



The Latest News from QIV-Canaan

MARCH 2018

Greetings all! It has been a long time since we produced our last newsletter back in 2015. Here is a list of some happenings in the intervening time:

- In this past year, our youth have learned to talk, started preschool, graduated from high school, entered college, graduated from college, entered graduate studies, had a baby...
- We deeply miss Ellen, who probably would have had this newsletter out months ago.
- Shira, Lev, Hana and Noah Askren-Palmer joined QIVC and bought the red house!
- The Coalter family has moved to a nice home in Chatham.
- Gene and Helen Braun, our octogenarians, have moved in with their kids, after a lifetime in Ecuador.
- 2017 'twas a great year for fruit production, much appreciated after 2016's small crop. Paul's garden grew sooo much... Dan's had wheelbarrow loads of butternut squash. Brauns' plum trees, apple trees, and northern kiwi vines produced like never before.
- Eric Bear came back!
- Anne is writing fabulous plays like her newest one, *The Kiss*
- Eric H-B's [project to communalize the internet](#) is off the ground.

Read on to find out about our recent [workshop](#) on white privilege and allyship, a [comic](#), an intentional community [advice](#) column, using [language](#) mindfully, a community [lexicon](#), [reflections on our experiences](#), and more.



QIVC is Seeking Residents and New Members!

Yearning to live in a close-knit community?

Seeking a more spiritually focused life?

Dreaming of living more simply and sustainably?

Come join us! Rent, buy, or build a room, apartment, or house in our intentional community in East Chatham, NY.

QIVC is seeking renters and members who will actively participate in the life of our rural intentional community. QIVC, established in 2000, is a community of 25 people of all ages living close to the land on 135 acres of forest and pasture in the upper Hudson Valley. We strive to live spirit-focused lives that are simple, sustainable, and joyful, benefiting from and enjoying our close connections with each other and the land. We welcome diversity of all sorts, and don't all need to identify as Quaker. Contact Sandra at 518-392-1971 or email info@qivc.org

Support our projects

Help us continue to protect the land, ensure sustainability, provide grants, and pursue other projects that fulfill our five intentions.

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How Are We Doing?

By Jens Braun

We now get asked, with some frequency: “And how is the community doing?” We’re not always sure what is being asked and don’t just want to say “Fine, thanks.” So here goes.

We are into our 17th year! Living in community for this length of time has been partly about community, but also a lot about dealing with other matters:

Managing zoning, legal, and financial structures

Building common spaces and homes

Working with the land and animals

Engaging in social and political action

Welcoming youth and others to spend time here

Nurturing spiritual practices

Keeping up with the rest of our lives beyond QIVC

We have reflected deeply on our experiences, and it is the act of remaining in community that has become very special to us. We have some learnings to share. Here is a short version of some of these concepts and lessons.

Embedded energy: Future generations are better off when energy is directed towards activities that last, like rock walls in the right place, or good stories and songs that remind us of what is truly important.

Land is land, like air, water, and sunshine. It is not property.

Going upstream: One can't stop a flash flood in the canyon, but it is possible to stop it by small diversions up on the hillsides. This is necessary in our work to change the dominant culture. (See [The Upward Spiral](#) by Paul Krafel.)

Wealth and flows: Money makes visible one kind of flow. We want to find ways to see, identify, track, and nurture other kinds of flows that are critical to healthier economics, like health, community vitality, and the value of living in deep contact with natural surroundings.

Thriving: The pursuit of Sustainability is insufficient. The real goal needs to be Thrivability.

Membranes vs. boundaries and intentions vs. rules: We work better with permeable membranes rather than boundaries and guided by agreed-upon intentions rather than rules.

Safety 4th: We do not put safety first, but fourth on the priority list, if not even lower down. Soul comes first, family and community second, goodness, truth and beauty next.

Infinite games: We explore the notion that we should be playing with the object of continuing and improving the game, rather than to win and end it.

It is at this point that we've discovered a substantial problem: our Euro-American culture has infected us with the perceived need to control, to domesticate, to civilize, and does not abide well the notion of creating surface area upon which to invite the unknown and, possibly, the wild.

And there is another challenge: The English language and its usage are inclined towards individualism, towards ownership, and towards a distinct, even dramatic, separation between humans and the rest of nature. How can we enter deep community if we don't have the words it requires? How do we work to rejoin the rest of the Universe's glory if our speech, therefore our minds, places barriers? If we say "mother Earth's lungs" or "carrier of rain to the interior of continents," we treat forests very differently than if we call them a "natural resource."

Most of the above, we discovered, were teachings of the earth. One of our favorite concepts, creating surface area, is also drawn as a teaching of the earth and has particularly helped with the notion of social cohesion. Paul Krafel encourages us to think:

bare rock->

rock with lichen->

with moss->

with dirt and then grass->

with a small bush->

with insects->

with a tree...

The earth does not tend to shut down possibilities. Instead, it excels at creating more space for things to happen, more options. Quaker decision making, at its best, does this too. How can we work with this land and with each other to consciously seek ways of creating more surface area for the new and unexpected richness to arrive?

We have recently been learning words from other human languages that do encourage unity and community, but we are not yet fluent and new insights continue to arise.

This is a good place to be.

Community, intentional community, is not just something interesting, but is something necessary: a critical part of addressing the issues of a disintegrating human society and degraded planetary systems. Our Western culture tells us that we are here on our own terms, and though we manifest in individual terms – we are all **communal**.

Language and Community

by Hana Askren

“Last year was a bad year for apples.”

“This season my tomatoes did poorly.”

“I can’t believe how well the peaches are doing this summer!”

Our language is built on a world view where ownership of living things is possible, even desirable. The idea that the fruit of a plant or tree is the sole measure of its “goodness,” or even its health, is founded on anthropocentrism and consumption. That which I consume is the only thing of value. This, in spite of the fact that many plants fruit most prolifically when stressed or dying – proof that Mother Nature’s sweetness intermingles with bitterness in a brutally complex dance.

What else might the apple trees be producing in a fruitless year? I don’t know, and it doesn’t matter, actually. They are probably producing oxygen, rootlets, underground food for mycelium, new leaves and branches. Or they are paring down, allowing part of the whole to die, an affront to capitalism: endless growth would yield death for all the woods.

Or, could they be producing nothing, just resting? For all I know, that could be the linchpin of our riparian ecosystem.

Here at QIVC we eschew the words property, mine, boundary, ownership when it comes to the earth. We try always to refer to “the land” where we live, “the peach tree in front of Eric’s” instead of “Eric’s peach tree.” Everything gets composted, even the heads of the sheep raised and slaughtered here.

I am not much of a gardener. I toss some seeds in the soil and try to prevent bindweed from choking them, but if the bindweed is stronger than I one year, I feel ok about it. I much prefer gathering and foraging, and it

has helped me to embrace the attitude of non-ownership, the ebb and flow of years and seasons, and I have learned to prepare myself each season for the unknowable harvest. I don't plant, tend, cultivate, or cull what I collect; I merely glean.

Every year something is abundant and something else is not, and it is never a problem. One year I gathered three years' worth of acorns. The next year I dug an entire season's supply of Jerusalem artichokes in a few hours. I've gone out looking for berries and come home with ten pounds of chicken of the woods mushrooms. I've gone out looking for something and come back with nothing, and gone out looking for nothing and come back with dinner. I've stuffed my pillows with milkweed and cattail fluff and slept on the cloud of abundance that surrounds me at all times, even the dead of winter.

So this year I am picking up apples that have fallen on the Farm Road (technically a shared driveway) and slicing them thinly, starting on the best-looking end, until I get to the rot. The rest goes to the chickens. I put the slices on the grate of a box fan laid on its side, turn it on, wait 24 hours and lo, dried apples. I have pounds and pounds of them already and plan to give them to my children in their school lunches during the next year.

Isn't this simply the rule of Ecclesiastes? Why has our culture forgotten that there is a time for fruiting and a time for barrenness? A time for lubricious desire and a time to abstain? The dominant language reflects a mandate to be always-on and to fetishize conspicuous production. But even the earliest women knew that to limit their fertility was to taste freedom.

Maybe we haven't forgotten. English is said to be among the most versatile of languages, so let us try a little.

"Last year, the apple trees flowered mightily."

"Remember the fall when acorns carpeted the ground?"

"This is a season for tomato worms and potato bugs."

"I wonder what the land is growing to sustain itself right now."

"Mud puddles may be bad for tomatoes but they nourish my children's creativity."





Community Values in Words and Phrases: U.S. language reflects individualism. Here are some words from other cultures that reflect a higher value on community.

Eudaimonia (Greek: εὐδαιμονία [eudajmo'nia:]), sometimes anglicized as eudaemonia or eudemonia /ju:di'mouɳiə/, is a Greek word commonly translated as happiness or welfare; however, "human flourishing" has been proposed as a more accurate translation.

tjotjog [verb](Javanese): Harmonious congruence in human affairs. As in a perfect fit, just the right solution, a beautiful relationship, food that tastes just right, a wonderfully comfortable home.

ho'oponopono [noun](Hawaiian): Solving a problem by talking it out—a social gathering and healing process that combines the functions of a religious ceremony, group therapy, family counseling session, town hall meeting, and small-claims court.

rojong [noun](Indonesian): Mutual cooperation—the relationship among a group of people who are committed to accomplish a task of mutual benefit.

lao, aunti/ami [nouns](Chinese, Arabic): A respectful term used for older people, just because they are older and have a lifetime of experiences.

kula [noun](Trobriand Islands): Sacred, endless process of gift-giving. Engaging in a kind of commerce that is truly symbolic, involving the exchange of cultural information and knowledge rather than goods and services.

ondinnonk [noun](Iroquoian): The soul's innermost benevolent desires, which are a font of wisdom, a source of guidance, always life-centered and health-giving. The profound urge to do good to others without expectation of reciprocity.

Taken from and inspired by [Howard Rheingold's](#) *They Have a Word for It: A Lighthearted Lexicon of Untranslatable Words and Phrases*.

Ask Em

A cheeky advice column by Emilie Michaud

Dear Em: I've been visiting communities around the country and a lot of them are filled with hippies. What is QIVC's stance on body hair? -Joe Smoothshaven

Dear Joe Smo, I am so glad you found all the hippies. Many of us have been looking for them for years. Our country sorely needs them back, back hair or not. At this point, I imagine most of them are balding, and

excessive unkempt body hair is only an old pipe dream and nothing to worry about. So please, send us their locations and we will get them out of retirement and back into the Resistance.

Longingly yours, Em

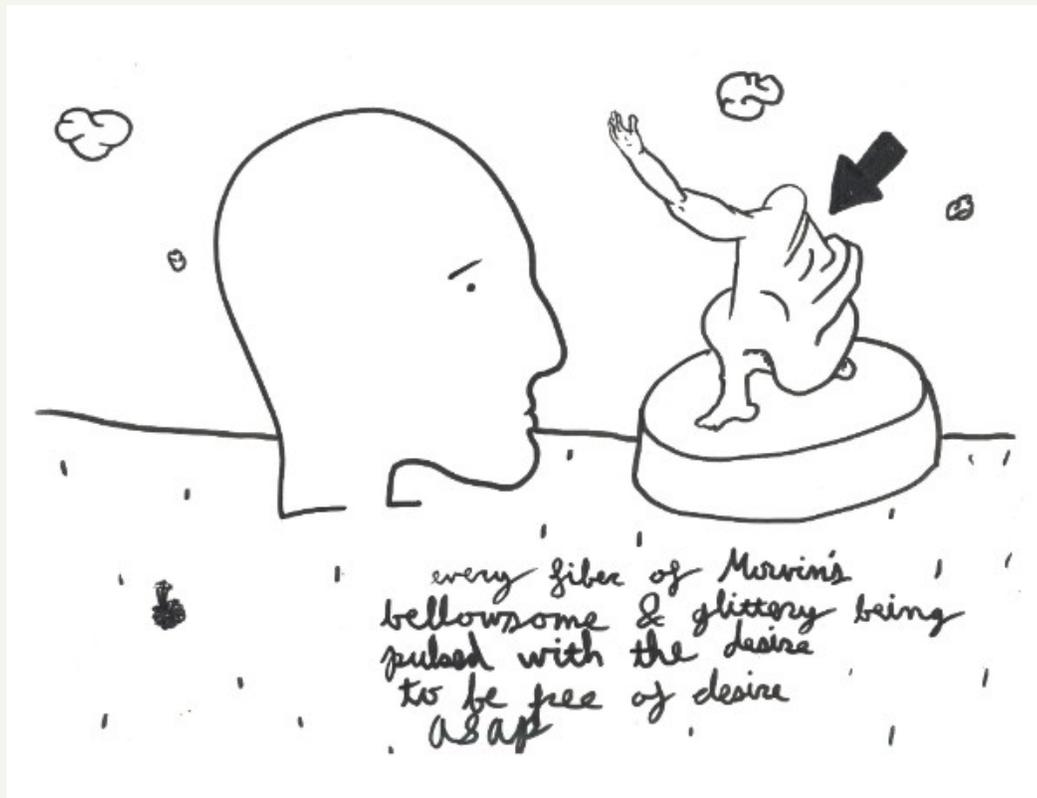
Dear Em: Can you help me come up with some last-minute potluck dishes? I feel like it might not be acceptable to dig around in the back of my fridge every time. Don't worry, I cut the mold off the cheese before I bring it. -Hana

Dear Hana, It can be difficult to come up with new Potluck ideas every week. Which is why I am particularly glad to hear you Cut the Cheese before you go to Potluck. All your dishes will smell and be more delicious! One other small culinary tip – may I suggest you clean the fridge and do all your digging in the garden?

Gustatorily yours, Em

Morvin

By Eric Bear Ludwig



Cracking the Shell to Learn

By Spee Braun

With encouragement from the broader Quaker community, QIVCers got to work last year on the small, but necessary, first step for white people to participate appropriately and effectively in the huge societal task of dismantling racism. On a monthly basis between April and September, we held the six sessions of the Cracking the Shell of Whiteness curriculum and had strong attendance at all of them. On average we had half Quakers and half people of other or no particular faith, and QIVC members did the facilitation using the

curriculum's excellent guide.

The white people who attended the program learned a huge amount about white privilege, even those who at the start considered themselves quite knowledgeable. Beginning with Session #2 they asked, what can we do about this? The curriculum guides participants to educate themselves thoroughly before acting in the world, so that white people are better prepared to serve as effective allies for people of color. By the end of Session #6, we realized we still have more to learn and discussed what type of gatherings we might organize in the future to continue on this educational trajectory while beginning to take action to help dismantle racism.

Session #5 had surprise attendees from Hudson, a small city that's 25 miles away and represents the closest location to QIVC with a significant population of people of color. An adult leader of a program for young people of color came with a couple of youth to, he told those gathered, show the youth that there are whites working on racism, that people of color do have allies. He spoke to the importance of white allies to the Civil Rights movement. All those attending that session appreciated the special opportunity provided by the presence of these folks from Hudson.

Although the number of people reached directly through the Dismantling Racism sessions was relatively small, the program indirectly benefited a much larger number. QIVC's publicity of the event garnered extensive interest and support on email and social media from Quakers and non-Quakers alike. Individuals reached out to QIVC to express regret at not being able to engage in person, to ask for a report on the sessions, or to ask for information on the curriculum for use elsewhere. And best of all, we engaged with people outside our usual circles!

Click [here](#) for Cracking the Shell of Whiteness: A Curriculum to Build Capacity for White People to Be in Solidarity with People of Color in the Work of Dismantling Racism.

Intentional Community in Times of Trumpism

by Jens Braun

We've been asked whether, in working to establish this community, we are placing ourselves in a position to survive the end of oil, or the effects of global warming, or the impending economic crash, or a variety of perceived environmental and health calamities. In fact, a number of elements we are incorporating (or talking about including) into the design of the community, such as alternative energy components, local food production, and even animal traction as a source of farm power, might be useful to "survival" in the ominous days being forecasted.

We are building this community, however, not to prepare for some future world, but to help us live as we believe we can live now. It is an experiment that may not last, but it is our effort to move away from survival and into the realm of a full life.

We invite others to think about reality not as the facts or information through which it tends to be presented, but rather as choices we each make for ourselves. If we are making good choices, particularly in the small bits and pieces of daily occurrences, reality is hopeful. When these choices add up to major new directions for a person's energy, they are added to new and positive directions headed by others, and a force begins to build. Oh, we can lament the news and the bad choices of some, but when we look to the hopeful nature of where we choose to be, despair and fear of a dark future lose their power.

Our Five Intentions

We believe conscious culture creation in community can be a means to advance our intentions:

1. To live in worship, increasing our mindfulness, spiritual focus, and God-centeredness by intertwining our daily lives with others who share these intentions.
2. To create a village setting that values and engages participation by people of all ages, expands our experience of family, and supports our expression in the world.
3. To create wealth that embodies integrity and Truth by carefully examining our engagement in the current economic order and stepping away from its destructive elements.
4. To live in unity & harmony with the earth by considering the near and far environmental impact of our actions while striving for thriving.
5. To include a good measure of joy, fun, creativity, and service in our lives.

We believe that our community's success in achieving these five intentions will be aided by membership diverse in race, age, ethnicity, gender, sexual preference, and economic situations, and therefore it is our aim to gather a community whose members are diverse in these ways as well as others.