forward this concern
- 5.2 Disposition of clerks discretionary fund (minute 7.1) Ian will confirm status with Blair on the fund balance and report back.
- 5.3 Developing policy for dealing with emergency financial requests (070405.7.2) (Bev) C/F
- 5.4 Quaker involvement at Caledonia (070405.7.3) (Robbie M) C/F

## 6 Reports

- 6.1 HMM Nominating Committee. Mona reported on behalf of the committee (Glenna, and Betty) that Chris and Anne agree to serve on the library committee. We approve these names. Glenna will distribute a final roster for 2007/08. Members of the Naming Committee for Nominating Committee have not been finalized (Bev to take action). Pete is approved for the auditor position, subject to his consent.
- 6.2 Representative Meeting. A report from Dawn on the May 4-5 meeting was received and will be attached to the archival minutes and distributed in the newsletter. We note with pleasure that Christine Davis, a former sojourner in our meeting will be giving the 2007 Sunderland P Gardner Lecture at CYM.

## 7 New Business

- 7.1 Appointment of delegates to YSHYM. We name Carol Leigh as our delegate of record and Glenna, Bev and Mona as her alternates.
- 7.2 Appointment of delegates to CYM, support for them. We name Glenna and Mona to be our delegates, with thanks. We agree to provide financial support of \$200 each for Carol Leigh and Glenna.
- 7.3 Meetinghouse cleaning. Bev and Don met with the supervisor of Marty Karl Enterprises regarding the fees for service and level of

service. We agree to increase the fees to \$100 per month for two cleanings (three hours each) and a special steam cleaning of carpets (\$100) and wax and buff the acrylic tile areas (\$100). A list of tasks is being provided. Friends need to leave the meetinghouse in more tidy fashion to facilitate the custodial work. We ask Don to serve as liaison person with the cleaning service.

7.4 Membership clearness issues (Bev) C/F

7.5 CYM appointee as FGC representative. We discussed the request for a nominee from CYM and ask HMM NC to consider this further. We support the nomination of [a Young Friend] as a possible delegate, with further exploration of their interest and availability. We note that HMM is not in position to fund the travel expenses of a delegate from our Meeting, and that the person's life situation should allow a reasonable commitment of time for this service, including serving on a working committee of FGC as well as Central Committee.

7.6 Appointee to Regional Multifaith Council (Ian G is standing down) C/F

8 **Correspondence:** Margaret Vallins' letter dated May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2007. Margaret thanks the Meeting for our donation in support of the Tyler Page Generosity of Spirit Award at Algonquin College. The Fund now stands at \$75,000 and will offer six \$500 bursaries each year.

9 **Date and time** of next meeting: We agree that the date be changed to Thurs June 7<sup>th</sup>, 7:30pm.

10 **Closing Worship**