



# BRIDGING THE GAP

The Quaker Intentional Village Project Newsletter

Summer 2013, Issue #34

## LATEST NEWS

With the blooming of the flowers and the greening of the pastures comes more time outside, more gardening and other outdoor projects large and small, and more serendipitous meet-ups in the neighborhood that is QIVC. Our neighbors the ewes have added to the sheep flock and the frogs in the pond have doubtless laid a million or more eggs, about which they sing every warm night. Two of the new lambs have black noses which greatly raised their already high newborn-cuteness factor. One day when they were a week or so old, their moveable fencing was set up in an area with a woodchuck hole, and the lambs spent much of the afternoon playing in and around the entrance--jumping into the wide, shallow vestibule, butting each other over who got to stand in it, lying down in it, and sniffing at the entry hole itself. The woodchuck itself was nowhere to be seen that day! (Probably off at an educational conference, Garden Invasion 2013.)



In late spring we had a firewood workday in which we tackled a huge pile of (bought) logs: first chainsawing them into lengths, then splitting them by hand because our log-splitter was in need of a new on-off switch, then stacking them head-high along the west wall of the farmhouse. It was too much to do in one day, so in the weeks that followed, various people spent time splitting and stacking for exercise. The stacks of wood are awesomely tall and deep, but there is still a lot to do!

Much has happened since our last newsletter. We now have a type of membership for renters as well as for home-owners, and two rental units. The community-owned apartment below Sandy's house was built over the winter by a local contractor, and our newest inhabitants of the land (except the aforementioned lambs) have moved in! The apartment is light and bright with many south-facing windows and a view down the hill of the fields and pond. Anne, our new rental resident, managed the project and put in lots of time tiling, painting, budgeting, etc. to get it all done. We are excited to have a new dwelling in the community with new dwellers in it!

We've been building on the organizational front as well as the housing front. Since last fall we have written and approved many documents that lay out our procedures for handling community transitions, describe and formalize the agreements we make as residents of this land and community, and provide guidance for those who want to sojourn on the land or provide housing for a sojourner (among other things). It has been an exciting time for community growth; we call the stage in which we have arrived "Phase Two."

If you'd like to come visit QIVC and find out more about how we live and what we are about, you are welcome to contact us.

—Ellen Harris-Braun



## ON RABBITS, PAYING TAXES, & BEING COMMUNAL

Rabbits have been on my mind. Early in the morning when I go out to open the chicken coops, I will often see them scampering away from the new lettuce or kale or strawberries in the gardens around the house. A few mornings ago, I shot an arrow through a rabbit looking at me from next to the basil.

QIVC is now registered as a "Religious Organization." On Memorial Day, members, advisors, and friends gathered to discuss whether we wanted to engage one of the options that this status can provide to the community, namely a property-tax exemption on the QIVC-owned parcel we call "Lot 1." The current taxes for the land and buildings on this lot are in the range of \$16,000 per year. Many thoughts were shared during the meeting about why QIVC might want to consider claiming this exemption, and why QIVC might want to continue its current practice of paying these property taxes to our town. This was a threshing session to hear each other's thoughts, with no intention of reaching a decision.\*

Though we are clear about our reasons for incorporating as a Religious Organization, we are less clear about how we would like to develop this into the future. The Quaker-based spiritual foundations of our experiment and our five Intentions (listed on the back of this newsletter) are the glue that holds the community together, and give it purpose. But what do these mean in terms of service to both our town of Canaan and the wider community? How do QIVC and its members translate our stated Intentions into specific actions and work, beyond the personal?

Yesterday I read an article about New England cottontail rabbits, which are fast disappearing as the introduced Eastern cottontail population grows. There are now organized efforts, featuring pictures of cute bunnies, to save the New England cottontail from extinction. Our area, the Taconic Hills, is one of the few where the New England cottontail can still be found. Most efforts to save the New England cottontail recognize that to do so, we (humans) will need to dramatically change our land-use patterns: New England cottontails thrive in substantial expanses of dense shrub land and thickets, while we (like the Eastern cottontail) prefer forests and fields, or suburbia. Though we tend to be moved towards action by looking at pictures and hearing stories of individuals of a species – one Bald Eagle, one Monarch Butterfly, one Panda, the real issue is one species, and the population it represents, exists or don't because of larger systems and patterns which present us (humans) with choices between multiple desires: desires themselves shaped by systems and cultures we don't always recognize.

At QIVC we have, on numerous occasions, stated that we are not here to be a community, rather we are here to use the tool(s) of community to pursue the QIVC Intentions. This statement implies that we feel we are individuals and by consciously joining with others we can reach towards some personal objectives. The thing is, perhaps the concept of individual (the personal) is a false starting point: even our bodies are communal as, we now know, there are 10 times more *bacterial* cells in our bodies than *human* cells. And, like the New England cottontails who ebb and grow with beaver activity, large forest fires, massive storms, sheep grazing, the return of forests, and the building of Wal-Marts, we too are defined, whether we like it or not, by the taxes we pay, the food we eat, the other species around us, the weather...

Yes, we humans have a vast array of tools to shape the world around us, and minds that seek to do so, but we live within biological and ecological systems that are communal. We often grumble about the economic systems that we claim to understand and wish to revamp because they define our use of life energy and resources. We are learning all the time about the social and spiritual systems that are the air we breathe and often don't even think about. These all shout to me that my self-definition of being a "stand-alone" individual is delusional.

## ON RABBITS ... continued

New England and Eastern cottontail rabbit populations may not themselves reflect deeply on the larger historical and systemic factors that help them thrive, but we can. In my experience, such reflections point me towards continually deepening my self-perception about the significance of living as a communal being. It is a messy business accepting my status as a conglomeration of organisms within a conglomeration of systems. Our challenge here at QIVC, assisted by the label "Religious Organization," is to live into that vast communality. The Intentions suggest realms for this: a special focus on the Spiritual, the family, the economic, the environmental, the social and creative. Service to others is important, but may primarily be a connector, a way to reach out and say we are all part of the same system, the same community. Perhaps our most important service to the wider community is specifically to uphold our individuality as we visibly internalize being communal.

Some ways this is happening:

- ✧ Our living together, on this land, has been a process of deepening understandings. These are partially reflected in our use of shared terminology for new concepts, and our revision of some Intentions to express more clearly our experience-based learning about spiritual economics and our relationship to that of our planet which is non-human.
- ✧ The ongoing welcome we offer to young angels (Intentional non-member residents) who ask to spend time here, and the help that we both provide to and receive from them in the areas about which they are passionate.
- ✧ The crossing off of projects on our to-do lists, as we embed ever more energy into this place. These are projects that offer examples of soil improvement, bio-diversity, water conservation, locavore living, and much more.
- ✧ Cultural change, as we raise children together not as a group of neighbors, but rather as a union of individuals and families.
- ✧ Lowering the conflict experienced by the Canaan Board of Assessment Review, made up of local residents including a QIVC'er, as it used consensus for its decision-making process.
- ✧ Serving as an idea-generator platform and providing support for actions like the Emerging Leaders Lab.
- ✧ Appreciating that Eric Bearfoot, one of our current Intentional Residents, cooked up the Eastern cottontail rabbit for us all to eat at potluck dinner.

—by Jens Braun

\*This property-tax exemption does not apply to our family homes in the community. We all have the obligation to pay the usual assessed taxes on our dwellings.



# WHO'S ON MOP?

An adaptation of: WHO'S ON FIRST  
by Abbott and Costello

**Starring:** Will Harris-Braun and Bob Elmendorf

**Adapted by:** Will Harris-Braun

(**MOP** = **M**embership, **O**utreach, and **P**romotion; **F&L** = **F**inance and **L**egal)

**Bob:** I love committee meetings.

**Will:** We all love committee meetings.

**Bob:** When we get to QIVC, will you tell me the clerk's names on the committees, so I'll be able to know those guys?

**Will:** Well, now, they give committee members now -a-days very peculiar names.

**Bob:** Funny names?

**Will:** Oh yes, yes, yes...Oh yes, absolutely. Yes, now, at QIVC, we have Who's on MOP, What's on F&L, I Don't Know's on Nominating...

**Bob:** That's what I want to find out. I want you to tell me the names of the people on the QIVC committees.

**Will:** I'm telling you. Who's on MOP, What's on F&L, I Don't Know's on Nominating.

**Bob:** Don't you know the people's names?

**Will:** Yes.

**Bob:** Well then, who's on MOP?

**Will:** Yes.

**Bob:** I mean, the clerk's name on MOP.

**Will:** Who.

**Bob:** The clerk of MOP?

**Will:** Who.

**Bob:** The clerk of the MOP committee.

**Will:** Who is on MOP!

**Bob:** Well, what are you asking me for?

**Will:** I'm not asking you. I'm telling you. Who is on MOP.

**Bob:** I'm asking *you* who's on MOP.

**Will:** That's the man's name.

**Bob:** That's who's name?

**Will:** Yes.

**Bob:** Well, go ahead and tell me.

**Will:** Who.

**Bob:** The guy on MOP.

**Will:** Who!

**Bob:** The clerk.

**Will:** Who is on MOP!

**Bob:** Have you got a clerk on MOP?

**Will:** Certainly.

**Bob:** Then who's the clerk?

**Will:** Absolutely.

**Bob:** When you nominate a new clerk every year, who gets replaced?

**Will:** Exactly right. Why not? The guy's done his share for the year.

**Bob:** Who does?

**Will:** Yes.

**Bob:** So who gets replaced.

**Will:** Yes. After all, the man's been waiting.

**Bob:** Who has?

**Will:** Absolutely.

**Bob:** All I'm trying to find out is what's the guy's name who clerks MOP.

**Will:** Oh, no, no. What is on F&L.

**Bob:** I'm not asking you who's on F&L.

**Will:** Who is on MOP.

**Bob:** That's what I'm trying to find out.

**Will:** Well, don't change the clerks around.

**Bob:** I'm not changing nobody.

**Will:** Take it easy.

**Bob:** What's the clerk's name on MOP?

**Will:** What's the guy's name on F&L.

**Bob:** I'm not asking you who's on F&L.

**Will:** Who's on MOP.

**Bob:** I don't know.

**Will:** He's on Nominating—we're not talking about him.

**Bob:** How did we get talking about Nominating?

**Will:** You mentioned the clerk's name!

**Bob:** If I mentioned the clerk of the Nominating Committee's name, who did I say is clerking Nominating?

**Will:** No—Who is on MOP!

## RAPUNZEL, REDEMPTION, AND MACRO-INTENTION

I'm one of those folks who cry at movies, freely and frequently; even animated films can bring on a good jag. And so it was recently with the (relatively) new animated Rapunzel adaptation *Tangled*. There is a scene in which the king and queen embrace their long-gone daughter. The queen extends her hand to Eugene, Rapunzel's orphaned partner on her quest home (as well as her "true love," of course). He respectfully offers his hand only to be quickly pulled in to the assembled embrace. Gets me every time.

Why, I began to wonder, would this warm but otherwise benign moment capture my emotions? I've been told I'm prone to over-think these things, but this may actually be of some import (I think). What occurred to me is that some part of me identifies with Eugene: a sense of abandonment early on; an all-out struggle to find my way; a yearning to be genuinely "a part of" (as opposed to "apart from"). The proverbial hook is in the embrace, though. Eugene experiences a sort of *redemption*. Through anguish and sorrow, hardship and tumult, his redemption comes as the gracious royal family pulls him in at the most intimate of moments to share in their warmth and love, having accepted him with no pretense or prejudice. It occurs to me that, as may be the human condition, on some level we all desire that redemptive experience, that sense of belonging *despite* what we may consider our trespasses or shortcomings. But what is the veil that lies between our perceived reality and that which we desire?

Lack of a place where it feels safe to be emotionally and/or spiritually exposed is an enormous challenge to one's growth along these lines. When a community guided by generous spiritual intentions provides this safe place, growth can be not only organic but prevalent. The most obvious and redemptive growth, to my mind, occurs when one's quest leads to discovering the *authentic self*, that which lies beneath the rubble and weight of the individual's history; when we are willing to begin to unload the boxcars of mental and emotional baggage given to us over the course of a lifetime. Behavior is very often simply a reaction based on past experience. Our baggage comes from our perceptions of our experiences--especially those experiences simply gifted us by our family of origin. So if we can truly scrutinize the authenticity of those perceptions, at that moment the world is infinitely open to new interpretations and realities. In the functioning community of intention, one is permitted, even encouraged, to explore all those bags and boxes, open 'em up, spill 'em out, kick 'em to the curb (well, properly bag and recycle). The community allows the space for grievance, for uncertainty, for assistance in guidance should it become overwhelming. The community is already sharing that embrace and the hand is extended, waiting to pull you in. In the functioning community, you are validated, you are redeemed.

— Lee Coalter

**POEMS**

Dead my old fine hopes  
And dry my dreaming, but still -  
Iris, blue each spring.

Ome Shushiki

O stand, stand at the window  
As the tears scald and start  
You shall love your crooked neighbor  
With your crooked heart.

W.H. Auden

## *MINUTES, AUGUST 2012 THROUGH APRIL 2013*

**2012-08-01:** We approved abolishing the QIVC requirement of a non-refundable application fee, knowing we have the buy-in requirement in place for homeowner members and we will have a deposit requirement in place for rental members.

**2012-09-01:** Together over the past few weeks, we have weighed the risks and benefits of the proposed plans to buy East House, rent it to renter members, and fund the construction of the apartment below Sandy's house and own it as another renter-member unit. We are not happy about increasing the community's debt, but we agree that first of all, we want to buy East House from Larin & Cricket and pay them back what they are owed from the community; second of all, East House and Lot 1 should belong to the community rather than to individuals; and third, we strongly desire to have a type of membership that does not require up-front capital investment.

We recognize that taking on large loans to make these plans happen will result in an even larger imbalance in federal dollars lent between the related families vs. other members. We also recognize that even though we will carry this increased debt together, some households will find it harder, and some easier, to carry their share in the years ahead. Part of moving ahead collectively is that we accept this continued imbalance in investment and we acknowledge the imbalance in how hard it will be for households to carry this continued debt.

We accept these imbalances because we recognize the importance to the community of these undertakings. We are here together because we wish to live more intentional lives, because we want to participate in this experiment of designing a way of life more aligned with our values and hopes for this planet. In choosing to be here we have taken risks, and we recognize that this is one more instance of becoming vulnerable as we reach out to do that to which we are called.

Our intention is that those with more federal dollars loaned to the community will not take, or be given, more influence and power in the community. Those with fewer federal dollars loaned to the community will not be treated as, or consider themselves, members of less power and influence. We agree to hold each other with love and trust, using care in our words, actions, and assumptions about financial issues as we move forward.

**2012-09-02:** We approve moving forward with community ownership of East House and Lot 1.

**2012-09-03:** We approve setting a goal of community ownership of the apartment below Sandy's house. This may happen immediately, using money loaned to the community, or at a later time after a period of private ownership. Therefore we approve starting construction on the apartment at this time.

**2012-09-05:** We approve increasing our total community-held debt by approximately \$212,000 in order to buy East House and to finish and own the lower unit on Lot 4.

**2012-09-06:** We approve creating two kinds of QIV-C membership: homeowner membership and renter membership. The rights and responsibilities of these types of membership will be the same except as follows:

## *MINUTES ... continued*

Homeowner members have the right to have a residence at QIV-C that they own. They are obligated to pay a buy-in fee, the amount of which is tied to the square footage of that residence. They are also obligated to pay all associated property tax and insurance on the residence. They have a right to sell that residence should they choose to leave the community. They are obligated to fulfill annually the amount of their annual homeowner membership fee, which is determined with the community at the end of each calendar year for the next calendar year.

Renter members have the right to have a residence that they rent from QIV-C as lessor. They are obligated to pay a buy-in whose amount is equal to one month's rent. They are obligated to make monthly rent payments in an amount determined with the community at the end of each calendar year for the next calendar year. QIV-C is responsible for infrastructure maintenance, major alterations, property taxes, and "landlord" insurance on the residence.

When topics related to loans, capital projects, and our capital budget are the subjects of discernment at our committee or business meetings (e.g., capital projects like proposed buildings, improvements, and agricultural projects), renter members are invited and expected to participate like everyone else. The clerk, when discerning the sense of the meeting, is directed to take into account the renter members' absence of personal capital involvement. This is the only way our decision-making process treats renter and homeowner members differently.

**2012-09-07:** Use of renter members' payments: The rent paid by renter members will be treated as income to the QIV-C operating budget.

**2012-09-08:** We approve the new Steps in Membership document brought forward by MOP as amended. The document is attached to the end of these minutes.

**2012-09-09:** We approve the QIV-C Conflict Transformation Procedure as brought forth by Community Life and amended at the meeting. The document is attached to the end of these minutes.

**2012-09-10:** We agree to establish the role of Piggy Bank Person. He/she is responsible for supporting members in fulfilling their financial agreements with QIV-C. The Piggy Bank Person may be the Treasurer or another member of the community. In the latter case, he/she will interface with the Treasurer and F&L as necessary.

**2012-09-11:** We approve laying down the Farmhouse Committee and establishing a Buildings Committee with the following composition, role, and responsibilities:

The role of the Buildings Committee is to coordinate and oversee care of the Farmhouse, East House, and Lower Unit structures and their use. The committee should coordinate with the Land Committee on external upkeep of and around the Farmhouse and with the Finance & Legal Committee on construction, alteration, and maintenance expenses for all three buildings.

Responsibilities:

- ✎ Act as lessor to residents of the Farmhouse, East House, and Lower Unit.
- ✎ Plan for and oversee implementation of major maintenance projects, such as exterior painting, appliance replacement, and roof repair.

## MINUTES ... continued

- ✂ Manage the Maintenance, Utilities, and Telecommunications line items of the annual operational budget.
- ✂ For the Farmhouse, maintain up-to-date guidelines for its use and provide these to members, residents, and longer-term visitors.
- ✂ For the Farmhouse, organize the routine cleaning and maintenance of the public areas, including sweeping, wiping, mopping, waxing, and painting. This may be done through workdays, weekly sign-ups, and/or paid labor.
- ✂ For the Farmhouse, organize firewood supply and heating of the building.
- ✂ For the Farmhouse, make decisions about furnishings and other contents, including whether or not to accept donations of all sorts, and make every-day purchases of dish soap, toilet paper, etc.

The current membership of the Farmhouse Committee will become the membership of the Buildings Committee for the remainder of 2012.

**2012-09-12:** We approve MOP's recommendation that Anne and Milo take up residence on the land through August 2014. We have seen drafts of documents that detail the agreements of this residency and these will be brought forward for approval at a future meeting.

**2012-10-01:** We approve the basic design of the lower unit on Lot 4 as presented.

**2012-10-02:** We approve having Emory Mort live on the land, with space in Dee and Paul's house, and participate in the life and projects of QIV-C for up to one year.

**2012-10-03:** Land Committee is asked to address Phase 2 parking planning, with special consideration for the constraints of snow in the winter. All of us are asked to share our strong parking opinions with the Land Committee as soon as possible.

**2012-10-04:** We approve the Agreement with Anne Undeland, covering her construction-management of the lower unit on Lot 4, QIV-C paying the costs of construction of that unit, and Anne's non-member residence on the land through August 31, 2014.

**2012-10-05:** We approve the Process for Exiting Membership document.

**2012-10-06:** We approve using [a new] procedure for this fall's budget work.

**2012-11-02:** We approve the financial arrangements with Larin McLaughlin and Christine (Cricket) Keating for the purchase of their house, 236 Bradley's Crossing Road (East House), as described in the table below: [return buy-in in full, purchase house for replacement cost minus depreciation with 50% credit on the depreciation occurring since they moved away (adjustment for this particular case of our

## *MINUTES ... continued*

**2012-12-01:** We approve that the unincorporated entity known as the Quaker Intentional Village-Canaan be incorporated under New York State's Religious Corporations Law. The initial Trustees shall be Sandra Beer, Christine Braun, Jens Braun, Deborah Duckworth, Patrick Hanley, Ellen Harris-Braun, Eric Harris-Braun, Daniel Michaud, Emilie-Anne Michaud, Paul Nowak, and Kristin Scheible. We authorize Jens Braun, as Clerk, to sign the certificate of incorporation on behalf of the Trustees.

**2012-12-02:** We approve stating the corporation's purpose as: "The purpose of the Quaker Intentional Village-Canaan is to live out the principles of the Religious Society of Friends and to advance community as a means of working toward the following intentions: [followed by a list of our current intentions and our diversity statement]."

**2012-12-03:** We approve transferring to QIVC, Inc. the bank accounts and EIN of QIVC. We approve QIVC, Inc. taking on the ownership of Lot 1 including all its buildings and other capital improvements, as previously minuted by QIVC. We assign to QIVC, Inc. all the promissory notes previously drawn up and signed by QIVC members in common.

**2012-12-04:** We approve removing the hyphen from the acronym QIVC in all uses.

**2012-12-05:** We approve the Non-Member Residential Agreement with Arthur Brock with no changes.

**2012-12-06:** We approve the \$75,000 promissory note with ACB Self-Managed IRA, LLC as read.

**2012-12-07:** We approve the 2013 roster as read.

**2013-01-01:** We release Larin McLaughlin, Cricket Keating, Maddy Keating, and Gabriel Keating from membership in QIVC as of December 31, 2012.

**2013-01-02:** Starting in 2014, QIVP annual dues for QIVC members will be included in the QIVC operating budget. QIVC will pay the dues for each household to QIVP.

**2013-02-01:** Community Life is asked to continue working with the Advisors about the best way to handle communications.

**2013-02-02:** Nominating Committee is asked to add to its list of committee responsibilities convening a yearly orientation and organizational meeting of Advisors at the beginning of the year as new members come on to the Advisors committee. Community Life is asked to add to its list of committee responsibilities keeping in mind and communicating with Advisors about events and opportunities they can engage in with the community.

**2013-03-01:** QIVC recommends to QIVP that intention #4 be revised to read as follows: "To consider the near and far environmental impact of our actions as we strive for thriving while living in unity and harmony with the earth."

**2013-05-01:** We approve the new document "Procedures for Non-Members Renting at QIVC."

**2013-05-02:** We welcome Eric Bear Ludwig to residency in the community from now until sometime in

## MINUTES ... continued

August.

**2013-05-03:** We approve raising the weight limit of the trampoline to 450 lbs for up to 3 simultaneous users. The kids will be responsible for: a) doing some research on what happens to trampolines as they age—when must we replace the fabric? and reporting to the next Community Life meeting; and b) checking the metal parts that may need re-welding periodically, and leading the effort to get the re-welding done. They will need to get information from Jens about how to check the parts and on what schedule this needs to be done.

**2013-05-04:** We approve changing our third intention to read "To examine carefully our engagement in the current economic order, take steps away from its destructive elements, and create wealth that embodies integrity and Truth."

### Minutes of QIVP, Inc.

**QIVP-2012-04-Inc:** We approve the request for a \$375 grant to support attendance by Spee, Sandy, and Paul at the workshop "Helping Your Community Thrive: Fostering More Harmony, Trust, and Connection in Your Cohousing Neighborhood, Ecovillage, or Intentional Community."

**QIVP-2013-01-Inc:** We approve granting Paul Nowak \$110 to attend Arthur Larabee's Clerking workshop at Powell House.

## The Emerging Leader Labs

(<http://emergingleaderlabs.org/>)

ELL, a project started by Eric Harris-Braun and friend Art Brock, has opened again this summer for it's second session!

Many have awakened to the fact that "the system" just isn't working for most of us. We want to change it. We're overflowing with ideas, energy and creativity, eager to make a positive impact in the world, but we struggle to find the resources required make our dreams become reality.



Emerging Leader Labs is a place designed to overcome that challenge. Part education (except you don't pay tuition), part job (except you work for yourself), and part social enterprise incubator (except the focus is on "social impact" first and "enterprise" later), the Lab is designed to nourish our wild spirits and the crazy projects that just might make the difference we need.

—Eric Harris-Braun



**QIVC**  
**235 Bradleys Crossing Road**  
**East Chatham, NY 12060**

***We believe community can be a means  
to advance the following five intentions:***

1. To increase the mindfulness, spiritual focus, and God-centeredness of our lives by finding and living with others who share these goals and thus will reinforce, on a daily basis, our desire to live in worship.
2. To strengthen our family life both by creating a "village" setting in which to raise our and others' children, and by caring for our elders. This includes an emphasis on leaving behind cultural obstacles that interfere with providing the time and energy that healthy family life requires.
3. To examine carefully our engagement in the current economic order, take steps away from its destructive elements, and create wealth that embodies integrity and Truth.
4. To consider the near and far environmental impact of our actions as we strive for thriving while living in unity and harmony with the earth.
5. To include a good measure of joy, fun, creativity, and service in our lives as we strive to fulfill these intentions.

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