SUSTAINABILITY

Peace and the Environment
A Journey to Reconnect

Alumni Take Sustainability to Heart
16 alumni reflect on the importance of sustainability in their lives
Working Toward Sustainability

In a recent survey done in partnership with Mennonite Central Committee, Grebel alumni responded strongly on the issue of climate change. When asked to list their top three important causes or issues, addressing climate change was top for alumni, followed by clean water/sanitation and food/housing security. And when asked to describe their identity, 91 percent of alumni described themselves as environmentalists.

This issue of Grebel Now focuses on stories and alumni profiles that illustrate the theme of sustainability. As students, Grebelites were at the forefront of recycling and composting, always pushing the College to do better. Even now, some alumni memories note frustration with the slow pace of Grebel’s move toward sustainability—urging us forward. It is clear that alumni have integrated values of creation care into their lives and, guided by new generations of students, Grebel as an institution is making new steps toward living those values as well.

This issue also includes the 2020-21 Annual Report, general Grebel news, and details for many upcoming events that will hopefully be in person!

Fred W. Martin, Director of Advancement
Jennifer Konkle, Marketing and Communications Manager
“Now” is never just a moment. The Long Now is the recognition that the precise moment you’re in grows out of the past and is a seed for the future. The longer your sense of Now, the more past and future it includes.

—Brian Eno, in The Big Here and Long Now

In the 2019 case of Mathur et al. v. Ontario, a group of young people sued the government of Ontario for its cancellation of a provincial carbon-trading law. These youth stated that the government’s inaction on carbon emissions meant that they (and, importantly, future generations) would face the future hardship of a warming climate, long after the those who had created the problem were gone. The youth argued that this was age-based discrimination and a threat to “security of the person”—both prohibited under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The government of Ontario filed a motion to dismiss the claim before it could proceed to trial arguing (among other points) that the youth did not have standing to represent people in the future. But the Ontario Superior Court agreed with the youth, and decided that a lawsuit on behalf of future generations could not easily be dismissed.

The idea that future generations can make claims in the present is a radical idea in Canadian law. But it is an old concept in many traditional cultures and religions. Long ago, the Haudenosaunee adopted the principle that decisions made today must respect the well-being of people seven generations into the future. The corollary idea is found in the Torah: future generations inevitably bear the punishing consequences of present-day bad behavior.

In a famous essay, the musician Brian Eno argued that in order to live well into the future, humanity needs to develop a greater sense of “the Long Now”—that is, our deep connection in the present to the past and to the future.

When it comes to Grebel’s responsibility for a sustainable environment, there is a long (and expensive) to-do list. An engineering firm just completed an environmental audit of our campus. They have suggested dozens of ways we can reduce our carbon footprint and other environmental impacts—ideas that range from replacing residence windows, to upgraded heating and cooling systems, to smart thermostats, to solar panels. The list is long, but we know that future generations demand that we work at it. Present generations of alumni and students certainly expect us to act, and they have the expertise to help us. One of our alumni led the environmental audit.

But I think that our responsibilities extend well beyond upgrades to our buildings. We are also called to foster a sense of the Long Now in our students. We already do this at Grebel—though perhaps we have not thought about it in these terms. Joining an enduring community, considering values that extend beyond oneself, exploring a faith tradition, connecting to history—all of these things enable our students to imagine a longer Now. In this issue of Grebel Now, the profiles of alumni and students who are working on environmental concerns provides the proof of this concept. When our students connect that long sense of Now to whatever they study here, they can discover vocations and callings that contribute to a sustainable future for coming generations.
Sitting on the edge of an urban stream that runs surprisingly clear, I am nestled in the grass among a small grove of trees who are slowly releasing their yellow leaves that dance and pirouette around me. A black and white speckled woodpecker thrums on a branch nearby. Two black squirrels chase each other from branch to branch making precarious leaps, stopping only to gnaw on walnuts now so plentiful. An occasional but pervasive smell of wild leeks wafts around me and draws me in to taste. My fingers follow the grooves and ridges of the bark on a nearby tree I am getting to know. Amidst the distant urban din, there is quiet here. This is my Sit Spot for this term, the place in nature I’ve chosen to visit weekly for a minimum of 20 minutes, using all six senses to explore and get to know these nature beings, journaling my reflections—just as I require of my Peace and Environment students.

Sit Spots, inspired by the work of Jon Young, a renowned nature connection and culture repair mentor, form a foundational practice of this course and the basis for our exploration of the connections between peace and conflict to the environment. This is part of what sets this course apart from other environmental courses offered at UWaterloo. As many an Environmental Studies major has remarked, “I have a lot of knowledge about the environment, but I’ve never actually gotten to know it in this way, building a personal relationship.”

Indeed, Relationship is central to the guiding framework of this course, together with Respect/Reverence, Reciprocity, and Responsibility—“the Four Rs,” as these are described by Martin Tamlyn, Manager of the Old Growth Forest Project at the Ignatius Centre near Guelph, where we usually hold a field trip. These, however, originate from a worldview that is Indigenous.

Undergirding and infusing all aspects of our study of peace and the environment is a consciousness of shifting paradigms, of the simultaneous existence of what some call the Old Story and the New/Returning Story, which Indigenous peoples remind us is the Original Story. The Old Story, characterized by a belief that humans are superior and separate from nature; that natural resources are for human consumption; and that there is general scarcity, leads to expectations of competition and inevitable violent conflict. We see this evidenced in the plethora of crises that are at once environmental, social, economic, and spiritual: resource wars, devastating impacts of climate change, the destruction of so much Life. This is what many Indigenous peoples call the dream or trance of the modern world. What does it take to wake up?

In contrast, the New/Returning/Original Story is characterized by a profound sense of interconnectedness; deep valuing of inter-relatedness, of cooperation and collaboration; a sense of abundance—there being enough for all if well distributed; and a living in balance with recognition of limits to growth. Conflict is understood as an inevitable part of all relationships, necessitating the development of skills and strategies for constructively navigating it so that it might be a catalyst for positive change and cultivating a culture of peace.

We are somewhere in between stories. The Old Story is no longer working (if ever it did) and the New/Returning/Original Story is not yet being fully lived out. The reality is that most of us embody both to varying degrees. When the Old Story is unquestioned and unconscious, we live out of it without awareness of how we are influenced by it. For some, the New/Returning/Original Story is foreign, counter cultural (to the dominant culture), while for others it is familiar but colonized by ‘modernity’, and for others it’s their birthright under constant threat. How do we become more conscious in our choices of which story we live into and co-create?

We come back to the 4 Rs—Respect/Reverence, Relationship, Reciprocity, and Responsibility—with ourselves, with other nature beings, and with other human beings. As we begin in our Sit Spots, many of us do our best to visit with respect, which for some over time shifts to wonder and reverence. But many of us find ourselves initially feeling and acting separate, an outsider, an observer, documenting data. This doesn’t feel like relationship. It does feel calming to our stress and tech wired nervous systems. How much of this is about us and our well-being and how much about truly getting to know the ‘other’? Challenged to use our cross-cultural communication skills, we experiment with more intentionally interacting with the nature beings whose home we are visiting, desiring to make friends. Observing their non-verbal behaviour, listening deeply, checking our observations with additional research, expressing our inner thoughts and questions, offering gifts of gratitude, sometimes cleaning up garbage—gradually we stretch into experimenting with our side
of reciprocity. We begin to learn names and how knowing names changes the quality of relating—from general (birds) to specific (blue jays, sparrows, crows). We try on the idea of everything being our relations—mother earth, father sky, grandmother moon, grandfather sun, brothers, and sisters. If so, what are our relational rights and responsibilities? Through our Sit Spots we come into greater connection with self and with nature. Our sense of relatedness shifts. We learn to hear voices different than our own, as well as a deeper voice within ourselves as we reflect through our journals.

We then come into Circle, another core practice through which we learn the 4 Rs. We sit in a circle with no tables and we pass a talking piece (even on zoom), creating space and opportunity for everyone to speak and be heard, but with no obligation to ever speak; presence is gift to the whole. In Circle, with the talking piece and a foundation of shared values and guidelines, we co-create a community where we all become teachers and learners, where our questions, stories, and explorations can be held, and where we learn to listen deeply to perspectives different from our own. This is where we integrate our reflections, readings, and other resources (like guest speakers and videos) into a collective co-creation of knowledge. Here we experience connection...sometimes disconnection...hopefully reconnection. Here we practice skills needed for navigating conflict and for building cultures of peace through inclusivity and dialogue across lines of difference. It is in Circle that we come into greater connection with self and with other people.

Through our practices of Sit Spots and Circle, we are settling the cortisol in our overstressed body systems, shifting our brains from fight/flight/freeze reactions, connecting our minds and hearts, allowing access to our creativity and intuition. We are activating seeds of consciousness often dormant, ancestral wisdom buried, that which is already in our evolutionary biology calling us toward living from core values that are life affirming and guide us toward wholeness. It is from this place that we want our visions and actions to come—the responsibility we hold for contributing to the emerging story. In the spirit of Einstein’s admonition that no problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it, we are learning practices to help shift our consciousness.

As we explore intersections of peace with the environment, we cannot escape the overwhelmingness and despair that comes with comprehending the extent of the devastation we as humans are having on nature, the disproportionate impacts of wealthy nations that implicate us in our own lifestyles and daily habits: the violence we contribute to through the mining of conflict minerals for our cell phones and computers; resource wars in which oil is central; greenhouse gas emissions; polluted water resulting in ongoing boil water advisories for many First Nations; logging of old growth forests; the extractive nature of industrial agriculture; and the intersections of race in the production of our food.

Responsibility brings us to the question of “what is mine to do?” Integral to answering this is cultivating a hope-filled vision of the world we want to live in, daring to dream of what does not currently seem possible. In this we draw inspiration from communities locally and globally reaching across lines of difference to collaborate in their care of the earth and thus of each other (like cultivating urban gardens on vacant lots, protecting a shared river or forest, even transborder peace parks between feuding nations). As Randall Amster, author of Peace Ecology, observes, “the same set of global conflicts over resources, population, and climate that are increasingly at the root of war might also be among the most potent drivers of peaceful relations.”

In the complexity and inevitable overwhelming of the state of the world, it is about coming back to basics of our relationships. As David Suzuki notes, “What we do to the earth, we do to ourselves.”4 Activist Julia Butterfly Hill admonishes, “we cannot have peace on the earth, unless we have peace with the earth.”5

Contrary to our unconscious bias, nature is not the backdrop to the stage on which we humans live out our lives. We are always living and acting in relation to other nature beings. The question is not whether we are in relationship but what quality of relationship?

I invite you to find a Sit Spot and continue your own journey in shifting and deepening your relationship with nature—in so doing, contributing to a more just and peaceful world.

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Greening Grebel

CEILEIGH MCALLISTER, GREBEL STUDENT COUNCIL ENVIRONMENT REP

At Grebel, sustainability and the environment are of great importance to students. From campfires after dark at Orientation Week, to weekends spent outdoors building community at Camp Trillium, to vibrant Environment Committee meetings, creation is a central part of life here. Recently, it has become clear that urgent change is needed to preserve and protect the natural world. To ensure that the Grebel community is doing its part to mitigate the worst impacts of the climate crisis, students have spearheaded an initiative that puts institutional sustainability at the forefront of our facility.

When I was appointed as the Environment Representative in fall 2020 with Eva Booker, another first-year student, we were conflicted. While we were extremely excited to be given the opportunity to steer Grebel towards sustainability, we were also very intimidated—we were both in our first year and talking to Student Council and College administration about sustainability issues was daunting.

As we talked to other students, we realized the importance of our role as advocates for the student body—sustainability is something that students at Grebel care deeply about. Moreover, many students believed that Grebel was not doing enough to take action on the climate crisis. In early 2021, we created a survey to quantify student needs for the administration. The results were overwhelming: sustainability was a major concern for students and they wanted to see more meaningful climate action from our community. Most notably, 98.1% of students believed that Grebel should set reduction targets in at least one of three areas: greenhouse gas emissions, waste, and water. Additionally, 96.3% of students believed that Grebel should aim to reduce emissions by 50% by 2030, as per the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

When we brought this data to administration, they were quick to act. Led by Paul Penner, the administration connected with engineering consultants at WalterFedy to establish baseline energy and water consumption data. In the audit (conducted by recent Grebel alumnus Max Chute!) possible energy and water conservation measures were identified. Grebel also joined the Regional Sustainability Initiative, a program run by local startup Sustainable Waterloo Region. Founded by recently elected Kitchener Centre MP Mike Morrice, SWR empowers local businesses to set reduction targets. Recently, we put together a Green Team to explore and advise on next steps. This team will be instrumental in the process of setting reduction targets as well as meeting them.

Student Council was also extremely supportive of our asks, creating a sustainability initiatives fee to help finance physical infrastructure updates, which was passed in a referendum voted on by the student body. Students now pay an additional $15 per term on top of residence fees to support our sustainability initiatives, demonstrating student commitment to this project.

In the short term, I would like to see us set ambitious reduction targets. In the long term, I would like to see Grebel not only achieve but exceed these targets. Grebel has the absolute obligation to do this: not only as an institution based on Anabaptist values that should centre creation care and principles of climate justice and equity in our operations, but as a home for students. Our future is threatened—large parts of our planet will be completely unlivable in our lifetime if we do not see immediate and ambitious change from all areas of society. Students go to Grebel to grow into adulthood, build relationships, and study for their futures. We need to do our part to ensure there is a future ahead for us to look forward to.

ARCHIVAL SURVIVAL REQUIRES COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

Climate change is a threat to archives and other centres of knowledge. Around the world, cultural heritage and community memory is threatened by fires, floods, severe weather, and environmental conflicts. Archives require energy to maintain physical collections in stable condition. Digitization is not necessarily the answer. Server farms, data streaming, and the manufacture and use of digital devices also contribute to environmental problems. Solutions must be found. Preserving the stories of the past for the future requires the participation not only of archivists and historians, but artists, scientists and engineers.

Fraktur drawing by Rebecca Brubacher 1892–1967
This year, Grebel officially joined Sustainable Waterloo Region’s Regional Sustainability Initiative. As a member, Grebel will share and learn best practices with other like-minded organizations. Members work to understand the impacts of their operations on environmental sustainability and aim to build a culture of sustainability among employees and engage employees as sustainability advocates while also adapting policy and reducing impact through realistic sustainability targets.

“The issues facing our community and society are all intermingled and Conrad Grebel joining the Sustainable Waterloo Region network is evidence of that,” said Tova Davidson, Executive Director of Sustainable Waterloo Region. “Addressing climate change and other environmental issues all works in partnership with the creation of a better, more just world. This is a great addition to the network and we are so excited to be working with them.”

Motivated by student concerns, Grebel commissioned WalterFedy to prepare an Energy and Water Audit. The lead engineer on the team was recent Grebel alumnus Max Chute (BASC 2021), who brought expertise and familiarity to the job. The final report identifies many opportunities to reduce carbon emissions through equipment upgrades and facility improvements, complete with a $2.5 million cost estimate. This report will be the first major agenda item for Grebel’s new Green Team to begin its work.

This new team includes students, staff and faculty and will meet regularly with Sustainable Waterloo Region advisors to form a plan for reducing Grebel’s carbon footprint. Further concerns the group will address include larger campus culture questions like: Why is climate change an important issue? Should we change what we eat? How much should we travel? Should we use air conditioning?

“It is so inspiring to see the passion our students have to fight climate change as we work together as a college community to make our campus more carbon neutral,” said Grebel’s Director of Operations Paul Penner. “Our students, administration, board, and alumni are committed to implementing the suggestions that come from our newly-formed Green Team with support from Sustainable Waterloo Region.”
Grebel Alumni are scattered across the globe, pursuing a vast assortment of vocations and lifestyles. With a focus on the care of our earth, the following profiles highlight a just a few of the interesting, intentional, and invaluable work some Grebel alumni are pursuing. We asked three questions: How do you work toward sustainability in your life? Why is this important to you? Do you have a memory of Grebel that relates to sustainability or the environment?

**VAL STEINMANN (BSC 1991)**
Farmer and Community Animator, Heartwood Farm & Cidery, Ospringe, ON

We moved to a small farm 17 years ago with three small children, a fledging desire to create a more sustainable life and my intuition that developing a relationship to land would be a step in the right direction. In the intervening years, I’ve hand-milked cows, raised and butchered our own pastured chickens, cut hay, spread manure and skidded logs with a team of horses, made cheese, canned produce, hung laundry, planted hundreds of fruit and nut trees, grazed goats, sheep, pigs and cattle, run a CSA (community supported agriculture) with young farmers, and generally tried to live more simply. I’ve grappled with the realization that my efforts to reduce my eco-footprint will never feel like they are enough, and that sustaining an environment that is spiraling into decline is not going to cut it.

I’ve gradually shifted from trying to do all the right things, to being curious about the connections between healing the land, ourselves and our communities. Ecological farming offers a potent context for me to practice and experience this first hand, and I’ve discovered that the lessons of regenerating soil and restoring biodiversity offer inspiration for work in different realms. I’ve always felt drawn to sharing my story as a farmer, and offering experiences on the farm; now I’m collaborating with others to develop this content to support organizational development and build community capacity for change.

**KEVIN RANNEY (BA 1987)**
Executive Director, Sustainable Finance Solutions at Sustainalytics, Guelph, ON

Living sustainably in the context of a non-circular, fossil fuel-powered economy is challenging. I aim to make a small contribution through my work in the field of sustainable finance (which includes supporting the issuance of green bonds, among other things), and by driving an electric vehicle, avoiding food with a large ecological footprint, investing in renewable energy, avoiding waste where I can, and supporting a political party that is serious about trying to make our economy and society just and sustainable.
For many years there was a tendency to see sustainability issues as issues that kept environmentalists busy but weren’t necessarily of central importance to everyone. That perception has begun to change in recent years. The impacts of climate change are arriving sooner than expected, and we are getting a clearer picture of the damage and disruption—including social and economic disruption—that it is causing and that can be expected to increase substantially in the coming decades. Sustainability challenges are clearly a matter of huge importance to all of us. Fortunately there is growing awareness and consensus, especially around the need to address climate change. Whether or not we succeed in transforming unsustainable systems remains to be seen. On good days I am hopeful.

One of my few environment-related memories at Grebel is of occasionally accompanying my inspiring friend and roommate Greg Cressman, who made regular late-night visits to the Grebel kitchen to rinse cans for recycling, which was rare and radical in those days.

SCOTT MORTON NINOMIYA (BA 1998)
MCC Ontario’s Indigenous Neighbours program, Kitchener, ON

When I was a Grebel associate and PACS student in 1995, I participated in a 10-day PACS course offered in Labrador where we met Indigenous land defenders from Innu Nation protecting their land from colonialism and militarization. That was a big personal awakening for me about the deep connections between environmental and Indigenous justice.

Also while at Grebel, I met my wife Melody—and as our three kids have grown, my concern about the lack of significant action to address the climate crisis has grown too. For that reason, I decided to pursue a PhD in Global Governance at Balsillie School of International Affairs (UWaterloo), researching how efforts to pursue climate justice can align with and contribute to Indigenous justice on the Haldimand Tract. I have also been heavily involved in community groups like Faith Climate Justice, and the advocacy effort that resulted in all local councils committing to a 50% reduction in local greenhouse gases by 2030.

Alongside those efforts, I have also become increasingly engaged in Indigenous justice work, leading the Truth and Reconciliation Working Group of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada since 2019. In October this year, I started a new full-time job leading MCC Ontario’s Indigenous Neighbours program. I am very excited about MCC’s many decades of relationships and good work. As settlers, and Mennonites, our work is cut out for us. We are called to dismantle the destructive colonial systems upon which our society—and our privilege—are built. Now is the time for all of us to humbly but courageously seek the upside-down Kingdom of God on this land for the sake of all who live on it. If you would like to get involved in that work, please contact me at scottmortonninomiya@mcco.ca.

DAVID NEUFELD (1979–1981)
Organic Greenhouse Operator, Market Gardener, WWOOF/Intern and Guesthouse Host, local historian and writer, Turtle Mountain, MB

MAGGIE ANDRES (BA 1983)
Teacher/Resource Teacher/Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, Turtle Mountain, MB

We lived for 8 years in rural and then semi-urban Africa (with Mennonite Central Committee) immediately after Grebel, so our marriage was grounded in simple living routines/expectations. When we moved to rural Southwest Manitoba from Africa, we wanted to fit in with our Canadian neighbours, but in a way which was as consistent as possible with our African experience.

We live in a comfortable home (since building it over the past five years), but we used local materials as much as possible (rammed earth, earthen floor, the trees on our land) and rely on solar power, rain water collection, and the composting process to keep us going. We’ve managed to build this place on a single income, lots of labour offered by friends, great skills learned from parents and life experience, and being privileged by colonial governments.

We live on a stunningly beautiful bit of land that we care for. We encourage the treaty notion of sharing this land knowing full well that this notion goes against the capitalistic notion of ownership.

We have hosted more than 100 volunteers for weeks or months, who have wanted to learn about sustainable living, develop skills for rural living, and maintain this lifestyle in their own way. We also run a straw bale guesthouse for people who want to experience something of this lifestyle. Maggie has woven many of these ideas into the classroom experience for students.

We feel it’s important to aim for a lifestyle that every person in the world can reach for and that the earth can support.

I, David, fondly remember classes led by Dorothy Friesen under the Peace and Conflict and Development Studies program at Grebel that helped me orient myself as an integral being in an unjust world.

I, Maggie, recall that Peace Society discussions and activities raised these issues and they were further discussed around the dinner tables at Grebel and later in our off-campus homes with fellow associate students.
GENA BRAUN  
(BSC 2003,  
MSC)  
Research Instrumentation Technician,  
Waterloo, ON  
I try to consider sustainability in all  
of the decisions I make, both large  
and small. For the smaller decisions,  
I try to purchase food locally, limit meat consumption, and bike to  
work as much as possible. For the bigger decisions, we are fortunate  
 to have an electric vehicle, we have been able to install an air source  
heat pump in our home, and we switched to an electric water heater  
and a salt-free water softener. I am also fortunate to work in a lab  
that supports a variety of environmental research and to co-lead a  
small “green-team” at our daughters’ school.  

This is important to me because I see creation as a truly remarkable  
gift, and as something we are responsible for taking care of for  
future generations. From a purely practical point of view, it simply  
makes sense to try to preserve our own habitat! I also think it is  
very important to recognize that trying to live more sustainably is a  
journey and there will be challenges and successes along the way.  

I had the pleasure of meeting many wonderful people at Grebel,  
including friends that challenged me to consider the long-term  
impacts of my choices. One roommate in particular choose to give up  
their vehicle because they could not reconcile the carbon footprint of  
their car with their desire to live sustainably. That choice still has a  
significant impact on how I approach my own lifestyle decisions today.  

KEVIN MARTIN  
(BES 2009)  
Co-CEO of Power TakeOff, Waterloo, ON  
The biggest impact towards sustainability in my life is through  
my ongoing work at Power TakeOff. Power TakeOff partners with  
utilities in helping their business customers of all sizes identify and  
achieve energy savings. We use big data analysis to target, predict,  
and communicate the energy saving potential of customers. Beyond  
the individual actions all of our employees take in our own  
personal lives towards sustainability, it’s incredible to see the  
large impact we can have together when combining our efforts and  
working as a team on these challenges.  
For example, last year  
we were able to help customers reduce enough energy usage so that  
it was equivalent to each one of our employees offsetting over 125  
years’ worth of household electricity usage.  

Since high school, I have felt called to be a steward of God’s creation.  
We have been entrusted with this miraculous gift that is our planet  
and all the living species and non-living resources within it. I feel  
compelled to be a caretaker of this gift, trying to leave it to our  
children in better condition than we received it, and working towards  
a more harmonious and sustainable relationship with our earth.  

At Grebel it was so wonderful to be immersed within a group of  
people that were similarly interested in living out their values,  
seeking careers with meaning where they could impact the change  
they wanted to see in our world, and taking steps toward making  
improvements within our communities. I recall so many inspiring  
speakers, alumni, and Grebel staff who had done just that—lived  
out their values within their lives and work, and found it incredibly  
motivating to be exposed to these role models.  

KAREN MARTENS  
(BES 2017, MSC)  
Ecologist-botanist, Lyon, France  
Sustainability is part of my life on both a personal and professional  
level. At work, I search for protected and threatened species, protect  
wetlands, and help developers modify their projects to avoid, limit,  
and compensate their ecological impacts. In my personal life, I  
think it’s the small actions that can have a big impact: I eat local and  
organic as much as possible, walk to work, carpool, etc.. This year we  
even built our own composter in our tiny garden for our food waste!  
Humanity has such a huge impact on the rest of the planet and we  
have the capacity to do better. It takes compassion for creatures  
other than us and consideration of future generations to make  
changes that seem difficult. There is so much life and beauty in  
nature and unless we act, that life and beauty will be lost. Tackling  
sustainability and environmental issues is a big challenge. I try to  
get people to realize that even small gestures can make a difference.  
If one person can get five people to change a habit, those five people  
can do the same. Our efforts become exponential and exceptional.  

As a student, I loved seeing the results of the Sailor Shower  
Challenge. There was so much competition and some crazy short  
showers! I think the record was less than 20 seconds!
ANDRE WIEDERKEHR (BSC 2021)
Vocation: Not sure, maybe Practical Theologian, located about 16000 pedal revolutions NW of Grebel

I’m aiming to live in a way that forms closed material cycles powered by the sun. In practice, that means that I’m working on growing, storing, and processing my family’s food supply, making the tools and infrastructure we need from local, usually biological materials, and trying to supply the energy for these and other tasks through physical labour and firewood rather than electricity and fossil fuels. This vision of sustainability requires me to choose and accept limits on what I can do. For example, I try not to eat foods that I can’t grow, and I don’t travel to places I can’t walk or bike to. My work is varied; a recent sampling includes making cheese, canning apple juice, sawing firewood with a crosscut, building a pedal-powered thresher, picking dry beans, planting fall grains, curing sheepskins, and braiding dry corn.

Several years ago, I experienced a gradual but transformative paradigm shift. I was primarily a consumer, with a narrow role in food production through my family’s farm business. I saw sustainability as something that was driven by high-level experts who developed incremental changes in each independent sector of our society’s life-maintaining framework. The more I learned, the clearer it became that our unsustainability is rapidly catching up with us “from both ends”: supply problems (like the depletion of soil nutrients, mined fuels and materials, and genetic diversity) and side-effects (like climate change, pollution, destruction of ecosystems). Experimentally, I tried to think through how one would go about constructing a holistically and genuinely sustainable way of life, and swiftly came to the conclusion that I didn’t know how, I hadn’t heard of anyone who did, and that a bunch of small, isolated actions were not going to build such a system. My faith and temperament make me love humanity (especially future generations, who deserve a chance) and the rest of creation, so I’ve become powerfully motivated to imagine and take a route that diverts us from our present rapid descent toward disaster.

A couple of times this past year, the Environment Student Society picked up trash along Laurel Creek—surprisingly fun when done together! Our best find was a partial bike discarded in the bushes. I took it back to Grebel, stripped the broken components, and passed it along to a bike mechanic friend. It eventually found its way to a former Grebel student who built it back into a functional bike. This story sticks in my mind as an example of how a cooperating community can almost effortlessly make neat things happen, in this case practicing a far healthier type of “economy.”

THEO WIEDERKEHR (BA 2020)
Subsistence farmer/gardener, Mildmay, ON, Treaty 45½ land in the traditional territory of the Saugeen Ojibway

I spend most of my time seeking better systems to meet my needs for food, fuel, clothing, and shelter using local plants and animals. Currently a focus in my work is experimenting with many kinds of crops and learning how best to grow them and save their seed so that I can grow them in future years. Examples include a wheat which will make straw appropriate for thatching and also good bread, perennial and biennial kales which can provide a source of fresh greens through the whole winter, dry beans, hazelnuts, flint corn, and various other things.

PACS showed me that much of the violence in our world revolves around colonialism and competition for natural resources. I want to do what I can to not participate in that violence, and help to heal it. I believe that setting limits on my own consumption by working directly with other species to meet my needs is a starting point.

Grebel was simultaneously very important in developing my thinking about care for creation, and disappointing in failing to demonstrate living that out. As an example, in my third year Jane Ramseyer Miller visited and led a number of students and community members in a wonderful evening of singing and speaking about the value of clean water and our responsibility to protect it from pollution. But in the reception afterwards, we were served with disposable plastic cups. As a person who spends most of my time working to connect theory to the material realities of my everyday life, I was struck by the disconnect between word and action.

RICHARD CUNNINGHAM (BASC 2018)
Junior Water Resources Engineer, Vancouver, BC

While the first steps to sustainability start in the home—reducing purchases, choosing sustainable methods of transportation,
separating waste, etc.—we also have to consider the sustainability of our communities and infrastructure. Our future is going to be stormy, largely due to the actions of humans. In my work as a water resources engineer-in-training, I help design infrastructure that will help us weather those storms.

Considering sustainability now will make our lives much, much easier in the future. Choosing to reduce carbon emissions, planning for climate change, and preserving our environment will end up paying dividends.

During my time at Grebel, the environmental representative on the student council ensured sustainability was always on the minds of the student body. I look forward to seeing Grebel’s continued journey towards sustainability unfold.

**AMANDA HOOYKAAS**
*BES 2006, MPHIL, MSW, PHD, FRCGS*

As a human ecologist, I think about the interplay between people and the natural environment. I am adjunct faculty teaching environmental science, geography, and other such things at the University of Guelph and at the University of Waterloo, a registered psychotherapist, a community capacity-builder, and a parent. Every day I am tasked with making this world easier for all living beings—whether in a classroom, conducting field work, sitting across from a client, or in my own daily choices as a consumer. What I do is not about me—it’s never been about me—it’s about us. I truly believe that. And if I can use the tools and gifts I possess, then I have spent my time here well. I think that mindset is what got me into this work and that is what continues to carry me through.

My work in sustainability is important to me because I cannot imagine living in this world without it being a vital component of my being. At the beginning of every academic term I meet new students who are willing make the world better. I continue to sense the same urgency that they do, albeit softened a bit. I too am frustrated by the choices of some politicians, the marginalization of voices and experiences, and the sheer dismissal of science, of traditional ecological knowledge, and of other ways of knowing. And so I challenge both myself and those around me to stretch because I don’t think we really have other options.

I was co-environmental rep on Student Council in my first year at Grebel. Becky Elko and I worked tirelessly to do waste audits, assess the feasibility of composting (including partnering with a local pig farmer and vermi-composting), and improve the efficiency of recycling for the entire College. Every proposal was met with tremendous resistance from a variety of sources. The Grebel I read about today is far from the one we spent long nights working to improve only 20 years ago and I am pleased to see the shifts beginning to occur.

**REBECCA OSBORNE**
*BSC 2018*

In my professional/academic life, working towards sustainability involves pursuing excellence in the science that I do. In my field of ecotoxicology, the data we generate about the environmental impacts of different sources of pollution is used by the government to set regulations. In my personal life I try to incorporate many strategies for sustainability such as walking instead of driving, eating local, minimizing waste, and repairing or recycling before throwing anything away.

Sustainability is important to me because we are just one part of highly interconnected and interdependent system. When we support and ensure the health of our environment, the rest of the system can thrive. One of the reasons sustainability is important to me is that environmental justice is often a straightforward way to disrupt systems of social injustice. For example, providing access to clean water can change social and economic outcomes by increasing time that can be spent in school rather than travelling to collect water, which improves literacy and job prospects, as well as reducing illness from water-borne diseases. Small changes in how we care for our environment can have drastic outcomes for both people and nature.

At Grebel, I was exposed to so many people who didn’t just practice sustainability in the obvious ways but lived it out fully. I learned that this embodiment of sustainability stems from seeing environmental stewardship as a part of our own mental, spiritual, and physical health. I also learned that even as you continue on your journey of sustainability it’s okay to not be able to do it all. A Community Supper speaker shared this quote: “There is only so much good that any one person can do. In order to do any good at all, there must be some good that a person is not willing to do.” To me this is one of the most important reminders—to give yourself grace and avoid burning out when it feels like your efforts aren’t going to change anything.

I have found in my career so far that barriers to sustainability are rarely due to a lack of knowledge but a lack of hope, so one of the most powerful things you can do is stay hopeful and contribute what you can in the ways that work for you.

**BRIAR HUNTER**
*BSC 2020*

My career path falls squarely within wildlife conservation, which is an effort to stop species from going extinct as a result of humanity’s impact on the environment. I currently conduct research to prevent the extinction of Canada’s most endangered amphibian species. However, such efforts may prove pointless if we cannot convince...
local communities that wildlife and wild spaces are worth conserving because no matter how we try to increase population numbers, if the habitat keeps disappearing the species will not survive. Thus, a lot of my efforts also go into communicating why sustainability is important and how it impacts the wildlife around us.

I believe all wildlife has intrinsic worth and that we have a responsibility to steward and protect these valuable lives. We have particular responsibility to those species we have directly impacted and put at risk of extinction due to our unsustainable use of the environment which they require to survive. I also believe there is powerful relational value in conserving the environment. We are a part of nature; it gives us a sense of place, of well-being, and of wonder. The more we use and abuse nature, the less opportunity we and future generations will have to truly connect with and within it.

I will always remember marching and standing with many of my Grebel friends for the climate strike in 2019. I loved seeing many of my professors there too who were actively teaching me about sustainability and climate change in my courses. This was a big, significant event. I also remember all the small actions at Grebel, such as the encouragement for zero food waste, using paper plates for events, and reusing mugs instead of disposable cups. These small memories created a lasting impression of a community striving to be sustainable in every way possible.

DAVID NEUFELD (BES 1983, MA, PHD)
Assistant Deputy Minister, Community Planning, Permitting and Development, Manitoba Dept. of Municipal Relations, Winnipeg, MB

I am a founding member of the Mennonite Environmental Task Force, which began in the early 1990s and grew into the Mennonite Creation Care Network (mennocreationcare.org). I have been working on water protection and land use policy for the past 36 years, first with the Government of Ontario and currently with the Government of Manitoba. Some projects include updating policies governing water taking, well construction, groundwater protection, and community and regional planning.

I first learned to love creation from my grandparents in small town Saskatchewan who grew much of their own food. My grandfather was a wood carver and taxidermist in retirement. As a teenager, my favourite pastime was looking for burrowing owls and scaring jackrabbits in the prairies around Regina. And my desire to have a career in environmental studies brought me to the University of Waterloo.

One of my memorable courses at Grebel was Sociology and the Environment, taught by Calvin Redekop. In the course, I surveyed Old Order Mennonite attitudes toward the environment. Equipped with a map of the back-roads of Waterloo County, I met farmers on location, in their kitchens, barns, and woodlots. I learned from them the concept of Mäßigkeit, which means “it is best not to have too much or too little of anything.” I still try to apply that in my life.

PROFESSOR EMERITUS CALVIN REDEKOP
Sociology, 1979–1990, Harrisonburg, VA

Working toward sustainability, I start with my own personal behavior. I consume as little as possible, recycle where possible, and refuse fossil energy. I drive a completely solarized-heating-cooling, electric car (Leaf) and an electric-solar quadricycle.

Sustainability is important to me because I discovered early in my childhood in Montana, our dependence on nature via the Dust Bowl and Depression, resulting in desperate congregational prayer meetings tearfully begging God to release the rain.

During the time I taught at Grebel, the relatively undeveloped Canadian landscape did not express much concern about the looming environmental crisis. I helped start a solar company in Waterloo in the early 1980s which was ahead of its time and was not successful. But I thank the many Grebel students who showed their support and interest which resulted in academic courses, research, and practical action on sustainability. Many Canada-wide developments in environmental sustainability resulted from Grebel, and the alumni described in this special issue of Grebel Now illustrate their contribution.
Making Sense of the Pandemic through Peace Research
BY SETH RATZLAFF, ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER AND GRADUATE STUDIES COORDINATOR, PACS

When the pandemic first closed down workplaces in March 2020, Simon Guthrie (right), like so many others at the time, found himself struggling to make sense of the world around him. A student in Grebel’s Master of Peace and Conflict Studies (MPACS) program, he soon had the idea to take advantage of this unusual opportunity and conduct research on the impact of a global pandemic—right in the middle of one.

With faculty advisor Eric Lepp, he developed a research question: How has the pandemic impacted faith communities in the Waterloo Region and how are they adapting? He conducted interviews with local community leaders from various faith traditions, once with each during the summer of 2020 and again one year later. The research was meant to probe what makes communities resilient (or not) in the midst of crisis, but it also helped Simon stay connected in a time of isolation. “I pulled off the entire project from my basement using Zoom,” he grinned.

One hopeful insight, he explained, is that the pandemic made time and space for many faith communities to step back and reflect on what they are doing, sometimes leading to a new focus on building relationships. For a few traditions, that meant reconnecting virtually with past members who were now physically distant—or, for example, a local Baha’i community connected with global counterparts by joining and contributing to an emergent grassroots 24-hour Zoom prayer group. For Christian denominations, Guthrie observed a trend of introspection in regard to harm caused to Indigenous neighbours, and a renewed effort to start building positive relationships.

Coming from a science and technology background, Simon reflected, “I’ve been answering technical problems for a long time, and this program gave me a chance to explore human problems; I’m really grateful for that.” He hopes to continue peace research, in one form or another, after graduation.

Connecting Deeply with Nature
BY KISSOR NITHIANANTHAN, PACS COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT

Third-year PACS student Samuel Farkas (left) spent his summer with his hands in the earth, planting 110,000 saplings in clear-cut areas of British Columbia. He related his tree-planting experience to PACS 310: Peace and Environment. “Both are nature-centred. Both cover reducing carbon footprint, encouraging tree planting and offsetting destruction,” Samuel reflected. “When I think about tree-planting, I think about not only replenishing the earth, but changing my personal growth.” Another aspect that he took away from the course was a goal to connect with nature at a deeper level.

Samuel also connected his understanding of PACS 201: Roots of Conflict, Violence, and Peace and PACS 203: A History of Peace Movements during this co-op work term. Both courses had taught him concepts revolving around perspectives—with PACS 201 looking at how working on the reforestation industry has an impact on the greater good of the environment and with PACS 203 on looking at what goes behind replanting to offset climate change.

As he continues his studies, Samuel plans to continue asking questions, thinking realistically, and learning to identify the impact industries have on peace, the environment, and technology.
“To everything there is a season...a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing.” —Ecclesiastes 3:5

2021 was a season for social distance and self-isolation—a time when we refrained from embracing. But at Grebel, it was also a season when we came together to meet the many challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Drawing on wells of goodwill and spirit, we found new and creative ways to deliver our programs, extend our community, and pursue our mission.

Faculty came together and transitioned to online teaching, doing their very best to deliver learning experiences marked by care and personal connection. Despite the pandemic, academic enrolments increased and our courses and instructors were highly rated by students. Public lectures, concerts, and community education programs all moved online with great success, deepening our commitment to reach beyond our campus to the community at large.

Staff came together to carry on their crucial work—some pivoted to working from home, while other front-line staff continued on campus. All demonstrated resilience, commitment, and creativity in the face of an enormous disruption to their normal work environment.

Our residence students came together to build a community, despite protocols that suspended community suppers and restricted sports, dances, and other social activities. They were also impeccable public health citizens, embracing the idea that wearing masks and following other guidelines was the best way to care for each other during this crisis. Only one case of COVID-19 was reported among our residence students over the entire year.

Our supporters came together to stand by the College during a time of financial uncertainty. We’re extremely grateful to report that gifts to our annual Grebel Fund totaled $406,000. That’s a record number, and 21% higher than the previous year.

It was not an easy year at Grebel—or anywhere. As we begin the return to a more normal pattern of work and life, many of our faculty, staff, and students are tired, frayed, and in need of restoration. We also sense that the post-pandemic world will bring new uncertainties and unknown challenges. There is a season for everything, but we don’t know what the next “season” will demand from us. The past year proves that we know how to come together in challenging times, and this gives us the confidence to face the year ahead.
The 2020-21 year brought extraordinary challenges to Grebel’s academic program, as professors delivered their teaching, scholarship, and administrative work exclusively online. Faculty took great care in altering course design and delivery for a virtual setting, through intentional conversation, resource sharing, and training. Departments also recognized an urgency to discuss and examine systemic racism in curriculum and programmatic structure, and to integrate anti-racism and intercultural competence into methods and course content. Music submitted their self-study document as part of a regular external review, celebrated the grant of tenure to two professors, and approached the complicated challenges of creating music together remotely. The Peace and Conflict Studies program (PACS) hired new faculty member Johonna McCants-Turner and focused on building and maintaining relationships with students and alumni. Theological Studies too, gave extra attention to developing connections with incoming and current students through social gatherings, celebrations, thesis defenses, seminars, and workshops. Both PACS and TS continued to respond to recommendations arising from their seven-year review. Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre (TMTC) hosted and sponsored numerous online activities that engaged audiences across North America. The Milton Good Library was the most accessible library on the UWaterloo campus in 2020-21, circulating 22 percent of University materials, even while processing five years worth of archival accessions.

UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING

Despite the pandemic, undergraduate enrolment in Grebel courses rose for the fifth consecutive year, to 4038 individual course registrations. Attracting students from all faculties at UWaterloo, Grebel offered major, minor, and diploma programs in PACS and Music, and taught undergraduate courses in Mennonite Studies, History, Religious Studies, and Sociology.

GRADUATE STUDIES

Graduate student numbers remained strong, with 89 students enrolled in two master’s programs—43 in Peace and Conflict Studies and 46 in Theological Studies—and course enrolments rose to a record high of 381. TMTC, a Grebel-operated centre at the Toronto School of Theology, celebrated five Associate and Fellow doctoral defences.

SCHOLARSHIP, SERVICE, AND OUTREACH

With 137 individual faculty activities, including books, chapters, articles, reviews, workshops, presentations, public lectures, media interviews, concerts, and sermons, faculty continued to demonstrate their scholarly expertise and service to church and society. Community outreach continued virtually, with concerts, public lectures, panels, conferences, and presentations attracting a broader audience that what is normally possible in person.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATE

After a rapid pivot to online delivery, enrolment in this continuing education program was stronger than previous years, with 37 workshops delivered online for a total enrolment of 626. Reaching participants from across North America, England, and Nigeria, registrants appreciated the opportunity to build conflict management skills from home.

KINDRED CREDIT UNION CENTRE FOR PEACE ADVANCEMENT (CPA)

The thriving CPA continued program development and supported activities virtually. The CPA’s people and programs gained profile in the innovation ecosystem, and community engagement was high with initiatives such as the Pandemic Challenge, X Page Workshop, #12Days4Good, and the Map the System Challenge. Student involvement hit a record with 25 student hires and three successful PeaceTech Living-Learning cohorts. Four start-ups joined the Peace Incubator and $134,220 in external funding was leveraged for projects with CPA participants.
The pandemic impacted all facets of Student Services in 2020-21. The residence was closed in the spring, while the apartments housed 23 students. Programming was decreased for this group and most of the time, there was a scaled-back Student Services staff presence onsite to accompany these students.

The fall term brought some optimism as 69 students moved into single rooms in the residence, including a record number of participants in Grebel’s three Living-Learning Communities. Traditional activities such as a community-wide Move-In Day, the All-College Retreat and Taste of Grebel were cancelled. Grebel spirit prevailed though, as students got creative and offered a multitude of fun and meaningful activities online, using the online platform Discord as a main communication tool. Formal leadership roles were held by 93 students, including a record number of first-years.

Overall, Grebel had 247 students (131 residents and 116 associates) registered for the year. A new virtual resident and associate program gave students living at home a way to connect during what was for many, a very lonely first year of university. Of the 27 virtual students, many of them will move into Grebel for their second year and will meet their friends in person for the first time in fall 2021. Student Services worked with students to plan hybrid Chapel services, Weekly Waves over Zoom (in lieu of Community Suppers), online talent shows, guest speakers, and intentional check-ins. The Waves were short and informal gathering times, sometimes with special speakers, including a team of Grebel alumni health providers and a guest who spoke about the Black Lives Matter movement. A student drama troupe helped to lead the Waves, focusing on topics like how to have a good conversation, micro-aggressions, Indigenous concerns, mental health, and volunteering.

With a team of 12 conveners over the year, Chapel was offered in the fall as a hybrid service and was solely online in the spring and winter. It was well attended by students from near and far (even on work term) as well as faculty and staff. Internal speakers shared on topics of diaspora, exile, and hope.

Student Services continued to work on inclusivity, diversity, and anti-racism commitments. A new student from Syria/Jordan was welcomed to Grebel through the WUSC program for student refugees. Three new universal washrooms were created, and inclusive language was improved on forms, the website, and in handbooks.

Public health measures over the year included screening at mealtimes, daily sanitation protocols, full service food serving, vinyl barriers at tables, no guests allowed in the residence, mandatory masking, social distancing, occupancy limits, and COVID tests.

Recruitment was difficult as open houses and tours pivoted to virtual options and connections were limited. This digital shift sprouted new ideas that Student Services hopes to continue post-COVID.

Grebel students and staff held strong this year, even in a time of turmoil and solitude, and continued to build community from afar.

Although students could not travel for their annual Mennonite Disaster Service trip, several students took the opportunity to work locally on an MDS/MennoHomes project.
Grebel’s residence operated at less than half of normal capacity this year. The residence was entirely shut down in the early months of the pandemic, and only offered single rooms during the fall and winter terms. The loss of revenue from the residence program and other ancillary sources created an enormous challenge in 2020-21. The year-over-year revenue shortfall was $1,700,000—a 17 percent drop from the previous year.

The reduction in on-campus activity generated some savings. For example, food, travel, and utility costs were all lower than prior years. These savings were not adequate to avoid a significant deficit, and further cost-cutting measures were required. These actions required considerable support and sacrifice from all Grebel employees and included the following measures:

- 18 employees were temporarily laid off during spring and summer 2020.
- Salaries and wages for all employees were frozen at 2019-20 levels for the year.
- All departments trimmed expenses and discretionary spending.

These efforts, along with a temporary reduction in long-term debt payments, enabled the College to finish the year with a small deficit of $46,000 in the operating fund, which can be covered by transfers from Grebel’s operating reserves. All things considered, this is a successful result that places Grebel in a strong position to face ongoing fiscal disruption in the post-pandemic environment.

**FINANCE**

2020–21 **TOTAL REVENUE** = $8,457,716

- Tuition $3,066,584 36%
- Residence fees $993,083 12%
- Rental and other income $573,313 7%
- Donations, MCEC support, endowments $822,915 10%
- Deferred capital and other contributions $736,131 9%
- Grant $2,265,690 27%

2020–21 **TOTAL EXPENSES** = $8,861,169

- Personnel costs $6,103,796 69%
- Program and other costs $889,207 10%
- Amortization of capital expenses $920,066 10%
- Scholarships and bursaries $464,884 5%
- Facility costs $483,215 6%

For complete audited financial statements, visit uwaterloo.ca/grebel/annual-report
ADVANCEMENT

Fundraising messages focused on the theme of hope in 2020-21, as Grebel faced the prospect of a deficit due to the pandemic. Although in-person events and visits were not possible, many donors responded to phone calls, emails, and letters with an increase in giving. The Grebel Fund surpassed last year’s result by $71,000, setting a new fundraising high-water mark of $406,000. The annual Grebel Fund supported programs in Theological Studies, Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre, the Mennonite Archives of Ontario, Chapel, scholarships, concerts, and leadership opportunities.

Two endowed music scholarships were established, and several gifts were added to existing scholarship and program endowments. The fair market value of the endowment portfolio has eclipsed $10 million. This investment fund shows the sustained support of Grebel donors.

Digital communications were of vital importance this year. The majority of Grebel’s activities were online, including special lectures, reunions, tours, and concerts. Digital presence through the website and video was critical for recruitment efforts. Despite being unable to visit in person, faculty resourced 25 MCEC congregations and larger leadership events, while student ambassadors connected with 8 youth groups.

Donors are key partners in Grebel’s mission. Sharing Grebel stories, maintaining alumni relationships, encouraging education, and sharing resources with the Mennonite Church help to strengthen these relationships—especially when we can do this in person.

The $8 million building project was coordinated by Director of Operations Paul Penner. Students and staff are already enjoying the new spaces and look forward to inviting visitors to campus.

DONATIONS RECEIVED: $2,125,736

Scholarships & Bursaries $88,268
Operating Restricted $407,313
Endowment—Scholarships $133,162
Endowment—Program $133,064
Capital Fund $129,648
Annual Grebel Fund $406,279
Fill the Table Campaign (Kitchen and Dining Room) $848,002

THANK YOU TO GREBEL’S GENEROUS DONORS

855 DONORS SUPPORTED OUR STUDENTS AND MISSION THIS YEAR!

Lois Abraham | 1982
Abundance Canada
Tanitoluwa Agbola
Nancy Alberti
Gordon and Valerie Alton | 1985
Nolan and Margaret Andres | 1997, 1996
Quinn Andres
Zoe Andres
Apple Inc.
Maia Aurini
David Austin
Susan and Phil Baker
Jennifer Ball | 1993
Matthew Ballahan | 2001
Brice and Karen Balmer
Geraldine Balzer and Gordon Peters | 1983
Kerstin Balzer-Peters | 2017
James Barber and Karen Heese | 1988, 1985
Francis Bardet | 1989
Kim Bast
Pauline Bast
Alicia Batten and Terry Rothwell
Lisa Bauman | 2016
Megan Bauman and Mike Ratcliffe | 2003
Phares Bauman
Richard and Norma Bauman
Roy and Lorraine Bauman
Susan and Marcus Bauman
Bauman Printing Inc.
Estate of Lester Bechtel*
Byron and Ann Weber Becker | 1990
Joel Becker | 2017
Scott Beech and Cindy Lebold | 1988, 1987
Chris Beer and Kim Bassett | 1995
Margaret and James Beer | 1998
Bell Canada
Belmont Mennonite Church
Anthony and Connie Bender | 1978
Jennifer Bender | 1991
John and Joanne Bender | 1972, 1972
Rebecca Bender | 1986
Lora Berg
Arnold and Linda Bergen
David Bergen and Deborah Kehler | 1972
Edward and Judi Bergen
Ilene and Karl Bergen | 2005
Jeremy Bergen and Rebecca Steinmann | 2000
Norman D. Bergen
Catherine Bergs
Hannah Bernstein
Kiera Biersteker
Elijah Birley
Carolyn Black | 1992
Micael Black
Jim and Lorna Blair
Devin Blankepoor
Jessica Bohn
Rita Boldt | 1967
Peter Bondi
Eva Booker
Jason Booy and Daniel Engel | 2008
Paul Born and Marlene Epp | 1987
Elijah Braam
Kate Bradley
Jocelyn Bretzlaff
Michael Brightling
Chris and Rachel Brnjas | 2012, 2012
Wendy Brooks and Mike Walkington
Chloe Brown
David E. Brown and Hannah Sauer | 1995
Isaac Brown
Jazmin Brown
Mimi and Sean Browne | 2011
Ashley Brubacher
Glenn and Ann Mary Brubacher
Grace and Earl Brubacher | 1968
John Brubacher | 1996
Laura M. Brubacher | 1989
Laverne and Ella Brubacher
Lois and Lewis Brubacher | 1989
Mark and Cynthia Brubacher
Neil Brubacher
Ray and Margie Brubacher
Roy Brubacher
Dale and Cheryl Brubacher-Cressman | 1987, 1986
Benjamin Brubaker-Zehr | 2015
Mary and Scott Brubaker-Zehr | 1985, 1985
Micael Brubaker-Zehr | 2018
Erika Bruulsema
Jake and Louise Buhler
Simon Buist
Shelley Bull and Wayne Carrick
| 1976, 1986
Bruce and Emily Burgetz
| 1970, 1969

Director of Advancement Fred W. Martin stands with a donor wall installation that illustrates vast support of more than $4.2 million in donations from the Grebel community for the Fill the Table capital campaign.
The new kitchen was ready just as fall students moved into Grebel, giving Food Services staff a bright, spacious place to prepare and serve delicious meals. This project was made possible by the donations of many generous Grebel donors.
Initially cancelled in April, Convocation 2020 moved online in October, followed by the spring 2021 service in May. Valedictorians (clockwise) Paulinus Okoye, Boushrah Fanous, Briar Hunter, and Katelynn Folkerts shared words of encouragement, inspiration, and resilience.
More than 1000 donors to the Fill the Table campaign have helped to make space for community, funding a vital new kitchen, allowing for a much-needed dining room expansion, and building an elevator and stairway to the chapel.

Stephen Tsang | 1974
Sophie Tsao
Mykayla Turner | 2020
Rebecca Turner
Suzanne and Joe Tyas
Walter Unruh
Emily Vanderkooy
Jeff and Shana VanderSlagt | 1992
Josiah Vandezande
Cynthia and Scott Veals
Marcus Veals
Michael Veenstra
Isa Veldhuis
Radmila Vujosevic
Mark and Natasha Vuorinen
Alexander Wagler
Cassidy Wagler
Casey Wagter

Anna and Rudolph Wiens | 2008, 2010
Marlene Wignall
Andrew Wikkerink | 2020
Eric Wildfong
Ross Willard
Lena Williams
Andrew Willms
Esther Willms-Kehler and Dennis Kohler | 1981
Deborah Wills
Jinnie and Ted Wilson | 1967
Elise Wilts
Pauline and Jeffrey Wilts
Erin Windblad
Sandra and Bruce Winfield
Benjamin and Sarah Winter | 2009, 2010

Thomas and Rebecca Yoder Neufeld
Philip and Janet Yordy
Ruth M. Yordy
Terry and Judy Zacharias | 1983, 1982
Dawn and Greg Zehr | 1989
Melvin and Delphine Zehr
Laura Zekany
Michael Zhang
Reuben Zuidema
Timothy Zwart

65 Anonymous Donors

* We are saddened by the loss of these friends.
Farewell to Ed Janzen, a Spirit Grounded in God’s Love

BY JEN KONKLE

In June of 1999, Ed Janzen began his role as Chaplain at Grebel, with experience, energy, and passion. He came with a desire to serve the College and with the perspective that service needs to be relational from beginning to end. For more than 22 years, Ed has been a relational chaplain who has endeared himself to many students, faculty, and staff over the years. He has served with commitment and integrity, and has inspired and influenced many to discover and understand their journey of faith and life.

This summer Ed retired, and he has been spending more time with family, is tackling various woodworking projects, and is sailing as often as he can. As part of his retirement celebrations, many alumni, students, and co-workers offered words of farewell and thanks to Ed.

“I have so appreciated the mentorship and wisdom you have offered me in my own ministry over the past several years,” shared Erika Toffelmire. “You have been a beautiful example of discernment, faithfulness, and compassionate care that comes from a spirit grounded in God’s love.”

Miriam L. explained how Ed “has an amazing ability to listen, provide words of wisdom, humility, while also being a wonderful leader in the communities he touches. Ed’s sense of humor is unmatched and his constant willingness to hear how you are doing made him a wonderful teacher, chaplain, and person to work with.”

“Your grace and wisdom are so inspirational to me,” wrote current student Victoria Lumax. “As I’ve served on Chapel Committee, I’ve seen your incredible heart for the community. Thank you for your years of service to the college and to God. I have enjoyed being under your leadership, a style of leadership that is sincere, fun, and loving.”

From a faculty perspective, Dean Troy Osborne wrote, “Ed’s work as teacher and scholar have shaped many students, and he has kept the torch of our mission burning bright in College Council and strategic plans. However, I’m most grateful for the impromptu hallway conversations that have ranged from history to theology to student wellness.”

“Whether organizing Mennonite potlucks in SOC 275, expressing thoughts about Max Weber in SOC 101, or quietly inspiring and provoking the student body with ideas about God’s love for all, Ed has been foundational to the evolution of the College in recent times,” added Marlene Epp.

Ed was often found at the front of a room: leading chapel, teaching a class, facilitating a discussion, or offering an epic prayer of blessing, but he was just as appreciated when not the main focus of attention. Staff member Seth Ratzlaff shared that he has always appreciated, and tried to model in his own life, Ed’s willingness to make time and space during any interaction for deep and vulnerable conversation. An encounter with Ed could leave you pondering a life question or howling with laughter.

“In serving, truthfully, I have had tremendous privilege,” reflected Ed at his online farewell party. “Through these years, I have known immense joy and great growing pains. I’ve known inspiring confidence of and in colleagues, cherished responsibility, powerful collegiality, nurturing supervision, caring administration, an inspiring mission, abundant love, creative and purposeful work, and friendship and spirit that will keep me smiling long after I’ve forgotten my reason for smiling.” Working closely with Chapel Choir directors each week and with the Student Services team, Ed “learned much about care of others and community life and development.”

Ed noted, in particular, the working relationship he had with Director of Student Services Mary Brubaker-Zehr. “I am so grateful for 23 years of trust and confidence in my work, for graciousness in consideration of my perspectives and suggestions over the years.”

Likewise, Mary described the experience of 23 years working closely together. “We’ve worked amazingly well together—despite or maybe because of some of our differences.” She continued, “I’ve appreciated your creative ideas, your warmth, and your friendly hellos each morning, your interest in growth and life-long learning. I’ve appreciated your reliability and your generosity, your graciousness and listening ear. I’ve appreciated the hundreds of times you’ve stood in my doorway to share an idea with me. I’ve learned a lot from you and with you. You’ve enriched Student Services and you’ve enriched the life of this College. Ed, we will never forget how you made us all feel—loved, appreciated, and valued. Go well into retirement, our dear friend.”
Students Return Joyfully

As families arrived for Grebel’s Move-In Day over the Labour Day weekend, joy was visible in student eyes, even as masks hid their smiles. Students have modeled care for their community by diligently wearing masks inside the public places of Grebel and outside when distancing isn’t possible. A full gamut of Orientation Week activities helped to build relationships and cement friendships forged virtually last year, as some students met their friends in person for the first time. For students who spent their first year of university isolated at home, moving into Grebel brought relief and excitement as they navigate living with a roommate and finding classrooms on the larger campus. Over the fall term, standard practices have been re-imagined, new initiatives created, and some favourite traditions embraced once again—all with the underlying purpose of creating community and rebuilding connections.

While full normalcy hasn’t returned yet to Grebel, professors were delighted to begin teaching some classes in person. The College offered a variety of different teaching modes this term, some blending remote and in-person elements, while others were taught remotely. Music ensembles were also mostly in-person, giving participants the opportunity to hear each other in the same room. Students have expressed gratitude to be able to take at least some of their courses in a physical classroom and to connect with peers face-to-face.

Following the University of Waterloo’s lead, the winter 2022 term will return to pre-pandemic levels of in-person instruction.
Roots and Routes by Bike

BY JEN KONKLE

On a gorgeous Saturday in July, Chaplain Ed Janzen led a dozen students and a few staff on a biking and learning tour of the Queen’s Bush area in Ontario, which includes Glen Allen, Macton, and Wallenstein. This area was the location of a Black Settlement, beginning in the 1840s, before Mennonites acquired the land.

Using the “Roots and Routes” guide created by Redeemer University Professor Timothy Epp who was Grebel’s 2021 Bechtel Lecturer, the group visited an historical plaque, numerous homesteads, the original location of several churches or missions, as well as a few schools and a cemetery.

The pamphlet advises visitors to “keep in mind that our stories and histories are often intertwined with those of others whom we might not at first consider.” With this caution, Ed provided background research, archival photos, and personal accounts at each stop of the tour. At the end, students wrote short reflections on the importance of place and being physically in a spot of historical significance.

One student wrote, “There’s something special about learning this history on the land where it happened. The stories of the Black settlers are truly inspiring; that despite all of the forces working against them, many persevered to keep the land they worked so hard to clear it and farm. There is so much to be learned from their drive and hope.”

Another students wrote, “Today’s bike ride of Queen’s Bush has guided me to reflect on the history of the many people who have called this land their home. This land has been the canvas for resilience and prosperity for Black Settlers. This land has been a place of community, of comradery, of struggle, and of celebration.”

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MUSIC RESOURCES FOR ONLINE WORSHIP

CHAPEL CHOIR RECORDINGS FOR VIRTUAL WORSHIP SERVICES

Are you running virtual worship services and in need of music? Grebel’s Music Department has a selection of copyright-free recordings available for your use to help you add music to your online church services. Let the uplifting sounds of the Chapel Choir augment your worship services.

uwaterloo.ca/music/worship-resources
Heeding the Call to Ministry

BY JEN KONKLE

The Master of Theological Studies program at Grebel draws students from a variety of backgrounds and faith traditions. Two current students, Kathryn Cressman and Laurel Rounds Fretz, both felt a gradual pull toward ministry within their home churches.

“Through volunteer work at my church and reflecting upon the energy I felt after leading in various capacities, I decided to consider ministry,” explained Kathryn.

“I have been drawn to ministry since I was a teenager active in my United Church,” reflected Laurel, “but high school guidance counselors don’t push you in that direction.”

Both Kathryn and Laurel found joy and purpose serving in progressively larger leadership roles at their churches. “I have been involved on various committees at Nith Valley Mennonite Church,” noted Kathryn. “Since starting my MTS degree, my confidence has grown in my biblical knowledge and excitement to share what I’m learning.” Kathryn also completed a Supervised Experience in Ministry placement at her church which allowed her to “test the waters of ministry in a safe and familiar place.”

“I was very active in church as a youth sponsor and song leader at Bloomingdale Mennonite Church,” shared Laurel. “Then I took on worship leader duties and offered some meditations.”

Both women have started writing sermons and continue to participate in worship planning. “I have learned a lot about myself and felt affirmed in a call to some sort of ministry. I have felt encouraged to be creative in what that could look like,” said Kathryn, who has just a few courses left to take. “It has been very valuable to study the Old and New Testaments, as well as taking an exegesis course, to have a stronger biblical foundation.”

“I see a formal ministry role in my future at some point,” added Kathryn. “While the MTS degree may not be put to use career-wise right away, it will be helpful for my lay-leadership and my own personal faith growth.”

With plans to become a pastor or work with seniors in a chaplaincy position, Laurel is at the beginning of her degree and especially looks forward to learning pastoral care skills. “It is not a skill that is easily learned in a lay capacity.”

Both women expressed initial apprehension about returning to school after a break, but quickly discovered that their enjoyment of the course content and the practical aspects of the MTS program at Grebel have made for a rewarding experience.
Composing Louis Riel’s Dream
BY KAREN SUNABACKA, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF MUSIC

Music Professor Karen Sunabacka presented the 2021 Benjamin Eby Lecture this October, titled “Composing Louis Riel’s Dream: Exploring the history of the Red River Settlement through family stories and music.” In this lecture she looked at how she has explored her mixed European and Métis heritage in her music. Below, Karen describes her lecture in more detail.

I have always known I was a Red River Métis, but I haven’t always known what that means. In the last 10 years I have been doing a lot of exploring and learning about my family history in the Red River settlement, and what it means to have a mixed European and Métis heritage. These explorations often occurred first through my compositions and then through research and family conversations that grew into more compositions as my curiosity led me to new revelations.

To take you through these explorations I divided my talk into three parts. The first part looks at three pieces I composed about my Métis grandmother Lenore Clouston. It is thanks to her that I knew I was Métis and it is through explorations of her life in my compositions that I have discovered more about what it means to be Métis and learned more about the history of the Métis people. In this section I also talk about how my collaborations with my mom, Joyce Clouston, began.

The second part looks at a piece I wrote about my settler heritage on the theme of mental illness, and specifically about my great-great-grandmother Matilda Clouston, who moved to the Red River Settlement around 1866 and spent the final 25 years of her life in the Manitoba Asylum.

The third section I discuss two recent pieces about my Aunt Beverley which were both inspired by the writing of my mom, Joyce Clouston.

Because of my mixed heritage, I have benefited from colonialism and I have been wounded by colonialism. But it is through my music that I have found my voice, that I have healed my wounds, and where I continue to explore the complicated relationships of my past and present.

The Benjamin Eby Lecture is an annual lecture that presents the research of a faculty member at Conrad Grebel University College. It is named after Benjamin Eby (1785-1853), an early educator and Mennonite church leader in Waterloo County.

WATCH THE COMPLETE LECTURE ONLINE AT: www.grebel.ca/eby

MUSIC RINGS THROUGH THE HALLS
It is a delight for Grebel Music students to once again be making music in person! While some health precautions are still in place, live music is once again filling the chapel, classrooms, halls, and outdoor spaces. (Left) The Chapel Choir sang a piece at the Memorial Garden dedication. (Right) Instrumental Chamber Ensembles find it much easier to play together when they’re all in the same room!
Mapping Systems, Advancing Sustainable Peace

BY EMILY CHARRON, COORDINATOR, KINDRED CREDIT UNION CENTRE FOR PEACE ADVANCEMENT

Advancing sustainable peace requires enthusiastic collaboration between passionate individuals across disciplines and communities, and catalyzing collaboration for impact is the mission of the Kindred Credit Union Centre for Peace Advancement. The Centre brings together experts, scholars, and students to work across a diverse range of local and global issues to advance peace.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are an organizing principle for the Centre’s work. The SDGs offer a roadmap for communities like the Centre to achieve a better and more sustainable future, outlining 17 distinct yet interconnected issue areas that are vital for building peace. At the Centre, peacemakers recognize that their work is just one part of a complex system that is maintained through balanced approaches to peacebuilding.

Gaining an understanding of what peacebuilding looks like in the context of this complex system can be a challenging process. For students at Grebel and the University of Waterloo, co-curricular pitch competitions have become a welcoming space for inquiry and experimentation. For example, in 2021, more than 220 students competed in the Map the System pitch competition at the University of Waterloo, organized by the Centre. Using systems thinking, students from across disciplines tackled global challenges from a holistic perspective. In contrast to traditional analysis where the world is broken down into parts, students learned that the world is deeply interconnected. To help others in sustainable ways, they must lean into complexity and ambiguity.

Map the System does not ask students to solve world problems. Instead, they are asked to understand problems and how they relate to specific SDGs. This prepares students to become changemakers who approach their work with curiosity, compassion, and collaboration in mind.

During the 2021 competition, a team of Grebel students from the Peace and Conflict Studies and Master of Peace and Conflict Studies programs tackled the issue of student food insecurity at the University of Waterloo. These students, who placed second at the Map the System Campus Finals, were supported in their learning during the competition by Centre Director Paul Heidebrecht through his Map the System seminar course.

Creating space for experimentation and learning is one way that the Centre is helping to equip student peacemakers to better address the SDGs. Urgent action is necessary to solve environmental and social problems facing the world today. As the 2022 Map the System competition ramps up, students have the opportunity to join a community of passionate individuals across their campus who are ready to begin their learning journeys.

THE GREBEL PEACE INCUBATOR

As the home of PeaceTech in Waterloo, the Kindred Credit Union Centre for Peace Advancement supports new ventures using tech to create a more peaceful and just world, in a program now known as the “Grebel Peace Incubator.” Playing a vital role in the University of Waterloo’s innovation ecosystem, the Grebel Peace Incubator advances expansive and innovative understandings and practices of peace locally and globally. This program links new ventures to social innovation tools that help them unpack complex human problems. The Centre’s expertise in thinking and working politically helps new ventures engage governments and transform systems. New ventures in the Incubator thrive within a culture of inclusion, collaboration, and community-mindedness.

These emerging ventures find their home in the Epp Peace Room, a space within the Centre made possible by generous contributions from the Epp family and friends as part of the Next Chapter capital campaign in 2013, in honour of the work of Helen L. and Frank H. Epp.

Current participants in the Grebel Peace Incubator include BeBlended, Demine Robotics, ESGTree, GeoMate, Lunaria, Maison Verte, Green Care Farms, and Union Co-operative.
Online Conference on Aging and Spirituality

BY MARGARET GISSING, COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT

This past June, scholars, practitioners, support workers, health care experts, and interested parties from across the globe gathered together virtually over the course of three weeks to advance the connections between spiritual practice and the effects of aging at the ninth International Conference on Aging and Spirituality. The conference connected researchers with practitioners in a way that fosters community and advances this important intersection of care.

Jane Kuepfer, Schlegel Specialist in Spirituality and Aging at Grebel and the Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging, worked with an established committee as the conference co-coordinator, to offer the conference online, after the pandemic made it unfeasible to host an in-person conference. “Many people were excited for the opportunity to participate in this conference virtually,” she explained, “especially in the midst of the pandemic, when they are longing for meaningful engagement.”

With participants tuning in from eight countries, under the theme of Vital Connections: Claiming Voice and Learning to Listen, speakers covered topics of COVID-19 and pandemic care in elder spaces, moral injury, medicine and spiritual well being, workplace engagement, dementia, oral traditions in Afro-Indigenous communities, mental health, art interventions, and more.

“The conference has been an opportunity for researchers from a variety of disciplines, along with spiritual care practitioners, to collaborate—sharing observations and research findings and learning together about spiritual needs we hold in common across religions and cultures as we grow older,” explained Jane. “It’s also an opportunity to engage diverse resources, like the Australian Aboriginal practice of Dadirri, the Ba’al Shem Tov’s 3-step approach to unwelcome experiences (Jewish), or the use of storytelling and song by East African elders.”

Long-Serving Assistant Librarian Retires

BY JEN KONKLE

After 41 years of dedicated service to Grebel, Ruth Steinman has retired as assistant librarian in the Milton Good Library. Alongside Sam Steiner and John Good, Ruth saw the library through many transitions: from microfiche to online databases, and the card catalogue to the Omni book sharing system. And as her co-workers retired, Ruth embraced Laureen Harder-Gissing and Mandy Macfie, as the new trio moved from a cramped library office to a new spacious location, shelving and re-shelving books as they moved. Ruth closed out her career in the middle of the pandemic, working from home.

Rumoured to have the whole library collection memorized, Ruth was a key player in many successful student essays. Faculty appreciated how she became a co-collaborator in their research and also offered suggestions for new books related to individual professors’ research. Ruth’s knowledge and skill, accumulated over decades, added to many scholarly conversations. Her cataloguing expertise and Mennonite knowledge was strengthened by her warmth and humour, professionalism and thoroughness, as well as her helpful attitude.

Not only did Ruth flourish in her job, she also participated in larger college programing such as singing in impromptu choirs, volunteering at events, quilting projects, served as the first staff rep to the Board of Governors, and was the unofficial historian of Grebel staff, with a good memory of past events and important changes from the last four decades.

Ruth was a thorough and gentle trainer who supervised dozens of students who worked in the library. “You were patient and compassionate, yet with clear expectations and direct feedback. I watched our student workers grow and flourish under your direction,” Laureen noted.

Co-worker Mandy explained that “Ruth was dedicated to finishing whatever task she started. Whether that was a complicated project, cataloguing books in different languages, or learning a new library system, she worked steadily at the task until it was fully complete.”

In retirement, Ruth plans to spend time in her garden and with grandchildren.
In addition to classroom teaching, faculty and other academic personnel at Grebel accomplish a wide range of scholarship and service in the academy, church, and community. Here is a sampling of recent activities and achievements.


**ALICIA BATTEN** co-edited, with Kelly Olson, *Dress in Mediterranean Antiquity* (London: T & T Clark/Bloomsbury, 2021). In addition to editing, she co-wrote the introduction and contributed two chapters to the volume.

**JEREMY BERGEN** published an opinion piece, “The Theological Reason Why the Catholic Church is Reticent to Apologize for Residential Schools,” in *The Globe and Mail*, 8 June 2021 (online), 11 June 2021 (print).


**LAURA GRAY** is Vice-President of the Canadian University Music Society.

**PAUL HEIDEBRECHT** presented a paper entitled “Growing, but also Gifting and Failing: MCC as an Incubator for New Approaches to Relief, Development, and Peace” at the “MCC at 100” virtual conference organized by the University of Winnipeg on October 1, 2021.

**JANE KUEPFER** convened the 9th International Conference on Ageing & Spirituality, online, this past June, at which she presented *Spiritual Care in Ontario Long-term Care: Current realities and hopes for the future*.

**ERIC LEPP** presented papers virtually on the role of ‘side-by-side’ relationships in conflict-affected societies at the 2021 annual conferences of the International Studies Association and the Canadian Peace Research Association.

**DAVID Y. NEUFELD**’s article “Narrating Anabaptist Conversion in Early Modern Switzerland” appears in the October 2021 issues of the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*.

**REINA NEUFELDT**’s article “Settler colonial conscripts: Mennonite reserves and the enfolding of implicated subjects” was published in *Postcolonial Studies*, as well as the chapter “Relational ethics: the possibility of a caring positive peace,” in *The Palgrave Handbook of Positive Peace*.

**CAROL PENNER** had “#MennonitesToo: Sexual Violence and Mennonite Peace Theology,” published in *The Conrad Grebel Review*, 38, no 3 (Fall 2020); pages 193-208.

**KAREN SUNABACKA** had her piece *And Then I Crow* for cello and electronics performed at an online Grebel Noon Hour Concert on October 6, gave the Eby Lecture on October 21, and recorded her debut CD of her piano music in mid-November with pianist Darryl Friesen (release date TBD).

**MARK VUORINEN** premiered Stephanie Martin’s (WLU 1982) *Frost Sequence* in August in an online concert and will premiere a newly commissioned work by Tim Corlis (BSC 1998), *On Love* in early November, both with The Elora Singers. He is currently recording a new CD of music for the Christmas season, also with The Elora Singers.
Curious tourists, skunk invasions, biblical basement floods, incredible lake views and sunsets... just a day in the life of a Brubacher House host!

What is it like to live in a museum? An exciting new digital exhibit explores this question from the perspective of the 22 hosts who have called Brubacher House home.

The 1850s heritage house, now owned by the University of Waterloo and operated in partnership with Conrad Grebel University College and the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario, was originally built by early Pennsylvania German Mennonite settlers John E. Brubacher and Magdalena Musselman. When it opened as a museum in 1979, it was restored to include a modern, upper-level apartment for live-in museum hosts.

Over the years, many Grebel alumni have had the unique experience of serving in this role. Brubacher House 2021 Digital Historian-in-Residence Bethany Leis and Web Designer Chris Steingart weave these stories together in “Life Upstairs,” the museum’s first digital exhibit, supported by Grebel and the J. Winfield Fretz Publication Fund of the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario. Heartfelt and humorous anecdotes, accompanied by photos of seasonal celebrations, quirky artifacts, and surprising encounters, provide a fascinating look at the changing seasons of Brubacher House.

Several Grebel alumni and former staff are featured in the exhibit: Nancy Maitland (Library staff), Arlyn (BA 1995) and Judith Friesen Epp (BA 1995), Colin (BASC 2001) and Jennie Wiebe (BES 1999), Chris Steingart and Jillian Burkhardt (BA 2003), Brandon (WLU 2001) and Bethany Leis (BA 2006), Allison (BA 2007) and Mark Brubacher (WLU 2006), Jacquie (BA 2012) and Karl Reimer (BSC 2013), and Laura (BES 2013) and Joshua Enns (BMATH 2012).

EXPERIENCE THE ONLINE EXHIBIT: [lifeupstairs.ca]

Mennonite Heritage Week was proclaimed by Parliament in 2019 to recognize Mennonite resilience, cultural production, and peacemaking efforts. The designation encourages deeper public appreciation of Mennonite contributions to “building Canadian society.” This national recognition coincides with the increasing awareness among Mennonites of their historic involvement in colonization in Canada. During the second week of September this year, Grebel marked Mennonite Heritage Week by drawing attention to an upcoming conference, called Indigenous-Mennonite Encounters in Time and Place, to be held at Grebel in May 2022, that invites reflection on these parts of Mennonite history in Canada and in other contexts.

The Institute of Anabaptist and Mennonite Studies compiled a list of resources that provides a variety of starting points to learn more about the intersection of Mennonite and Indigenous histories in Canada and the work of Mennonite organizations and individuals to address their implication in colonial violence against Indigenous peoples. Some of these resources are available online; others are available in print in libraries or online through institutional access. May these work to prompt deeper and fuller consideration of Mennonite action in the past.

ARTICLES AVAILABLE ONLINE AT: [uwaterloo.ca/grebel/mennonite-heritage-week]
ALUMNI CELEBRATE PARENTS WITH SCHOLARSHIP

Steve McDowell (BA 82) and Andrew Reesor-McDowell (BA 76) established a scholarship endowment in honour of their parents. Emerson (1918-1976) and Elsie (Ramer) McDowell (1923-2018) served in various ministry and pastoral settings over their lives in Ontario.

Elsie enjoyed serving on the Women’s Inter-Church Council for six years in the late 1970s, working on the Women’s World Day of Prayer Committee. Emerson developed camp programs at Fraser Lake Camp and Willowgrove Day Camp, served on several Mennonite boards and committees.

The scholarship is for strong students who are interested in pursuing ministry. The first recipient is Zachary Stefaniuk. “It is gratifying when donors can honour the legacy of their parents by offering tangible support to students in our programs,” noted Director of Advancement, Fred W. Martin.

MPACS SCHOLARSHIP HONOURS MALCOLM X’S LEGACY

This new scholarship is the culmination of the vision and perseverance of Majid Mirza who connected with Paul Heidebrecht at Grebel’s Kindred Credit Union Centre for Peace Advancement (CPA).

“This endowed MPACS scholarship bearing the name of Malcolm X, and dedicated to the advancement of racial justice as well as interfaith harmony, will serve as a constant reminder of the kind of community we strive to be,” noted Professor Nathan Funk, outgoing chair of PACS.

“I believe Brother Malcolm is the embodiment of speaking truth to power,” said Majid. “As a result, Malcolm X or Malik Shabazz as he was known in the last chapter of his life, was a controversial figure who changed his opinion frequently because he was constantly striving for truth, and this is an infinite journey.”

“It is exciting to see a variety of supporters from the Muslim faith community step forward to augment this award with generous donations,” added Fred W. Martin, Director of Advancement at Grebel.” The inaugural recipient of this award is Qudsia Alvi.

Gardens Get Revitalized

Some families of students who passed away while living in the Grebel residence gathered on October 25 to dedicate a new student memorial garden. The garden was relocated to the area between Laurel Creek and the lower parking lot at Grebel. It includes three trees in honour of Jamie McCaughey, Tim Sutherland and Becky Frey. A bench for this garden was purchased with the help of Becky’s friend, Megan MacDonald (BSC 1998).

Benches were replaced in the Black Walnut garden, created in 2005 to honour of the arrival of Pennsylvania German settlers. Thanks to: Ralph and Dorothy Shantz, Orvie Martin, Orval and Jeanette Cressman, Laverne Martin, Ed (BMath 1961) and Karen Bergey, Bob (BASC 1971) and Linda Bergey, Paul Tiessen and Hildi Froese Tiessen, Barb (BA 1977) and Roy Draper and the Pennsylvania German Folklore Society of Ontario.

A new bench was also purchased for the Chortiza Oak garden, created in 2004 in memory of the oak tree that was at the centre of the Russian Mennonite community in Chortiza, Ukraine. Thanks to: Marie Penner, and Harold (BA 1981) and Tobi Thiessen.

In addition, a Japanese Maple was planted to replace a tree that was planted in 2010 in honour of the Mennonite World Conference. Thanks to Bert and Martha Lobe, Ray and Margie Brubacher, and Kathrine Good.

GREBEL FUND SUPPORTS CONNECTIONS

Grebel is about community, even if we have not been able to meet together in person. The COVID-19 pandemic has stretched us. But your interest and support helps to connect us.

Watch for a letter from President Marcus Shantz that describes the importance of your donations to the Grebel Fund. These gifts support our students directly with scholarship awards. Donations also are critical for budgetary support for our programs that do not receive funds from tuition or government grants.

Fred W. Martin,
Director of Advancement
fwmartin@uwaterloo.ca
519-572-7704

DONATE ONLINE
grebel.ca/giving
Pursuing a career in music education was a dream for Ann L. Schultz (BA 1990) who was always passionate about making music. After finishing a degree in music at Grebel, Ann completed a Bachelor of Education and began her teaching career at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate in 1991, becoming head of the music program there in 1997. She began serving as Rockway’s Principal in January 2013 and will retire from that role in December 2021.

Ann brought energy, passion, and creativity to her work as a music teacher and choir director in a high school setting with a strong tradition of music making. She spearheaded many school musicals, produced the choral recording *Pieces*, and participated in annual choir festivals, twice hosting the Mennonite Schools Council Festivals. “Instilling the love of music in my students and impressing on them how they can be messengers has been an important part of being a music educator, specifically in a faith-based environment,” Ann shared. “Additionally, I was committed to bringing an integrated approach to my music practice, exposing my students to the music of the masters, the music of the church, and the music of today.”

Taking on the position of principal at a small Grade 7 to 12 school was challenging, but it was a natural offshoot of Ann’s commitment to faith-based education and a way to nurture her love for students. “Having taught at Rockway for so many years, moving to the role of principal was another way I felt I would be able to advance Rockway’s mission, which has a strong emphasis of putting values into action through service and peacemaking,” Ann reflected. “Leading a school that encourages students to learn, form faith, and build character has been deeply life-giving to me. It has been an incredible honour to work with so many committed and dedicated people over the last 30 years!”

Beyond the Rockway campus, Ann has given leadership to Mennonite Schools Council conferences, Sound in the Land conferences at Grebel in 2009 and 2014, and the 50th anniversary of the Inter-Mennonite Children’s Choir in 2018.

“Many of our Music alumni have gone on to careers in education and it is gratifying to see this impact in a variety of settings” noted Music Department Chair Mark Vuorinen.

Ann came to Grebel after completing a Bachelor of Church Music at Canadian Mennonite Bible College. “At that time, many of my friends came to Waterloo,” she explained. “I was interested in engaging in a setting where community was important and the music education I received would further my goals. I have fond memories of music courses and music ensembles led by Len Enns, Ken Hull, and Wilbur Maust. One of my highlights was participating in the Music and Culture trip to Vienna, facilitated by Bill, which included singing medieval music beside the Melk Abbey.”

“Ann is a compelling example of leadership and is a role model for our students who seek ways to connect their passion to a vocational calling,” said President Marcus Shantz. “For her entire career, Ann has represented Grebel’s ideals. Her contribution to the church and to the spiritual, intellectual, and musical growth of teenagers is significant. For this reason, we are pleased to award Ann Grebel’s 2021 Distinguished Alumni Service Award.”

“Many of our alumni are educators,” observed Alumni Executive Chair Michael Shum (BASC 2011). “Educators make indelible impacts on the lives of young people every day. I am sure that there are many Grebel students considering a career in teaching, perhaps due to one or more inspirational teachers they had during school. Our committee thought that bringing alumni teachers together to share their insights and experiences would create an informative event for anyone interested in education, and allow teachers and students to connect about common struggles due to the pandemic, as well as their shared hopes for the future.” The award will be presented to Ann at a brunch for Grebel alumni educators on March 5, 2022.

Alumni Award for Respected Educator Ann L. Schultz

BY FRED W. MARTIN, DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT

The COVID pandemic has had an incredible impact on education. Teachers have responded admirably to many challenges. This in-person brunch will feature a panel of alumni teachers who will share their experiences from the last few years. The Alumni Committee will also present the 2021 Distinguished Alumni Service Award to Ann Schultz. Alumni who are teachers are invited to this special brunch in the new Grebel dining room.

$15 tickets available in the new year. grebel.ca/events
People

Sharon Lamont (BA 1980) retired after decades of service working in the University of Waterloo library. She marked her retirement in May 2021 with a gift that reflects more than 45 years of experiences as a Waterloo student, staff member and volunteer. She was featured in UWaterloo’s donor report this year. Sharon also wrote a recap of Grebel’s ’70s Reunion this past June, available at grebel.ca/news.

Amanda Kind (BA 2006) has released a new music video for her song Easier and it is available on YouTube. Brimming with musical expertise and adept at public speaking, Amanda also hosted UWaterloo’s Black and Gold Day online concert. Amanda was Grebel’s 2017 Distinguished Alumni Service Award winner.

Maxwell Kennel (BA 2013, MTS 2015) has completed a PhD in Religious Studies at McMaster University and began a SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellowship in the Department for the Study of Religion at the University of Toronto. In late 2021, his book Postsecular History: Political Theology and the Politics of Time will be published by Palgrave Macmillan, and in 2022 Max will take over as director of Pandora Press—a publisher that specializes in Anabaptist and Mennonite Studies.

Nelson Scheifele, who served as VP of Finance and Administration at Grebel from 1981 to 1993, returned to campus with his wife Joy this summer. They came to see new plaques they sponsored that list every Student Council President from the past, which is an impressive list of alumni who continue to be leaders.

Nancy Mann (MTS 2008) began as pastor at St. Agatha Mennonite Church in June 2021. She previously served as pastor for the Nithview Community, a seniors community offering several types of accommodations and services in New Hamburg, and also for Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church and Floradale Mennonite Church.

Hannah Hill (BES 2020) hosted a Waterloo Network Hub Breakfast for Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) in October. Pedro and Majid from ESGTree, an environmental, social, governance data management platform that is a participant at the Grebel Peace Incubator in the Kindred Credit Union Centre for Peace Advancement, were joined by the Centre’s Director, Paul Heidebrecht (BASC 1994) for a great discussion about tracking ethical finance.

Ben White (BES 2011) is a New Testament faculty member at The King’s College in New York City. He began his role at King’s after several years in Durham, England. In his newest book, Pain and Paradox in 2 Corinthians: The Transformative Function of Strength in Weakness, Ben argues that interpreters overlook the material’s most immediate context—a pained community. He is married to Brittany, and they have two children, Gideon and Thaddeus.

Andrew Wiebe (MSC 2012) recently graduated from UWaterloo with a PhD in Science. Earth sciences and hydrology have always been of academic interest to Andrew, so for his research, he found ways to estimate recharge uncertainty for rainfall monitoring scenarios, allowing for more precise and effective decision making. Andrew is now working on a postdoc at McGill University, where he assists in developing tools to assess groundwater vulnerability in northern Canada.

Elise Devoie (BMATH 2016) completed a PhD in Civil and Environmental Engineering at UWaterloo this year. Her research on permafrost has allowed her to participate in fieldwork, write numerical models and engage northern communities. Elise’s work has made it clear to her that humans have driven climate warming too far for permafrost to survive, causing irreversible impacts to our waterways, land surfaces, ecosystems and the way people relate to the land. She is currently continuing her study of permafrost through an NSERC-funded fellowship.

This fall, friends of Ed Enns (BA 1989) gathered for a round of golf and vising to remember their departed friend.

Betty Pries (MTS 2005) has published a new book, The Space Between Us. The book invites readers to journey through a diversity of themes that considers how we fall into conflict and how we understand the nature of conflict, alongside strategies for managing or transforming conflict. Betty is Co-Founder and CEO of Credence & Co., is a facilitator in Grebel’s Conflict Management Certificate Program, and was the recipient of Grebel’s 2011 Distinguished Alumni Service Award.

Elaine Ranney (BA 1986) has been named Rockway Mennonite Collegiate’s new principal. Most recently, Elaine completed 8 years as Superintendent at the Waterloo Region District School Board with a focus on student achievement and well-being. Elaine is an active member of Erb Street Mennonite Church, is married to Henry Wiebe, and has two adult children, Evelyn and Eric Wiebe.

Zac Klassen (MTS 2015) began working as pastor at Bloomingdale Mennonite Church in August 2021. After graduating with his MTS degree, he completed a PhD in Religious Studies at McMaster University. Previously Zac served as a pastoral intern at FaithWorks Mennonite Brethren church in Winnipeg, and as a pastor at The ConneXion in Arborg, Manitoba.

Dave Neufeld (BA 1978, MA 1982) of New Hamburg, Ontario, recently purchased his second mandolin, carefully crafted by his old Grebel roommate Charles Dick (BA 1979), who is a luthier in Spencerville, Indiana. When they lived together in their third year of university, they built guitars together in their two-bedroom apartment.

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Sarah E. Fisher (BA 1996), Kevin, Grace, and Bridget Langille moved to Prince Edward Island in 2014. Sarah (who worked in the Grebel Library when she was a student) now works at the UPEI Robertson Library and manages the archival provenance project www.booklives.ca, which traces the ownership history of pre-1950 books in the library collection by studying inscriptions, bookplates, letters and prayer cards found under the book cover. Outside of work, Sarah occasionally teaches and preaches about Biblical Hebrew and the Jewishness of Jesus (Yeshua). She posts weekly at hebrewwordlessons.com, which aims to understand the Hebrew Bible one word at a time.

Zoe Andres (BA 2021) is Grebel’s new conferences, bookings and events coordinator. Since graduating this spring, Zoe has been employed by Shalom Counselling and was the volunteer coordinator for the Mike Morrice political campaign.

The TMTC Fellows Program marked significant transition this year. In particular, Sarah Johnson (BA 2007, MTS 2008), a TMTC Visiting Fellow since 2018, successfully defended her dissertation at the University of Notre Dame and began a new position at the University of British Columbia this fall and Kim Penner (MTS 2011), a TMTC Research Fellow since 2017, began as Pastor of Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church in February. Sarah and Kim both added tremendous energy, insight, and wisdom to the TMTC community. Sarah was the recipient of Grebel’s 2020 Distinguished Alumni Service Award.

Jane Plas, who studied in the MTS program from 2006 to 2008, passed away on June 17, 2021. Created in her name, the Jane Plas Scholarship Award is awarded each year to students in the MTS program who have demonstrated academic excellence and are committed to academic and community life.

“A ‘70s reunion on Zoom seems deliberately ironic,” reflected Grebel alumnus Sharon Lamont (BA 1980). “After all, most of us graduated from university before personal computers were even on our radar. Typewriters were our thing! Nonetheless, the group of Grebel alumni who gathered on June 5 had obviously kept up with the times.” Pictured below, the ’70s Era Reunion welcomed alumni from across the country. Read more at grebel.ca/news

Sarah E. Fisher

Yuvaraj Sivakumar/ Adam Kostuch, UWO; Courtesy of the University of Waterloo
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