

# Hamilton Quaker Newsletter

June 2024



***Respect the laws of the state, but let your first loyalty be to God's purposes. If you feel compelled by a strong conviction to break the law, search your conscience deeply. Ask your meeting for the prayerful support which will give you strength as a right way becomes clear.***

*Advices and Queries #35*

# Upcoming Events and Announcements

Wilf and Shirla are pleased to invite all those who might be interested to join them for the Amnesty International Summer Potluck Picnic. This gathering for members and supporters of Amnesty International will be held at their home at 766 Sulphur Springs Road, on Saturday, June 15, beginning at 5:30 pm. If you are planning to attend, please let Wilf know what you can bring by June 13 ([deerspring1@gmail.com](mailto:deerspring1@gmail.com)). This event will run rain or shine!

The next Quaker Education Session will be on Sunday, June 16, beginning at noon. Participants are welcome to bring a lunch.

PSAC will meet online at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, June 17. Please use the regular Meeting for Worship Zoom link.

Our celebration of the lives of George Fox and Margaret Fell will take place on Sunday, June 23 after Meeting for Worship, in the garden if weather permits, and inside if it does not.

The next meeting of the Reading group will be on Sunday, June 23, from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. in our Zoom space. We are reading Thomas King's *The Truth about Stories: A Native Narrative*, from the *CBC 2003 Massey Lecture Series*. Even if you cannot attend every month, you can drop in as your schedule permits. Please contact Shirla ([shirla766@gmail.com](mailto:shirla766@gmail.com)) to be added to the participant list.

The next Meeting for Worship for Business will be held in person at the Meeting House on Sunday, September 8 at 12:30 p.m. You can also join us online on our regular Meeting Zoom link.

There will be a Brown Bag Lunch discussion about Half-Yearly Meeting on Sunday, September 15, following Meeting for Worship.



# Who Are Quakers, Really?

by Beverly Shepard

Many years ago, I was at a Canadian Yearly Meeting session, participating in some meeting or other, and a Scottish Friend who was sojourning for a year in Canada rose to speak. She began, "Friends,..." and -- although I knew that is what Quakers are officially called -- it hit me at that moment with great and wonderful force: *We are Friends!* I can think of no other religious group that has a word for themselves that isn't just the name of the religion. We are blessed! When we want to address a gathering of people of our faith we don't have to say something like "fellow Methodists" or just resort to "people". We call each other Friends! It felt so comforting and true and real and helpful.

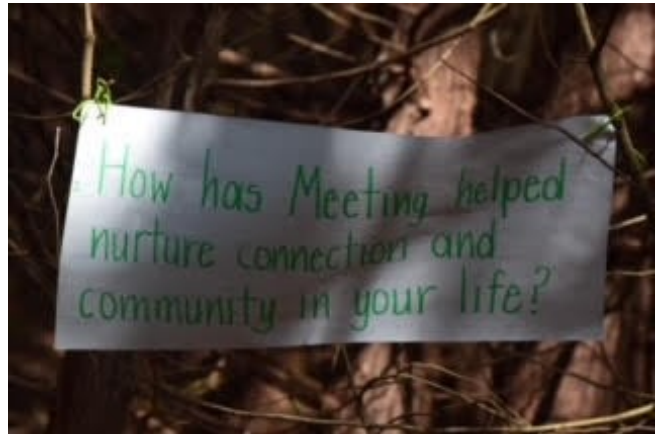
Centuries ago, when our faith was emerging as separate from other branches of Christianity, we were the "Religious Society of Friends of Truth". That last phrase has been gone for some time, and although it is still true, leaving it out of our name opens us to be friends of those who need us, friends of peace and love and simpler living, but perhaps most importantly friends of each other. That moment when she stood and said, "Friends..." told me why I am a Quaker.



# Cedar Haven Retreat

by Kathryn Wiersma

May the 4<sup>th</sup> was a Saturday, and the force was strong amongst Friends at Cedar Haven, with hosts Beverly and Robert Shepard. We began with warm welcomes over muffins in the beautiful surroundings, and every face I saw beamed. There was quiet worship in the music room for half an hour, which ended with singing. Afterwards, some drifted towards the woods to gather for a guided walk. We crept through the woods quietly, stopping to reflect at particular points on successive queries, with about five stops in all. The cumulative effect of pausing to share with one or two Friends in turn along a meditative walk was of deepened intimacy, and renewed curiosity for me.



This was celebrated with joined hands, and again we ended with singing, 'Where there is Love, there is God'. Others were invited as led, to enjoy fellowship on the deck or indoors during this time. The two young Friends present were engaged in the story of Hiawatha and embroidery bracelets, with Jane and Sian.



After a potluck lunch with some warm soup provided by our hosts, Friends were invited to choose focus groups. One was worship sharing. The two young Friends were again engaged, this time with an exploratory walk through with Wilf Ruland. Still others again chose fellowship on the deck, raised up to the trees with birds flitting back and

forth, to listen to one another and share from the heart. Connections were made, and as a second quiet worship came to a close, Friends departed home with the Light shared all round and with all ages.

# Speakers of Truth: Before the Red Dress

*by Carol Leigh Wehking*

As one small step on the continuous journey towards reconciliation, and in solidarity with the Sisters in Spirit, Jane MacKay Wright and Carol Leigh Wehking attended an event at the Art Gallery of Hamilton on May 16, entitled “Speakers of Truth: Before the Red Dress”, at which we were introduced to the MMIWT2S, and to three Indigenous women who were murdered in Hamilton.

The event began and ended around a sacred fire, into which we were all invited to offer the three medicines of cedar, tobacco, and sage.

Prior to entering the circle, we were offered the opportunity to add our handprints and names on a large canvas that will travel with the Shelley Niro exhibit, in conjunction with which this event was held.



There were several songs, and formal and informal contributions about the women. In addition, we learned about the Moose Hide Campaign, which exists to promote the commitment of men (and women) to be advocates and protectors, working together to end gender-based violence. (We wore our moosehide pins.) <https://moosehidecampaign.ca>



# Derelict

by Sheldon Clark

Asleep, drunk, fallen halfway between the curb and the dirty road,  
he looked dead under the lamppost. This was not a movie scene.  
Dad had parked the car in a vacant lot near the Cleveland Public Auditorium.  
We were walking this early wintery 1949 night in anticipation of enjoying  
The American and Canadian Sport and Outdoor Show.

Dr. Clark, our mother, checked for pulse and breath.

She confirmed the derelict was alive.

My brother and I could smell the whisky fumes and vomit from several feet  
away.

This cold evening, we saw a person in need of care.

Dad went into the Bar to telephone for an ambulance.

We waited outside.

Cigar, cigarette smoke, and stale beer exited as he entered.

Tobacco smoke followed him into the cold when he came out.

The man had not moved.

We heard the siren.

Mom and Dad conferred with the medics.

They checked the man and lifted him into the ambulance.

They thanked our parents for their *Good Samaritan* concern.

Jesus' parable learned in First Day School was practical and timeless.

The Sportsmen Show held indoors was warm.

It was filled with people jostling for food from vendors.

At the railing, a place opened to see fishermen demonstrate their skill.

We joined the vibrant enthusiastic spectators.

At the shallow pool, two men waved their long flexible rods back and forth.

Their lines grew longer and longer until they cast their lead sinkers

Toward the far end where two floating rings bobbed.

Kerplunk! Spontaneous applause vaulted to the ceiling.

Other fly fishermen tried their luck next.

The juxtaposition of these two starkly different scenes has never been forgotten. The contemporary need for immediate intervention was automatic. Compassion was essential to redress the woes of the man on the street. He sought escape from his reality of addiction and poverty. Hundreds of revellers sought escape from the humdrum by indulging in the fantastic.

Today, at the end of the first quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, timeless human aspirations

Have not changed. Loving relationships with hopes, dreams, and aspirations are born afresh against a backdrop of poverty amidst plenty, the pursuit of peace against the angst of perpetual war, and the desire for life, when there is so much evidence of fear and death. We, the people of the world family want to embrace personal, family, and community transformation merely to survive. Like refugees and immigrants, tradesmen and farmers, scientists and engineers, artists and poets, everyone can show the best of human values, love, compassion, courage, gratitude, kindness, mercy, vision, humility, selflessness, self-control, transcendence, wisdom, and what is meant by heart.



# Falling into Silence

*by Carol Leigh Wehking*

...and when the words are done,  
And all that needs expression has been voiced,  
(And all that must be voiced has been heard)  
We gently cease, and silence envelops us,  
Familiar and comfortable.  
Enfolded as if in invisible arms,  
We are gathered before scattered.



# 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. Please limit submissions to a maximum of 750 words. 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, Síân Reid, [daywitch@gmail.com](mailto: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.*