

CYC-Online

e-journal of the International Child and Youth Care Network (CYC-Net)



**A Journal for those who live or work
with Children and Young People**

Issue 215 / January 2017



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A New Year

James Freeman

I'm glad 2017 is finally here. Mostly because I'm so pleased to see 2016 is over. A brief watch of news in any of our countries is enough reason to want to move on. Kiaras Gharabaghi describes some of the challenges and opportunities for this coming year better than I could. If you do nothing else at the beginning of this new year, read his column in this issue. We have so much to grieve in this moment of our work, yet so much opportunity in our hands. Knowing the suffering and trials of those who we work with - and in many cases in our own families - drives us to seek better days.

CYC-Net is proud to be a part of those better days with you. We're thrilled to announce the addition of Dr. Mark Smith as Associate Editor and Janice Pike as Assistant Editor. Mark brings significant research and publications on residential child care and is a Senior Lecturer of social work at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. His book, *Residential Child Care in Practice: Making a Difference* (Policy Press, 2013), co-authored with Leon Fulcher and Peter Doran, is one of a half-dozen must have reference books within everyday reach on my desk. Janice is a certified Child and Youth Care Practitioner (CYC-P) and is a Senior Counsellor at Waypoints Family Support Program in Newfoundland and Labrador on the Atlantic coast of



Mark Smith



Janice Pike



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Canada. She has a degree in journalism and shares the experience of working with young people and families in the every day.

Thom Garfat is transitioning to the role of Founding Editor – a position he now shares with co-founder Brian Gannon. Although some may see this as ‘retiring’ I assure you he's not going away and certainly will not be any less supportive or influential in our current moment as a field of practice.

Thom is a friend, mentor, and coach to me. It's clear that he is that and more to many. This month we pause and reflect – just as he has taught so many to do in their daily work of caring. Thom's influence in our field has been deeply significant in both substance and scope. I know you'll recognize some of those ways in the brief reflections in this issue.

Join me in this moment of joyful thanksgiving for Thom and his continued influence in lives across our world.

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A Note about Stepping Aside

Thom Garfat

So, an interested reader – I know, you are all interested readers but I have to have an opening – will have noticed that I have retired as the Co-Editor of CYC-Net – but that does not mean I am ‘going away’ – gosh, if ‘retiring’ meant I never got to nag and bother the CYC-Net team on a regular basis, I would never have done it. So, let me explain my decision a little bit.

First, and most simply, it is a ‘time of life’ / ‘time of career’ decision. It is just age, time of life, etc. Over past few years I have been gradually letting go of things – like the *Relational* journal and whatever – it is a part of letting go, for sure – and it is also a part of ‘getting out of the way’ as the next generation comes forward to influence the field. It is, simply, time.

I have enjoyed being an editor of CYC-Net over these years – I have enjoyed being a part of bringing ‘stuff’ to you all, helping to facilitate connections, etc. When Brian and I started CYC-Net we set some primary objectives which are embedded in the CYC-Net constitution. If you have not read it, the main point from the constitution is highlighted here:

The organisation's main objectives are (primarily through the internet and electronic media) to promote and facilitate reading, learning, information sharing, discussion, networking, support and accountable practice amongst all who work with children, youth and families in difficulty.

<http://www.cyc-net.org/administration/constitution.html>

I like to think we are succeeding. But, like I said, time for me to step aside, linger in a chair in the corner with Brian, and whisper my nags from the sidelines.



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I am thrilled that James Freeman (USA) will continue as CYC-Net Editor. He has a solid understanding of CYC (and many other things) and lives the values and beliefs on which CYC-Net was founded. Together with Mark Smith (Scotland), Janice Pike (Canada) and the rest of the Cape Town Editorial Team (Carina, Martin and Brian), they form a strong international team which will continue to support you into the future. And with your continued support, CYC-Net will grow and develop in the way in which it is needed.

So, in the words of Douglas Adams ... **So long, and thanks for all the fish.**

Oh, and by the way, if you are not a monthly financial supporter of CYC-Net, now is a good time to start – see, I told you I would not quit nagging 😊 Go here and sign up: <http://www.cyc-net.org/donate.html>

Oh, and get that article written and if your organisation isn't a financial supporter and ...

“Ah, shut up, Garfat.”



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In this issue of *CYC-Online*, we are pleased to share some reflections from around the world on the meaning colleagues have made from the work and collaboration with our Founding Editor, **Thom Garfat**.



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Ever present
Reflecting on and reflecting back
What I and others might not see
An unending committed belief
In the capacity of others
To being relational
To being youthful
To being...

Carol Stuart

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

--

I don't think that saying goodbye to Thom as an Editor of CYC-Net is the same thing as saying goodbye to Thom. In his CYC-Net role he has always been attentive to the wide geographic distribution of child and youth care workers, reminding them that they are nevertheless part of a unified and inter-dependent work force with colleagues next door, in the next city or around the world. In his writings he made one aware of what it feels like to have a fellow youth care worker at hand or in the next group home or suburb. Here in Cape Town, virtually at the antipodes of Canada, one could scribble off a query or idea, and have a reasoned, appropriate



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and thoughtful reply seemingly in minutes, and feel as supported as if one was consulting one's supervisor on the same team in the next door office.

With all his other responsibilities, he has responded to the invitation to share in the regular monthly production of CYC-Net with never-failing generosity and great wisdom, and as such he has been a ready colleague to all who nail the monthly issues of CYC-Net together month by month for the appreciative readership.

Thanks for all the good ideas my friend ... and the laughs!

Brian Gannon

Cape Town, South Africa

--

At 11:00 pm Victoria, Canada, I was walking along the path outside my hotel room revising a presentation for the next day when I was greeted with a friendly, "Hello". Unbeknownst to me at the time, this was Thom. Unbeknownst to Thom, I was pacing the footpath, anxious about what I was going to present the next day for the first time at an international conference. Thom simply struck up a conversation and took an interest in who I was and why I was there.

We spent over an hour discussing our similar views in Child and Youth Care. I felt as though everything I said was important and valid. Through that conversation I went from feeling like a nervous nobody to someone who would contribute something worthwhile the following day. With little knowledge of his expertise in the area, I felt empowered and inspired by this man who showed no pretenses, and was one of the most humble men I've come across.

The next morning, as I stood in front of the crowded room, there was Thom in the front row. Just his presence in that room gave me the confidence I needed to share my experiences. My initial meeting with Thom was typical of many interactions since. He believes in the value of supporting a new generation in our field and does that not only as a mentor, but as a friend. Thom's relational



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approach to all he does enables him to see the strength in others and energise them to provide quality care to young people. All this is done through his genuine attention to people with no self-interest or expectation of a return.

Thom, thank you for all you have contributed and the countless lives you have inspired.

Simon Walsh

Warners Bay, New South Wales, Australia

--

It was Bernard Malamut who said: “Without Heroes, we are all plain people and don’t know how far we can go.” Isn’t that what Heroes do? Don’t they show us how far we can go? They may do it by writing something that inform or shapes what we do or think. They may say something that we wish we had the courage or integrity or the intelligence to say ourselves. They may excel at a skill that we can only marvel at and only wish we could do nearly as gracefully or competently.

To me, though, my truest heroes literally SHOW me how far I can go. They lead and inspire and motivate and teach by “how they are who they are while they do what they do”. My truest heroes practise what they preach. In the purest form of Generosity, they give of themselves freely and expect and, in fact, wish for, nothing in return.

We in the Child and Youth Care community are truly fortunate in that so many of our Heroes are still amongst us, and through their great humility make themselves available to us.

I have the honour of being able to call one of my truest heroes one of my truest friends. I hope Thom never stops showing us how far we can go.

Andy Leggett

Coburg, Ontario, Canada



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Thom's stories capture the rawness that marks us all. Listening to him, we are always relieved that someone else can feel such profound bemusement, fear, calmness, and exhilaration packaged into one small moment that's been shared with a child, youth, and/or family. Even in a crowd, he has an amazing ability to make you feel like you are the only one in the room. He reassures you that it's ok not to know, not to have all the answers as long as you keep searching for possibility and perspective. Whether you are agreeing with Thom or not, whether you like what you've just heard or not, interactions with Thom make you think prompting growth if you allow it. He challenges you to account for the best personal and professional version of self. After all, he'd say do you or anyone else, deserve anything less? Thom possesses a rare trait where he genuinely and authentically walks the talk and we are all better for it.

Heather Sago

Peterborough, Ontario, Canada

--

It has been my good fortune to have known Thom for many years, and to have followed his writing and practice for many years before that. Whether in the work place or in conversation, Thom has and continues to role model the aspects of relational CYC that are integral to engagement in our practice. I think it is safe to say that the world of CYC has benefitted from his incredible investment of time and energy in not just CYC-Net, but in so many of his other endeavors. On a personal note, thank you Thom, for all you have done for me and my practice.

Jeff Reid

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada



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I had the first opportunity to really meet and get to know Thom during the first CYC Clan Gathering in Paisley following a training of trainers on the Therapeutic Use of Daily Life Events. One of the first things that struck me was his voice. It exudes a type of warmth and welcoming. I could imagine that voice has helped train, mentor and nurture many in the CYC field toward making the lives of children better. It has been my honor to get to know him over the years and to have his support. He is one of a kind and my life has been enriched by his fellowship.

Okpara Rice

Cedar Rapids, Iowa, USA

--

Thom Garfat, what can I say? Thom has been my teacher, my mentor and my friend. Thanks for the encouragement! He continues to be generous with his time, support and his contributions to the field. CYC-Net has been and will continue to be an amazing resource for all of us working with young people. Thanks to Thom for all that he put into CYC-Net. I am so grateful for the stories, the laughter, the learning, the many opportunities to participate and the many people who have come together. I will break out the good stuff Thom, the Black Art, and drink a toast to your retirement and all that you have achieved and shared. Hope to see you soon!

Christine Gaitens

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

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Thom's seminal contributions to the field of child and youth care work will continue to provide a platform for current and future professional practitioners to continue to learn and develop. The remarkable resources that are freely available



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on CYC-Net provide numerous opportunities to learn from and contribute to the growing child and youth care knowledge base. The international focus not only provides cross cultural learning but helps us all recognize that we are part of an international field of practice-something bigger than ourselves. Thom's work in helping to define "a child and youth care approach" further clarifies are unique identity and contributions as a field of practice.

Dale Curry

Kent, Ohio, USA

--

Even though we have never met I have a clear image in mind what kind of person Thom is. The e-mails we have exchanged and your comments on the articles I have sent are showing you as someone who is fully committed to the cause of vulnerable children and young people, with a lot of experience and always combining professional know-how with human values and an open heart and mind. I hope that even in future many people, especially children and young people, can benefit from this valuable combination. On behalf of SOS Children's Villages I wish you all the best – and keep your passion!

Karin Demuth

Innsbruck, Tyrol, Austria

--

When I met Thom Garfat he was already a highly regarded international training expert and author. The second time I met Thom we were training together with a juvenile justice group. The success of our efforts can be measured not only in the evaluations of the training but also by other important measures. The participants



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in the training were surprised that it was the first time we ever worked together. Thom's grace in partnering with me and his ability to contribute relevant knowledge and Garfat wit made it a very meaningful event. The experience was a foundational experience in a colleagueship, and a friendship that will last for the rest of our days.

Mark Freado

Columbus, Ohio, USA

--

I'm not sure why the word retiring is linked to Thom Garfat. In my picture of the future I still see his name everywhere; in many articles, on many books, as keynote speaker, and on some interesting invites in my inbox. It is not easy to say good bye to a thought-promoter and network-enabler. And therefore, I do hope that this is not a goodbye-type-retirement.

Together with Leon Fulcher, Thom has been a significant force in including what we were doing in South Africa, with the larger international movements in CYC. There are of course many other role players, but this dynamic duo has contributed significantly to the expansion of the work I was involved in for the past 7 years. Thom's innate ability to understand differences and to highlight the golden thread among the work of various people, created a safe space for many in the field to spread their wings.

Thom, please don't disappear. You are still needed! Who else would make one feel right at home with such quirky, sarcastically warm and witty remarks?

If you want some rest, please enjoy the free time, but please also keep one eye out for my 'what do you think of...' emails.

Rika Swanzen

Johannesburg, South Africa



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It is a testament to our mutual love and respect for each other that living in different countries and infrequent opportunities to be together has not interfered with our thirty-year friendship. I first got to know Thom in yet a different country from either of ours when we met up in London in 1988 where we each presented at a conference. We took to each other right away and over the years have laughed, collaborated, laughed, had cocktails, laughed, had dinner, laughed, and regaled each other with tales from our work.

The glue that has held us together all these years is our mutual love for our kids and our work. His love comes through in every article, book, workshop, and keynote and his wisdom has made me wiser. The bond has been helped because I love who he loves and he loved who I loved. Of course, the four of us loved to laugh together. And drink wine and regale each other with tales from our work. We were each blessed to have as life-partners colleagues in our work, and we knew how much that added to our collective understanding and commitment. Between our love and friendship bonds we were always part of the CYC community and knew how fortunate we were in so many ways.

I will not personally miss him because I will not let him go and will continue to find ways to keep “us” together, albeit from a familiar distance. But “we” – the collective “we” – all of us in our work will miss him terribly. Fortunately for us all, he has left behind a treasure trove of valuable insight, questions, warmth, and challenge in his words – both written and spoken – to keep us bound to our clients and to each other. Thom has often spoken of feeling as if he had “come home” when he entered the world of child and youth care work, and I have felt the same. For that reason Thom is my brother, part of my family and part of your family, as well as a colleague and friend. That is good news because family is always family, and we don’t need to say good-bye. God speed loved one.

Lorraine Fox

Los Angeles, California, USA



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I'm not sure when I was first "introduced" to Thom. It was definitely sometime in the pre-internet era when he and my dad, Brian Gannon, were exchanging audio cassettes, via snail mail, in which they would discuss (amongst other mundane matters, e.g. garage wine) all things CYC. Brian would mention something about needing to go to the post office to send something to "Thom in Canada". Who the hell was this "Thom in Canada" I wondered. And why was this person important enough to be sent audio cassettes when surely a letter would do! Well, out of the audio cassettes (and garage wine) evolved CYC-Net. And the rest, as they say, is history. It turns out this "Thom in Canada" was (and remains) a very special and important person in our lives down here in far-flung Cape Town – and the CYC community across the globe.

Of course, retirement means different things to different people. It will be impossible for Thom to retire completely from CYC-Net. We simply won't allow it! And I'm sure he feels the same way.

I am thankful, fortunate and honoured to have Thom (and Syl) as friends. In Thom, a more willing, generous and insightful person you will not find (although his sense of humour still needs some work). His contribution to the field of Child and Youth Care and CYC-Net is, and continues to be, extraordinary.

Let the next chapter begin!

Martin Stabrey

Cape Town, South Africa



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Caring for One Another

Kiaras Gharabaghi

The coming year will present all of us with some significant challenges. The world around us is changing quite dramatically. It will be a less caring world. And it will be a world in which difference and diversity will be reconstructed as foreign, suspicious, and perhaps even dangerous. The roots of this world have been around forever; this is not the first time we encounter racist, sexist, exclusionary and sometimes violent rhetoric directed at those who dare question the superiority and inherent rights of the dominant race, class and gender. But the sudden sprouting of these roots in 2016, as evidenced by the absurd election of Trump in the US, the increasingly authoritarian streaks within leadership in places like Turkey, Russia, and the Philippines, and the overt expression of rejection of migrants and refugees in France, Germany, Poland, Hungary and elsewhere, means an abrupt shift from our complacency toward whatever remnants of liberal democracy we might have clung to a new dawn in which the caring inherent in child and youth care will also be threatened. Let us not forget that history has taught us many times over that cold hearted, extremist and one-dimensional social movements create a climate for everyone to adapt. Child and Youth Care, notwithstanding our commitment to caring, is at risk no less than any other domain of human endeavour.

We are facing the re-birth of 'common sense', constructed through the lens of deeply embedded racial superiority complexes, patriarchy, and a self-appointed and in some cases God-given right to direct the lives of others, to render judgment upon others, and to designate their lifespaces, their value, and their humanity. For Child and Youth Care this means that our value of caring won't be compatible with pressures to 'solve' problems, by, for example, locking young offenders behind bars, denying gender-diverse young people a sense of identity, re-isolating the LGBTQ2s



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community, and labelling (and drugging) those with mental health, neurological or regulatory challenges. We will move quickly from a culture seeking to find strength in adversity to one seeking to isolate deficits and protect the healthy ones.

Caring is neither economically efficient nor socially valued; it is a soft, probably socialist, and almost certainly non-white construction that incorporates indigenous, culturally diverse and identity-diverse values and processes. This is why caring is at the heart of child and youth care practice. We care for the uncared for, the ones whose experiences in relationships have virtually negated even the possibility of feeling cared for and about. We care by being present, by becoming engaged, and by responding to young people without judgment, without solutions, and without expectations about their performance. This is good enough for us. It won't be good enough in the new culture of exclusion, judgment and perhaps even hate that is quickly taking hold and enjoying a degree of legitimacy we haven't seen in quite some time.

Where will this leave us? How will child and youth care respond to the challenge, indeed the dismissal, of caring?

The temptation will be to stop caring. This will be the temptation because not caring will be rewarded. What will be rewarded is rhetoric – the rhetoric of common sense, of solutions to intractable problems, at any cost, including whatever absurd forms of teaching a lesson, holding accountable, and doing the time for one's crimes might take. Great practice will mean the compelling imposition of particular values, particular hierarchies, and particular norms. The heroes from here on in will be those who produce the strongest rhetoric about exclusion, about deficits and about moral indecencies.

And yet this is the time when we are being called upon to care - to care deeply about the lives of the young people we join in their journeys. To care deeply about the societal marginalization and oppression of those who don't fit the norm. To care deeply about our relationships, our presence, our ways of engagement, and our commitment to rights, voice and participation. To do this, we must be weary of the pressures inherent in the attempts to divide us. We must reject the rewards



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associated with fighting on behalf of alien leaders and narcissistic messengers of hate. And we must maintain our caring for one another, even if we have not always held the same perspective about everything. This is not a good time to fight about our differences. And it is not a good time to undermine, to critique and to divide our field.

Child and youth care, as my friend Thom likes to say, is about a way of being in this world. I suspect he would agree that it is about a commitment to caring that stands out amongst professional endeavors as relentless, uncompromising and categorical. We cannot afford for our way of being in this world to be destroyed by the coming darkness of ignorance and of division. So let us care, for young people, and for each other. Right now more so than ever before. Let us place our caring at the centre of our resistance to the current winds. Let us care so that difference and diversity will always have a place of safety, a place of peace, and a place of celebration. Now is the time to be present for each other. To acknowledge each other and celebrate our way of being in this world. Everyone is invited. Whether you have status (formal credentials) in the field or whether you have joined this field because of your everyday commitment to young people's journeys, unlike the coming darkness, our field welcomes you, your friends, and those you feel are ready for this way of being in the world in solidarity.

We will get through the coming year. The question is whether we will still be who we thought we were. Let's care together, for each other, and for this increasingly fragile world.



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RESIDENTIAL CHILD AND YOUTH CARE IN A DEVELOPING WORLD

Tuhinul Islam and Leon Fulcher
Editors



Residential Child and Youth Care in a Developing World builds from a critique of Courtney, M. E. & Iwaniec, D. (Eds). (2009). *Residential Care of Children: Comparative Perspectives* (Oxford University Press) which evaluated de-institutionalisation policies in the residential care of children in 11 countries.

It also builds on the comparative efforts of Whittaker, del Valle & Holmes (2015) *Therapeutic Residential Care for Children and Youth: Developing Evidence-Based International Practice*. We started from an intellectual claim that residential child and youth care “places” exist everywhere – whether called homes, orphanages, schools, centres or institutions. Unlike Courtney & Iwaniec or Whittaker et al, we include private boarding schools, madrasa and other religious learning centres in our definition of residential child and youth care. Residential establishments involve any building(s) (and sometimes tents) where children or young people are brought together to live in shared community life spaces for given periods of time, whether as refugees of war, poverty, disease, abuse, famine or natural disaster.

Residential Child and Youth Care in a Developing World captures some of the challenges and changes faced by residential child and youth care workers in 73 countries – places that rarely feature in the international literature. Each contributor has highlighted challenges and opportunities facing residential child and youth care in their own country’s.

Volume I now available at
<http://press.cyc-net.org>



Relational Thinking

Jack Phelan

Everything is Relational

We cannot escape from being relational in life space practice, no matter how wooden or objective we try to appear. All of our talking, acting, emotional baggage and logical interpretations create relational messages that are received by all around us, especially the youths/families we are attempting to support. Some of our relational presence is deliberate and intended, when we are trying to be kind or stern, interpreting the rules as fairly as possible or having a laugh together. Some of our relational message is unintended, like when we treat people like objects or get angry or frustrated despite our best intentions, or just misinterpret what they are telling us with their behavior. Some of our relational message is full of power and control, which can be comforting when control is essential or upsetting when power is used to maintain my need to have things my way. Most of the everyday relational behaviors the program and staff members use are trying to communicate the sometimes-useful message that we are trying to keep you safe. This message is only useful sometimes because once a person feels safe, then they need to have room to be powerful. We have a hard time listening to that message and having a relational response that doesn't assert our ultimate power.

Some relational practice is deliberate

CYC practitioners who are comfortable in the life space (usually after one year) begin to create relational messages that are focused on connecting safely with unsafe, mistrusting youth and families. These practitioners have learned to create caring interactions, forgiving easily, using upset moments and emotional crisis to create closeness instead of distance and working harder in quiet moments to build



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trust and safety rather than take a coffee break. This process of creating *relational safety* is a major step forward in becoming a CYC professional. There is no possibility of doing relational CYC practice without relational safety for both parties, and this emerging skill creates the groundwork for both sides of the equation. Awareness also starts to build about bad relational practice, which is just as important. Now much of the behavioral program which infuses all the daily events is resisted because it actually is non-relational. Skillful CYC staff who are becoming better at building relational safety find themselves hiding their caring interactions and attempts to create connection from the other staff because it does not fit into behavioral mandates. Good CYC supervision will manage these competing staff priorities, and bad supervision will punish connecting attempts.

Relational practice starts after relational safety

“Join before you jar” is the motto of a very successful family support program. The goal of relational practice is to create influence to support people to build new beliefs about themselves. Basically, people with low attachment ability can begin to believe that people can care for them without taking advantage of them.

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They can begin to believe that they are deserving of being cared about, and can start to care about others. They can begin to believe in their own ability to make a difference in their own lives, to feel powerful rather than helpless and out of control. They can begin to expand black/white thinking about the only choice is to be a victim or victimizer so that compromise and boundaries can be more flexible and personally useful. Relational practice includes the CYC practitioner being able to accept and respect the limited belief system and logic of a person who has survived abuse and neglect, while being able to resist arguing or condescending. The other person in this relational “inter-personal in-between” can feel safe enough to actually describe what they believe to be true and be open to hearing another person’s perspective. This is only possible when both sides feel respected and understood. Basically, I will be able to listen to you when you are willing to listen to me.

This is where relational practice begins.

Effective CYC Practice Is Relational

This statement has been tossed around in our field for at least 20 years. I believe it to be true, as much as anything can be said to be true. The paradox is that I am not sure that I really know what it means. On the one hand, I have read many very useful CYC articles and chapters which have helped me get a better understanding of relational practice, and I have had quite a few intense conversations with thoughtful practitioners that gave me new insights into relational ideas. I have also taught people about my understanding of relational work and relational supervision, which I believe was helpful for them in their jobs.

I have suspected that relational ideas comprise a threshold concept area that need to be further developed and taught in CYC programs. Grasping the idea of relational approaches is transformational for a professional and will create an understanding of practice that will establish an irreversible shift in focus which will elevate the sophistication of CYC practice and programs.



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The issue for me is that the more I increase my understanding of relational concepts, the more I realize how complex and multifaceted the practice of doing relational work really is. As I gradually build more awareness of relational practice concepts, I am confronted with more questions than answers, more areas for potential research and expanding definitional boundaries. This makes things more exciting and intriguing, which is good, but less definite and clear, which is troublesome.

Thom Garfat, who is being highlighted this month for his pioneering work establishing this web site and e-journal, is a huge voice for relational practice. Thom received the Governor General's award at the University of Victoria 10 years ago for his PhD thesis on relational practice. He has probably done more than any CYC thinker to advance relational thinking for our field as well as exemplify a relational approach in his work. Thom connects to people as well as connects CYC people to each other. Thom has been responsible for creating relationships among many CYC practitioners around the globe, as he either convenes a session, organizes a trip, coordinates a training process, or gets people together to co-author different writing projects. He is committed to building our understanding of relational ideas even as he, and the rest of us, struggle with building our capacity to create effective relational CYC practice.



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SUPERVISION

in child and youth care practice

**NOW
AVAILABLE
HERE**

Editors

Grant **Charles**

James **Freeman**

Thom **Garfat**

The Quiet Revolution of Thom Garfat

Hans Skott-Myhre

hskotty@kennesaw.edu

Not all revolts are noisy declamatory events that burst onto the world stage with eruptions of mass protest and even violent upheaval. Sometimes revolutions are quieter than all of that. Every so often revolutionary change comes about as a quiet steady turning towards a vision of a world that isn't yet, but is strongly implied in the world we have today. Of course, one might argue that this is evolution rather than revolution, but I would argue that revolution has a dependent relation with human consciousness that evolution does not require. That is not to say that the terms are not inter-related. Indeed, in this era of the anthropocene, one might say they are hopelessly entangled, with both profoundly problematic relations of consciousness and bodies, as well as vistas of unforeseen capacity premised in what Garfat (2008) has called the "in between between us."

This "in between" space, or what Garfat and Fulcher (2012) term, "the co-created space between us" is the foundational element of what we, in CYC, have come to call relational practice. Because our work is centered in the realm of human struggle, as it plays out in the lived experience of young people, Garfat and Fulcher's call that we should premise our work in the liminal space of relational co-creation is perhaps more revolutionary now than at any time in recent history. As we enter the 21st century with its vast expanses of rhetoric disconnected from any lived experience, empires of sheer abstract power unrelated to any actual human necessity, escalating panoramas of global ecological destruction, proliferating genocidal conflict and high intensity regimes of narcissistic self-regard, the very concept of actual living relationships that functions as a collaborative "space between us" becomes ever more pressing for the processual advancement of



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generations to come. I have argued elsewhere in these columns and in other writings that CYC has a great deal to offer in the face of the current crisis. I would add here that the work of Thom Garfat has been advancing CYC as just this kind of relational practice for nearly fifty years.

It is the mark of truly remarkable thinkers that their work becomes increasingly relevant as time goes on. Thom's work has this quality. He had steadily and (one might say stubbornly) insisted on ideas that valorize the living connectedness of young people and adults as foundational to our work. He has done this without a great deal of fanfare, seldom drawing attention to the radical implications of his work, much less the political. He has worked intensively offering praxis grounded in the day-to-day experience of workers and young people.

To call Thom an activist would be both accurate and bit misleading. He is not an activist in the sense of making a large public fuss that draws attention to the inherent world shifting possibilities in one's writing and thought. As an activist, Thom is more of what I would call a minder. That is, someone who cares for, nurtures and sustains a deep set of practices and ideas in such a way as to make sure they weather the vagaries of the various ephemeral fads and fashions that can divert and distract us from the living encounter at the heart of our work. Thom gives careful and deep thought to the way he assembles the elements of his work and, in my reading of his contributions, he centers his work on a core set of precepts first, before proceeding on to their implications. One might see Thom's work in this regard as painting on the relatively small canvas of direct practice, but that would be to miss the point and ignore the global impact he has had on CYC as an international community.

Thom's work reminds me of the way I was taught to cook Jambalaya. First, you make a roux. The roux is made of the simplest ingredients possible and on the face of it requires almost no skill to prepare. The cook simply melts oil or butter in the bottom of a pan and then gradually stirs in flour over low heat (although some folks brown the flour first and then add the oil). The trick is managing the roux so that it gradually deepens in color over many hours without burning it (although recently



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some chefs have advocated quick cooking over high heat with lots of stirring). This takes years of practice and patient attention to the combination of elements. A good roux makes the difference between an average Jambalya and an amazing Jambalya. It is an apparently simple act with simple ingredients, but the care and attention to the process is what makes it an art. As Judy Walker (2012) stated:

There are 1,001 variables in making roux: The fat, the type of flour, how long to cook it and many more considerations. It's one of those items that rewards experience. The more you make it, the more you learn, and the more instinctive it becomes. (para 6)

Of course, what ingredients one adds to the roux will also determine the quality of the dish, but without the foundational richly prepared roux, the chemistry will not be the same.

I think that Thom, as one of the minders of our foundations, also brings a nuanced understanding of the complexity and chemistry of the encounter between young people and adults. He continually comes back to the dynamic creative aspect of relationship as a kind of encounter that requires careful attention and “stirring” over variable time with attentiveness to the ingredients as they are added to the mix.

In an article he wrote with Leon Fulcher (2012) they describe the ingredients of the work. They list 24 ingredients that they argue are fundamental. I won’t go into detail on all 24, although a good and careful reading of them all should be required for anyone who does CYC work or scholarship. I will take note, however, of how they start with an attention to the mundane lived encounter, which I would argue is like the roux I have described above. They tell us

Central to a CYC approach is the idea that if people can change how they are, in the minutia of their lives, then change will be all the more enduring for their relationships are central to who they are and how they are in their world. (p. 11)



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They refer to this as “rituals of encounter” and tell us that we need to give “give conscious thought to the ways in which they engage with another.” (p. 11) Like a roux it is not simply enough to throw the ingredients together, add heat and hope they don’t burn. Making a roux requires a careful attention to the ways the heat, the oil and the flour combine and transform over time. The cook has to be consciously aware of what is happening and their role in facilitating the transformation, both of the food and themselves as a culinary artist. Similarly, Garfat and Fulcher seem to making the case that “rituals of encounter” rooted in the apparent simplicity of mundane events such as eating together, taking a walk, playing a game or just hanging out, are also complex admixtures of ingredients and energy that take conscious attention and care. Indeed, one might be so bold as to say, a certain artistry or crafting.

Thom and Leon also detail other ingredients such as “meeting them where they are at ... connection and engagement ... being in relationship ... using daily life events to facilitate change ... examining context ... intentionality ... responsive developmental practice ... hanging out ... hanging in ... doing ‘with’ not ‘for’ or ‘to’ ... a needs based focus ... working in the now ... flexibility and individuality ... rhythmicity ... meaning making ... reflection ... purposeful use of activities ... family oriented ... being emotionally present ... counseling on the go ... strengths based and resiliency focused” (pp. 11-21). These are all quite powerful ideas and modes of praxis in their own right and they make for a rich CYC Jamalaya indeed. But if rituals of encounter is the flour, then there are two other ingredients that I would argue are the oil and the heat that constitute the roux that undergirds our practice and I would argue makes Thom’s work particularly revolutionary.

The first of these is what Thom and Leon refer to as “it’s all about us” (p. 21) This I would argue is the oil that when added to the flour makes the foundational ingredients of the roux. They argue for, what under our current regime of extreme individualism, may be an extremely radical proposition,



'It's all about us' ... refers to the fact that one is not operating alone. The plural pronoun 'us' refers to everyone involved in helping another person grow and develop. This holds for all CYC Practitioners, whether their titles be Foster Carer, Kinship Carer, Birth Family member, Young Person, Social Worker, Teacher, Therapist, Manager, Play Group or Youth Group leader, Peer Mentor, Distant Relatives, Clan or Tribal members, etc. Each has a role to play. The more everyone is working together, unified and not 'us' and 'them' – the more successful everyone will all be in supporting developmental out-comes for the people with whom we work ... the CYC approach is holistic, ecological and inclusive. Ultimately, 'We're all in this together!'

I would argue that this is the oil that binds the flour together and produces it as more than simply the elements out of which it is made. This precept can be found throughout Thom's work as he has brought us together, through journals, books, CYC-Online, international collaborations, intercultural encounters to name but a few. For Thom it would seem that CYC is all about us. His role as convener and ambassador has been central to our development as field of international proportion. This is indeed a quiet revolution of significant proportion.

If "us" is the oil, then what Thom and Leon refer to as love is the heat. They cite Zeni Thumbadoo who references "love of (an) other as a human being in the Ubuntu sense of 'I am because you are.'" (p. 21) They propose that

CYC practice is, in this sense, an act of love and loving – one holds others dear, one cherishes their being, and ultimately one acts in the context of love in a non-exploitative manner. (p.21)

Love is the heat because, in this remarkable articulation of love as mutually constitutive creative co-becoming, there is an astonishing amount of energy exchanged and incorporated into the encounter. There is a violation of the logic of alienation and lack that is remedied through the opening to the other as a key element in who we become. Love is often referred to as holding a kind of warmth



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or heat. Love as CYC praxis proposed here, requires a conscious awareness, a cherishing and an attentiveness to the ways in which the profound energy of love is facilitated as a transformative power. Like a roux, one must keep stirring and watching to make sure it doesn't burn. In many respects this is the kind of attentive love that Thom has shown us over the years as a colleague, mentor and visionary. He has minded the flame of love that is central to our work. As he steps aside from his role as editor of *CYC-Online* (but certainly not from the field one hopes) it will serve us well to strive to be attentive and mindful of the lessons he has given us so far. His quiet revolution has a legacy left for us to pursue. It is with profound gratitude that I hope to honor that legacy as it continues to develop in his future projects and with those he has delegated to carry on with *CYC-Online*.

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Data Collection and Use as Practice

Doug Magnuson

In the "olden" days, children and youth had experiences, under the guidance of youth workers, and the youth workers wrote case notes--an exercise in coding and thematic analysis if there ever was one. The data that went into those notes and reports was often thin, with no validity check. They were interpretations with no verification or triangulation.

That is going to change, because our ability to represent life-worlds is more sophisticated. Real-time data collection about practice will be more available, and children, youth, and families will increasingly have access to the same data as the professionals. They will be also able to produce and save their own data and their own interpretations. All of this will be searchable. And it will demand a new understanding of what it means to be accountable to clients.

Similarly, practitioners will do the same. Data, evaluation, research, interpretation have been treated as exotic activities. Yet in practice and in reporting practitioners are already coding data on the fly, whether they know it or not, and that data could be better organized and used, if we changed the way we think. In *The Gold Bug Variations*, Richard Powers described an example of a code and of coding.

... the entire Brittanica – not to mention the stacks of my old [library] branch as well as the entire Library of Congress—can in theory be encoded by a single notch on a rod. The whole human reservoir can be condensed to a single information-bearing groove with no loss of meaning. A trillion pages, the complete journey from Aardvark to Zygote and back, enpacked, retrievable, in a flick of a nick on a stick.



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No high tech, no microengraving or fantastic manipulation of silicon. Just a twig, a pocket knife, and a grade-school ability with numbers. Any text, however long and complex, is a linear stream of characters. Letters, punctuation marks, typographic marks, fewer than a hundred types. Each of these hundred can be replaced by a unique three-digit number. Simple substitution cipher, the sort even small children use for urgent communications. Montaigne's brutal truth ... "if we saw as much of the world as we do not see" becomes 131 006 222 023 005 222 019 001 023 222 001 019 222 ... As goes Montaigne, so goes the whole Brittanica ...

Now the remarkable twist. If I run the triplets together and put a decimal point in front of the number, the result is a rational fraction running to millions of decimal places. But a fraction represents, and is represented by, a portion of any distance, say from one end of a stick to the other. My Montaigne number, .131006222023005222019001023222001019222 ..., can now be committed to infinitesimally compact storage.

These numbers are "codes" that represent something else; coincidentally they are "coding" that preserves something original, allowing anyone with the know how or the technology to reproduce the original. A couple of interesting corollaries are in our future: One is that we can digitally translate numbers into pictures and words, and vice versa. Whether something is coded as a number or a word matters less than it used to, at least if the integrity of the relationship between the codes and coding is preserved. Another consequence is that the standard of accountability for one's representations is much higher.

This has already begun in the quantitative world. The change in our ability to collect, store, and share quantitative data has encouraged researchers to use more complex and sophisticated data sets. Also, they expect "reproducibility" as a standard of accountability. That is, in published research, often in tandem with web sites, readers of research can increasingly check the researcher's work by using the



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same data and running the same analysis, in part because researchers are now publishing the computer code and the data.

We are some ways off from the same standards in the qualitative world. Yet it will likely happen, though there is still great reluctance to share data with others and to share the details of analytic methods. Most researchers studying qualitative data ask others to trust their analysis.

Things are changing so fast that we are not keeping up. When I ask my physician a question, his first response is often to swivel his chair around to his computer and "google" the question. He is the authority, because he is smarter than me and he has experience that makes him wiser than me about medical issues. But "the smartest person in the room is the room," as the book subtitle says. A new skill is knowing how to "work the room."

In most CYC/youth work settings we are not using the room, and we are still treating data and data analysis as a scarce commodity, with the consequence that access is controlled by a favored few and those favored few never include clients. It does not have to be this way. In education, there is now the capacity for students and instructors to introduce into the experience much more and varied data, to co-produce a continuous stream of analysis and interpretation, and to record and save this stream. Students will still have to produce some traditional products, like papers and portfolios, but how those are compiled can be different. The instructors, like me, will be less of an authority and will have less control. The same will be true of practitioners.

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Thoughts and Thanks

Laura Steckley

“You have blonde hair!”

These were the first words my friend Thom Garfat spoke to me on one of his visits to Scotland.

All of our previous communication had been done via e-mail; I had submitted a couple of contributions to CYC net, and while our exchanges had been friendly, we weren't yet friends.

Thom's exclamation told me a couple of things about him: one, he carries pictures of people – people he'd never seen – in his mind's eye; and two, he's a person who generously shares what's going on inside his head. I could immediately identify with the former, and I really like the latter quality in a person.

Thom's sharing was generous, but not indiscriminate. For example, I'm pretty sure he felt ambivalent about what I was writing about physical restraint. He never told me this, but he did tell me about his own related thoughts, feelings and experiences. In those early days of what has been a long process of making sense, theoretically, of a huge amount of rich data, I felt unsure about how my work was being received. Thom managed to find a middle ground between an involvement that tried to unduly influence my thinking, and disconnecting himself entirely. I think this is a difficult thing to get right with an early-career academic, and he did it extremely well. I came away from our conversation thoughtful, and with space for those thoughts; I also came away feeling respected. You can see in this example how Thom lived what he espoused about direct practice.

I've written before about the profound contribution CYC Net has made to our field, and to my own development as a practitioner, a reader, a writer, and an educator. It has given me and many others a strong sense of membership of an



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important community. Over the years, I've seen Thom consistently find ways to support individuals' development, foster connections between individuals, and elicit others' involvement with this site – often all three at the same time. CYC Net is infused with his warmth and presence.

Yet, Thom's contribution is all the more significant because he has helped to create something that isn't completely reliant on a charismatic leader. While he does indeed have a charisma that has served CYC Net well over many years, I have no doubt that it will continue to flourish after Thom's retirement. This is due not only to the vibrant and resilient site he worked so tirelessly to help create, but also because he has clearly chosen well in terms of his successors.

Thank you, Thom. Best wishes for your retirement.



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The Storyteller's Gift

Aurora De Monte

Not till we are completely lost, or turned round ... do we appreciate the vastness and strangeness of nature. Not still we are lost, in either words, not till we have lost the world, do we begin to find ourselves, and realize where we are and the infinite extent of our relations.

Henry David Thoreau

I really appreciate a good story, one in which I can truly get lost. I grew up within a family of storytellers, and I love being taken on a journey across space and time. What I appreciate most is the feeling of being guided along and through the geography of a lived moment, to the riches and treasures buried within. It is a privilege to be a companion throughout such narrative landscapes.

Thom Garfat can tell a good story. In the few years that I have known him, I always look forward to our time together and the stories he shares about life and practice and the space(s) in between. Marvelous storytellers (and their stories) often go beyond what meets the eye. I recall many times leaving Thom's side quietly mulling over a theme, idea or line that became stuck in my mind, and upon later reflection finding nuggets of gold; treasures about growth and practice that have assisted in deeper development.

A storyteller's gift is the transmission of history and culture. In doing so they integrate lore and ideas into the narratives of future generations. "You digest an idea or an ethic as though it were bread, and like bread it becomes part of you. Out of all this comes your contribution to the making of the world, your sentences in the ongoing interchange" (Solnit, 2013, p.192). And so the stories go...



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I love being surrounded by such magnificent storytellers – wise peers and elders, willing to share and support community members throughout their growth and development. Thom, changes can be challenging but there is no doubt in my mind that you will handle this transition with utmost grace. Thank you for sharing your spirit, stories and parts of your journey.

For all the rest of us, if you ever have an opportunity to share space with Thom or any others of our elders, persuade them to share with you a story. You will not be disappointed.

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<p>A Guide to Developing Effective Child and Youth Care Practice with Families Second Edition</p>  <p>Thom Gurtel, PhD Grant Charles, PhD</p>	<p>Making Moments Meaningful in Child & Youth Care Practice</p>  <p>Thom Gurtel, Leon Fuchsler and John Blane</p>	<p>Moments with Youth</p>  <p>Mark Krueger</p>
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From New Keynote Speaker to “Le Naggeur” – A Testimonial to Thom Garfat

Karen VanderVen

Some decades ago – maybe the late 1970s – the program for the InterAssociation Child Care Conference held annually outside of Philadelphia, announced a keynote speaker from the University of Victoria, Canada: Thom Garfat. “Hmm” we Pittsburghers mused. “Never heard of him”, while we forked at our apple pie. Thom Garfat, whom we had also never seen, assumed the podium and began. He was not, I recall, wearing a suit and tie, but he did have on a pair of leather boots. “This should be interesting” ran through our minds. Soon we simultaneously put down our forks and looked up at each other with both pleasure and awe. We were pleased to be hearing a message that spoke so closely to our own experience. Presented with eloquence, articulation and a spot-on understanding of the meaning of the work that we were jointly engaged in doing. This was my first exposure to Thom Garfat, but very fortunately, far from my, and everyone else’s, last. He was “of us”, “of the field”.

The years rolled by and Thom Garfat and his work continued to emerge and be a major presence at the growing number of child and youth work conferences and in the writings that were being published to increasingly define and empower our field. We are all familiar with these – the seminal *Canadian Journal of Child and Youth Care* that later morphed into *Relational Child and Youth Care Practice* – to name just a few. A brilliant doctoral dissertation defining the unique nature of the child and youth care intervention was produced by Thom for his degree from the



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University of Victoria School of Child Care. Ongoing work to define and describe the nature of relational child and youth work was seminal. Thom went on to establish CYC-Net and serve as Co-Editor.

In the earliest part of the 21st century, Thom invited me to develop a column for the new *Relational Child and Youth Care Practice* journal. I thought about what approach I might like to take, such as expressing my strong opinions. *From the Soapbox* was born and given an accepting home.

It's one thing to have a publication outlet and an expectation to produce by a deadline, and another to actually come forth with the expected manuscript. Prior to each due date, Thom would increasingly need to think up so ways to reach his columnist. "This is a 'nag', the message would say. The next one would be another 'nag", with various plays on the word but always being clear as to the message's intent. So I coined the name "**Le Naggeur**" for him and would address him by this title when I got my piece in – pushing the deadline a bit from time to time.

Now Thom is 'retiring' (I don't like this word). Well, we all have to do it eventually, don't I know. So now it's **my** turn to **nag**: Thom, while you may deserve a bit of a rest and relief from some of your obligations **don't even think of making a totality of it**. Stay in touch. Stay as involved as you can so we may continue to learn from your insights, wisdom, vision, encouragement and all of your qualities that have made such a difference to child and youth work, and to the children, youth and families of the world.



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Postcard from Leon Fulcher

From the Kingdom of Fife

Still back in Europe with this postcard frae Scotland. It was delayed for travel reasons. On arrival at Edinburgh after the flight from Paris, we were greeted with the sign that said It all really about returning to Auld Reekie. This short visit was about family and old friends, spending time together and remembering the life of David Drysdale – oldest son and sibling, nephew and visionary advocate for the role fathers play in the lives of their children.

There is something quite iconic about the Forth Rail Bridge opened in 1890 – within days of the British signing of the Treaty of Waitangi with New Zealand Maori. The village of South Queensferry lies where the old Firth of Forth Ferry used to set sail to North Queensferry. I once worked with a consultant psychiatrist at the hospital in Dunfermline who documented changes in the genetic birth patterns of intellectual disability in Fifers when the Forth Road Bridge enabled a wider gene pool into what was previously cut off from the rest of Scotland.



Welcome to Edinburgh International Airport



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With opening of the Forth Road Bridge in 1964, parts of Fife rapidly became commuter belt properties for folk working in Edinburgh or Dundee. The University of St Andrews – one of the four oldest in Europe dating from the Middle Ages and the Royal and Ancient Golf Course is of course in the Kingdom of Fife! Special greetings to Kathleen Mulvey in Fife!

Traffic demands on the Forth Road Bridge resulted in the need to remove trucks and heavy goods vehicles onto a new bridge known as the Queensferry Crossing. Where once only a ferry took Fifers back and forth to Edinburgh and the Lothians, now there are three (2 road and 1 rail) as well as the old Kincardine and new Clackmannanshire Bridge further West.

We stopped by to see the old family home in Dunfermline and were invited in for a cuppa by an old neighbour. *Nae lang spoon* in Cameron Street! It gave pause for reflection that with the death of one generation whose family members had lived within a 30 mile



First there was a Ferry from Queensferry to Fife, then the Forth Rail Bridge from 1890



A new road bridge opened in 1964, and a new third bridge is almost ready!



radius of this house for more than 300 years, now there were no family members living in Scotland.

It is here that I wish to acknowledge an important role that long-standing friend and Transformation brother, Dr Thom Garfat, played in the 24-hour marker events that started our family move away from Scotland – and also for his exacting scientific enquiry into the essence of Scottish Malt Whisky. This photo, taken in our Cameron Street home that evening, captures for me the essence of Thom's professional abilities as a clinical psychologist who has made a seminal contribution to the field of child and youth care world-wide. This photo also reminds of Thom's Scottish Ayrshire Granny who did much over the years to get Thom to stop swearing. So if'n ye hear



Cameron Street home with Scottish links going back 300 years



Dr Thom has strong Scottish connections with a Canny Granny frae South Ayrshire



Thom swear, not that he does swear, aye no?
Just remind him that his Scottish Granny
wouldnae be pleased ;-) But I swear, Thom has
touched a lot of personal lives during his career
– and I say *Thanks, Bro!*

In this village – the locals say Kin Yuckert
while Visiting Americans say Killy Conquer! ;-) -
there is an ancestral line with the immediate
ancestors of King Robert the Bruce!

Having been so reminded of past lives and shared
memories in relationships with old (we're all getting
older) family members and friends, it was also
nice to spend time around children and
grandchildren. Thank you Misol Drysdale for
being part of our family
lives!



**Try and pronounce the name
of this medieval village with
links to Robert the Bruce!**



**Loving a new generation of Scottish
Family in Edinburgh**



**In Remembrance of David Drysdale –
Family Member, Friend and
Inspirational Guy!**



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All artwork to be sent to admin@cyc-net.org

Files: Only TIF, PDF and JPG files will be accepted. All images should RGB at 300dpi resolution.

Fonts: All fonts should be embedded. We accept no responsibility for incorrect font rendering.

Sizing information

Finished Size	Layout	Width	Height
Full page	Portrait (5mm bleed)	150mm	200mm
½ page	Portrait	70mm	200mm
	Landscape	150mm	90mm
¼ page	Portrait	70mm	90mm



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