



Montreal Monthly Meeting Newsletter

Infolettre de l'Assemblée quaker de Montréal



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Life of the Meeting / La vie de l'assemblée

Three Months at the Greene Centre

By Wendy Sturton

As chilling winds blow outside, Montrealers are having difficulty saying goodbye to a summer of heat, sun, travel, and growth. Tempering the blessings of summer, we have experienced some losses, and have felt sorrow for the suffering elsewhere on our planet.

Montreal's parks and green spaces were important to us this summer. We organized a Quaker picnic in Angrignon park. Such picnics help all who attend to relieve the joys of childhood. Midweek meeting stayed near the McGill encampment in support of Palestine until protesters disbanded, and then moved on to leafy locations outdoors when the weather was good, especially to people's homes when shelter was needed. Location decisions were made on an ad hoc basis, until the McGill MORSL room was on again.

The monthly craft session following Meeting continued through the summer both as a venue for needle arts and cooking. Both activities are popular because they soothe and build fellowship in unique, relaxing ways. The event will continue for the next couple of months, and probably longer.

Geoff Garver attended CYM at Camp NeeKaunis and came home filled with joy and satisfaction with the beauty of the gathering's surroundings, as well as the spiritual boost of meeting Quakers from across Canada. Geoffreyen Edwards attended virtually on our behalf as well.

We welcomed Jonah Dimant as a new member of our Meeting, and will celebrate her decision to become a Quaker at our next pollux (on October 20), with baking by Colin and others, and music! Jonah was immediately nominated and accepted to work with Geoffreyen Edwards on First Day School. Thanks for your faithfulness in serving our children, GJ, and for working on the project! Jonah. And thanks, Leigh Smit, for your work on the project!

Although many of us bake and cook—think of Geoff Garver's wonderful confections during craft activities—Colin's baking stands out. It has been generously supplied after most meetings, for no reason other than his enjoyment and our state of culinary blessedness. Thanks, Colin!

In spite of summer absences, attendance at our Meeting was good; and our clerks ensured that the Meetings ran well. A special thanks to Geoff Garver and Brooke Nancaville, Clerk and Assistant Clerk respectively, for ensuring smooth transitions through the phases of our worship, and sensitive response to all our First Day needs. Their love and competence sets the tone for all of us! We also observe and appreciate their efforts to improve the virtual experience of our Meeting. Please hang on, anyone who has experienced problems with this connection. It has improved, and will improve more.

During this period, we lost Molly. She died after a long and loving life, facing illness in recent years with courage and grace. To the end, in spite of physical difficulties, Molly accepted occasional lifts to meet, yet few will ask you boldly and gallantly to stop, inspect and listen thoroughly to the absolute awareness or the divine light that is already within, here and now. Surprise! The package has been shipped and delivered to you. When? Not long ago, just since you were born!

Ministry and Council welcome Wendy Eberle as a new member of the Committee. M & C has plans afoot to organize a workshop on how we can better aid attendees and visitors experiencing trauma, and to challenge members of our Meeting to take part in supporting those of us who develop various needs at difficult moments. We hope for a stronger and more sensitive "pastoral" response to one another, as being as we are—The Religious Society of Friends.

A Partial Return to Quebec City

By Jean-Louis Demers

Our small francophone group recently determined to alternate its Meetings for Worship between Lévis and Québec. Over the course of several months, we have come to realize that several participants make the journey from Québec to Lévis. It seems reasonable therefore that some of the Meetings should be held in the city. We have therefore made arrangements with the Anglican Cathedral who have agreed to let us use the small All Saints Chapel for our Meetings once every two months. It was in this regard that the very first Meeting of our group was held in 2018! If you are passing through Quebec City, keep track of the dates of our Meetings via our web page, and if you can, come and join us for our silent meeting. We will be thrilled to have you with us!

Midweek Meeting Shines On

By Colin Robertson

Midweek meeting, as befits the beginning of the academic year, has returned to its usual home in McGill's Office for Religious and Spiritual Life. Midweek in-person meeting is a smaller gathering of a few regular attendees and a steady stream of fresh faces. As a less busy and on-call ministry which had the resonance of a strong inner spiritual life. Although we for the most part were not witnesses to her earlier participation in MMM, we had glimpses of how the Spirit lifted and carried her lifelong, and us along with her. A committee formed by Geoff Garver, Sandra Miller-Sánchez, Janette Fraser and Birnal Thambyah is planning a Memorial Meeting for Worship in her memory. It will take place on November 9 at 6 pm at the Greene Centre and will be made available on the internet. All are welcome, and more information will be forthcoming soon.

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First Day School

By Geoffreyen Edwards

This film, one of the best I have seen, explores both the joys of transition and some of the challenges. The all-important issue of safety runs as an implicit undercutting throughout the film. As a less busy and on-call ministry which had the resonance of a strong inner spiritual life. Although we for the most part were not witnesses to her earlier participation in MMM, we had glimpses of how the Spirit lifted and carried her lifelong, and us along with her. A committee formed by Geoff Garver, Sandra Miller-Sánchez, Janette Fraser and Birnal Thambyah is planning a Memorial Meeting for Worship in her memory. It will take place on November 9 at 6 pm at the Greene Centre and will be made available on the internet. All are welcome, and more information will be forthcoming soon.

Making Silence Together*

Proposed by Jean-Louis Demers

Let us make silence together in order to meet God. God of the cosmos, we encounter you in the dance of the clouds, in the scents of autumn leaves and the murmur of the stream as it crosses the beach.

You orchestrate the symphony of the crickets, the beating of the wings and the movement of branches in the wind.

You breathe heat into winter's overcoat, scents into the bread as it cooks and melodies into guitars.

You are the tears on the face of one who suffers, the laugh of the child and the hand reaching out from the beggar.

You are the one who, today and always, invokes thanks for the sanctity of your presence in the moment.

Let us make silence together with you in our midst.

*This text is excerpted from "United Voices" of the United Church of Canada

Review of *Bewilderment* by Richard Powers

By Wendy Sturton

This novel tells the story of a father and son bereft after a beloved wife and mother swerves her car to avoid an opossum, killing herself to save the wild creature in front of her. It is no coincidence that she is an environmental activist with a passion for animals. As a less busy and on-call ministry which had the resonance of a strong inner spiritual life. Although we for the most part were not witnesses to her earlier participation in MMM, we had glimpses of how the Spirit lifted and carried her lifelong, and us along with her. A committee formed by Geoff Garver, Sandra Miller-Sánchez, Janette Fraser and Birnal Thambyah is planning a Memorial Meeting for Worship in her memory. It will take place on November 9 at 6 pm at the Greene Centre and will be made available on the internet. All are welcome, and more information will be forthcoming soon.

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Good To Know

By Jonah Dimant

Messages like the one below, written to clearness Committees by those applying for membership in the Religious Society of Friends, describe the spiritual impulses which push us across the threshold into full Quaker life.

In late October of last year, my girlfriend of several years ended our relationship in an unnecessarily chaotic and hurtful way. We had been living together, with a shared cat, and the loss was very difficult for me. I was entirely mired in grief and felt isolated and hopeless despite the best efforts of my friends. I knew that I needed to set up a new schedule for myself; find new ways to socialize and new sources of fulfillment. This lonely time was when I remembered, almost immediately, Quaker meeting. I had been once before, out of curiosity and at a time when I was not at all able to sit still or meditate. I decided to try again, with a more cognizant approach to meeting.

That subsequent Sunday, committing to Meeting, I feared that, sitting silently for an hour, I would be able to think only to my break-up. But, to my great surprise, I was transported by the Spirit of all those around me, into a place of light, paving the way to peace, tolerance and harmony. In short, we are all sailing together, in the same boat guided by our innermost lighthouse!

Meets weekly. Sunday Zoom at 6:30 pm. We use the usual format: a core group, followed by a discussion of what is coming up. All are welcome. Contact us for the link.

Mid-week meetings also take place in person on Wednesdays.

This meeting will in general meet at MORSL, 3610 McTavish, often at 5pm. Usually a discussion follows the meeting, to decide the details. Please contact us for confirmation or to join the Signal group making these decisions.

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Peace Work at the CFSC

by Geoffreyen Edwards

Since Canadian Yearly Meeting this past summer, I have become a member of the Quaker Peace Committee (QPC), one of three sub-committees of the Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC). The other two sub-committees are the Quaker Transformative Justice Committee (QTJC) and the Quaker Indigenous Rights Committee (QIRC).

Although my work with the QPC is just beginning, I would like to highlight several recent initiatives which may be of interest to Friends in Montreal and Quebec. CFSC has a long history of interventions in the peace area, but changing times have led to a restructuring of both the committee and its work. This become more expensive and fragmented, and more towards supporting initiatives within Canada at local, regional and national levels. Among the initiatives currently underway, the Peace Committee has developed a *Toolkit for responding to conflict*, and is in the process of publishing a series of short videos for rethinking the way we see conflicts. [Here](#) you can find the first in the series.

In addition, the CFSC staff is developing what it calls an "advocacy incubator" (i.e. documents that respond to "what about?" questions, etc.) in support of a *Universal Basic Income (UBI)* initiative currently in debate before the Senate. This effort on the part of CFSC integrates the work of all three sub-committees. And this is just the beginning. I'll report more later, as the work progresses.

News from the Quakers in France

By Jean-Louis Demers

The latest edition of the *Letter des Amis de France* is now available (in French only).

Also, take note of this [announcement](#) from the resident Friends at the Quaker Meeting House in Congénies.

Midweek Meeting Shines On

By Colin Robertson

The non binary aspect of the experience of a trans woman is subtly present here in an uncharacteristically chaotic and hurtful way. She shares her passions for animals, but her behaviour to others, no matter how much she tries, is often problematic. As a less busy and on-call ministry which had the resonance of a strong inner spiritual life.

She is realistic enough to recognize that through its love and compassion, her behaviour to others, no matter how much she tries, is often problematic. As a less busy and on-call ministry which had the resonance of a strong inner spiritual life.

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