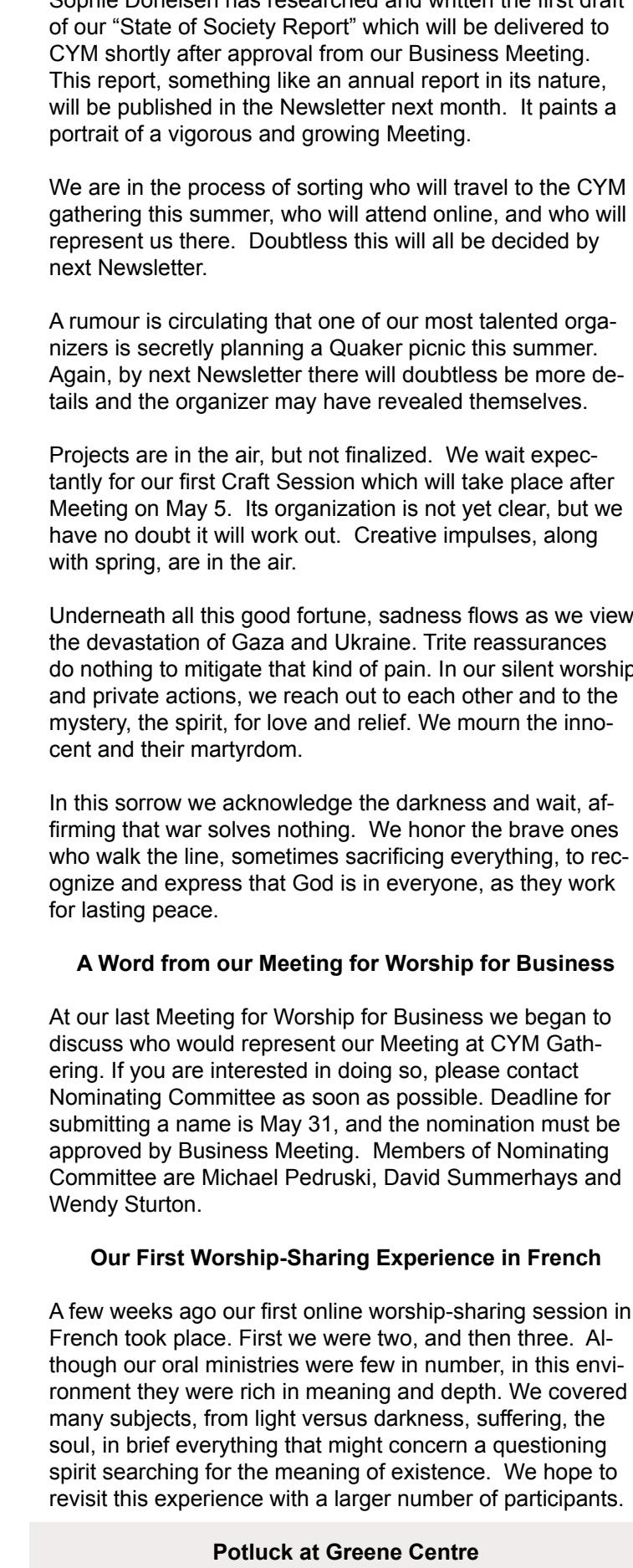




Montreal Monthly Meeting Newsletter

Infolettre de l'Assemblée quaker de Montréal



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Life of the Meeting / La vie de l'assemblée

Our weekly Meetings for Worship at the Greene Centre continue to meet with us for food with the spirit, body and mind. Attendance hovers just above 20 on most Sundays.

In the month to come we will enjoy our bi-monthly potluck on April 21. Friends are invited to bring their favorite dishes to share and enjoy everyone else's culinary generosity. On the same Sunday, First Day school will be held. Children and parents are invited to share along with the rest of us.

Our co-clerk, Geoffrey Garver, visited our francophone meeting in Lévis on April 7 and writes about his experience below.

Sophie Donelsen has researched and written the first draft of our "State of Society Report" which will be delivered to CYM shortly after approval from our Business Meeting. This report, something like an annual report in its nature, will be published in the Newsletter next month. It paints a portrait of a vigorous and growing Meeting.

We are in the process of who will attend online, and who will represent us there. Doubtless this will all be decided by next Newsletter.

A rumour is circulating that one of our most talented organizers is secretly planning a Quaker picnic this summer. Again, by next Newsletter there will doubtless be more details and the organizer may have revealed themselves.

Projects are in the air, but nothing will take place after Meeting on May 5. Its organization is not yet clear, but we have no doubt it will work out. Creative impulses, along with spring, are in the air.

Underneath all this Gaza and Ukraine, sadness flows as we view the devastation of both countries. Triste realizations do nothing to mitigate that kind of pain. In our silent worship and private actions, we reach out to each other and to the mystery, the spirit, for love and relief. We mourn the innocent and their martyrdom.

In this sorrow we acknowledge the darkness and wait, affirming that war solves nothing. We honor the brave ones who walk the line, sometimes sacrificing everything, to recognize and express that God is in everyone, as they work for lasting peace.

A Word from our Meeting for Worship for Business

At our last Meeting for Worship for Business we began to discuss who would represent our Meeting at CYM Gathering. If you are interested in doing so, please Contact Nominating Committee as soon as possible. Deadline for submitting a name is May 31, and the nomination must be approved by Business Meeting. Members of Nominating Committee are Michael Pedruski, David Summerhays and Wendy Sturton.

Our First Worship-Sharing Experience in French

A few weeks ago our first online worship-sharing session in French took place. First we were two, and then three. Although our oral ministries were few in number, in this environment they were rich in meaning and depth. We covered many subjects, from light versus darkness, suffering, the soul, in brief everything that might concern a questioning spirit searching for the meaning of existence. We hope to revisit this experience with a larger number of participants.

Potluck at Greene Centre

Our bi-monthly potluck will be held after Meeting at the Greene Centre following worship on April 21. Come and enjoy our delicious shared meal!

Craft Session

The first MMM craft session will be held at the Greene Centre following worship on May 5. Bring your lunch and a craft project if you have one on the go. A cooking project will also be undertaken for those who have culinary inclinations. All are welcome.

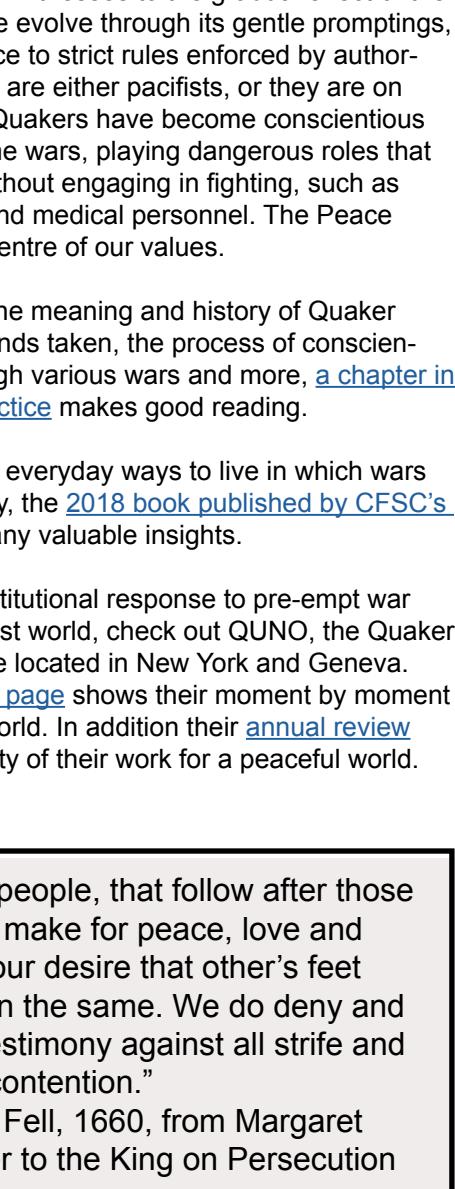

Photo: Lucas van Oort

Photo of/dé: Geoff Garver, Jean-Louis Demers, Eira Garrett, Sébastien Garant

The decision to commit fully to these principles is hardly easy. Not all Quakers follow the precept to the limit in all situations; some of us are on paths which lead to this conclusion but have not yet arrived. A favoriting William Penn asking the elder George Fox whether he could continue to wear his sword to Meeting. Fox replied, "Wear thy sword as long as thou canst." In a later encounter, Fox noted that Penn no longer wore his sword. This story witnesses to the gradual effect of the Spirit on all of us; we evolve through its gentle promptings, not through obedience to strict rules enforced by authority. And so, Quakers are either pacifists, or they are on the path towards it. Quakers have been conscientious objectors during some wars, playing dangerous roles that alleviate suffering without engaging in fighting, such as ambulance drivers and medical personnel. The Peace testimony is not at the centre of our lives, but it is there.

For a discussion of the meaning and history of Quaker Pacifism, various stands taken, the process of conscientious objection through various wars and more, [a chapter in British Faith and Practice](#) makes good reading.

And for a Quaker just instinct to preempt war, and create a more just world, check out QUNO, the Quaker United Nations Office located in New York and Geneva.

First, their [Facebook page](#) shows their moment by moment involvement in their work for a peaceful world.

For those looking for everyday ways to live in which wars become unnecessary, the 2018 book published by CFSC's [Matt Legge](#) gives many valuable insights.

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"We are a people, that follow after those things that make for peace, love and unity. It is our desire that other's feet may walk in the same. We do deny and bear our testimony against all strife and wars and contention."

- Margaret Fell, 1660, from Margaret Fell's Letter to the King on Persecution

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My First Quaker Meeting at Café Mosaique in Lévis

By Geoff Garver

A joy of being one of the co-clerks of Montreal Monthly Meeting is getting to know the wonderful people in our community better personally. Attending meeting for worship regularly at the Greene Centre in Montreal has certainly made that easier. But, when I began my time as co-clerk in January 2024, I told myself I also needed to get to Quebec City and Lévis as soon as I could to join our worship group in that region. On the first Sunday of April, I was delighted to be at Café Mosaique in Lévis to join in worship with Jean-Louis, Sébastien, and two friends from Shrewsbury Monthly Meeting in New Jersey, Tom and Fee.

We who live in Quebec know that April can bring everything from a big snowstorm to summer-like warmth, and so it has been this April. I left Montreal Saturday morning April 6, with a plan to see what migrating waterfowl were on a stopover at Baie-du-Febvre. Sure enough, the day began with short bursts of sunshine starting soon after I arrived in Baie-du-Febvre. April's main attraction, Snow Geese, were still only there in small numbers, but the flooded fields had plenty of other birds – Canada Geese in the thousands, along with Northern Shovelers, Green-winged Teals, Northern Pintails, Ring-necked Ducks and more. I'll be back again to see if the hundreds of thousands of Snow Geese that stop over in Baie-du-Febvre in the Spring have arrived – and if so, to experience one of Quebec's amazing natural wonders.

My dog Oscar and I spent the night in a place in Saint-Roch, a neighborhood in Quebec City I didn't know before. An early morning walk on the St. Charles River with Oscar was a wonderful way to start my day. I took her 9:30 ferry to Lévis under clear skies, which gave me time to discover to the talk because my own online activities for gender queer issues increase. I have started to experience some of this violence and wanted to know more about what I could do to better protect them.

I have to say that the discussion centred initially on the toxic environment these advocates experience as a result of their activities, including hate mail, death threats, doxing (people publicizing their home address), staking and other forms of violence. Those who have been doing this work for themselves and to take basic precautions, being careful not to post personal information, make sure their online presence is adequately protected via passwords, and so forth. Instead, most of the remarks were focused on the fact that this violent hate-messaging needs a more systematic response than the bill will develop. Although the federal government is in the process of developing its "Online Harms Bill" (#63), there are still broader social implications and it is unclear how the bill will address these. A lot of hate messaging is accepted by the powers-that-be as the price of being present online. Note that it was pointed out that this is not primarily or only a response to trans advocacy, but indeed to all gender-based advocacy, including women's rights, gay rights, abortion, indigenous rights, and so forth. Judith Butler, in her recently published "[Who's Afraid of Gender?](#)" argues that this hate rhetoric is an attack at the roots of democracy and needs to be addressed as such.

Among the actions discussed was the need for religious organisations to take more ownership over the problem and become more active in speaking to government, private companies and also the public more directly. This seems to me to be directly in line with the Quaker Peace Testimony, and action that we can do here with global significance and impact. This may involve letter-writing campaigns and petitions, but also means solidarity with and support for other groups who are actively working in this area. For more detailed information on such action, see the following [Amnesty International](#) website.

Photo reproduced by permission of Brooke Nanciville

Good To Know

In these editions of the Newsletter, we publish short explanations of an essential Quaker concept. If you are interested in particular subjects, please contact us at the Newsletter address.

Quaker Peace Testimony: Peace on Earth, Now and Always

From the very beginning, Quakers believed that it was wrong to take up arms, whether in one's own cause or in the cause of others. They believed that war was residing. They believed that war effort is a product of a few personal initiatives, such as that of Alfred Stanfield of McGill University, around 1907. The history of the Quaker community of Montreal is still to be written, if enough historical records can be found. Thinking of the future, we must preserve the records of the present, records which will become the roots of the past to inspire those who will follow us.

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On gender-based violence - a call to action

by Geoffreyen Edwards

In our ongoing discussions about how we Quakers may take a more active role in social concerns in line with the Peace Testimony and other Quaker efforts to improve the world we live in, I would like to share with you my experience recently viewing a webinar organized by the Canadian section of Amnesty International. I probably don't need to say much about this organisation, which is one of the main agencies worldwide involved in the defense of human rights. I, personally, have been involved with the work of Amnesty International since I was fifteen, indeed, my aunt worked for the agency in London for many years.

On Thursday, March 28, a webinar involving a panel discussion on the topic of "Let's Talk About Safe Online Spaces; Addressing Technology Facilitated Gender-Based Violence" was organized. The three panelists were Liz Jong-Jones, Fae Johnstone and Nasreen Rajani. Liz Jong-Jones is an engineer by day and an advocate for women's issues by night. Fae Johnstone is a trans activist, and Nasreen Rajani, an academic researcher on non-violence. I was attracted to the talk because as my own online activities for gender queer issues increase, I have started to experience some of this violence and wanted to know more about what I could do to better protect them.

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Quakers at Large

Registration for CYM Gathering July 24-July 21, 2024 is Open

Registration for Canadian Yearly Meeting Gathering 2024 is now open. The choices for registering are broad—either in person at CampNekauNis or online, with various formulas for lodging at the camp or in the area, and meal packages depending on age, etc. It's best to read the offerings very carefully to ensure you are aware of all the options.

Price for registration goes down if people register in a group. If you plan to register, check to see who else is attending from MM so you can register together.

A fact to keep in mind are the deadlines for your two basic choices. If you wish to attend in person, the deadline for registration will be May 1. If you wish to attend online, the deadline will be July 15.

Details of the program itself are not yet available.

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Time to Learn / Formations

Reminder: if you need financial help to attend a workshop, please apply to M & C for aid.

Remembering the History of Quakers in Quebec

By Jean-Louis Demers

The first Quaker family to settle in Quebec, other than that of Nicholas Austin, was the family of Gideon Bull in 1800. At that time, in East-Farnham, a true Quaker meeting was founded. A tightly knit community, these Quakers gained a reputation for their values of equality and justice, and were respected for their peaceful character. This Quaker community was the largest in 19th century Canada, counting more than thirty families.

Formal meetings of this group were held beginning around 1814. They would continue for nearly a hundred years, until 1902. According to historical records, their decline occurred because young people were attracted to the city, where they were able to get more lucrative jobs. Unlike what one might expect, the Montreal Meeting of today has no connection to the descendants of East-Farnham. It seems that the present meeting's origin is completely independent, a product of a few personal initiatives, such as that of Alfred Stanfield of McGill University, around 1907. The history of the Quaker community of Montreal is still to be written, if enough historical records can be found. Thinking of the future, we must preserve the records of the present, records which will become the roots of the past to inspire those who will follow us.

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