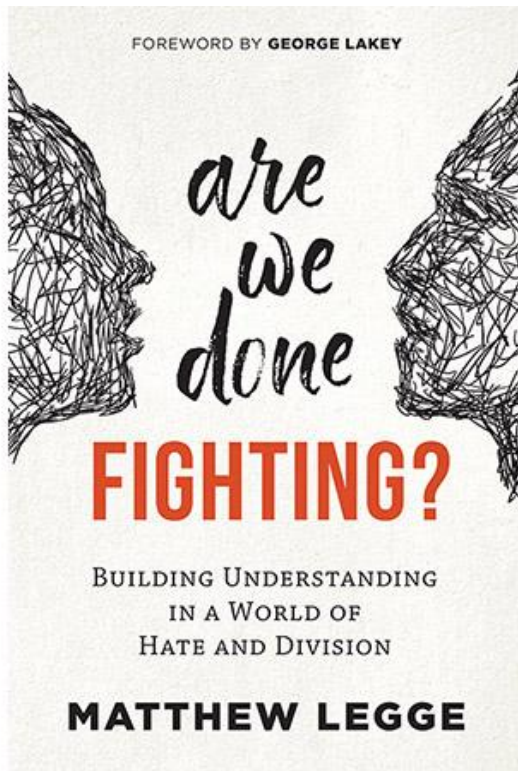




# Canadian Friends Service Committee E-Newsletter



## **Build your peace skills with a free online workshop series**

CFSC's book [Are We Done Fighting? Building Understanding in a World of Hate and Division](#) just won a Nautilus Book Award in the category of Social Change and Social Justice! With the slogan "better books for a better world" the Nautilus Book Awards recognize books that make a difference and inspire.

We're pleased to announce that we will be offering a free interactive workshop series based on this award-winning book. Participants will have the chance to build life-enriching connections with each other while maintaining our physical distance.

The workshop series will take place online over five consecutive weeks with the following themes:

1. Introduction (setting ground rules, learning about the group and some of the strengths present and challenges we each face)
2. Us, others, and power
3. Communication
4. Belief
5. Inner peace

When registering there is an option to let us know which days and times you prefer or that do not work for you. Once enough participants have registered, we will schedule a recurring time each week. <https://quakerservice.ca/register>



Join Canadian Friends Service Committee for a

# VIRTUAL SCREENING OF THE AWARD WINNING CANADIAN FILM:



**Thursday, May 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:00pm EDT**



Followed by a Zoom discussion with  
special guest speaker:

**IRWIN ELMAN,**

former Ontario Advocate for Children and Youth

Find out why the former Child Advocate of  
Ontario, supports the film's message -  
**BUILD COMMUNITIES NOT PRISONS!**

Join us via **Zoom** for the  
virtual screening and discussion here:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83483324773>

Get more information at [quakerservice.ca/events](https://quakerservice.ca/events)



## Reminder: Virtual screening of *Conviction* and discussion with Irwin Elman

Join us this Thursday May 21 for a virtual screening of the award-winning Canadian film, *Conviction* and a discussion with former Ontario Advocate for Children and Youth, Irwin Elman. The film is 1 hour and 18 minutes long and will begin shortly after 7:00 p.m. EDT. The presentation by Irwin Elman and discussion will begin at approximately 8:20 p.m. EDT and go until approximately 9:00 pm EDT.



A study from Brazil of genetically modified mosquitoes found that they behaved very differently from what the company that engineered them anticipated.

### Gene drives

Theoretically, we could someday live in a world where creatures couldn't pass diseases on to humans because they'd have certain genetic tendencies edited out of them. Mosquitoes, for example, wouldn't carry malaria. Realistically, however, there are dangers, and one of the major and widely acknowledged problems with instituting gene drives is that humanity can't accurately calculate in advance what will happen when we start tinkering with nature on this scale. And there are plenty of reasons to be wary.<sup>18</sup>

Gene drives continue to be a well-funded area of research in spite of the massive uncertainties and unknowns. In the last year authors have reflected on what "free, prior, and informed consent" would mean with respect to a gene drive, and the possible need for collective governance, given that gene drives will not respect national borders.<sup>19</sup> Europe has made plans to call for a moratorium "on releases of gene drive organisms into nature, including field trials, in order to prevent these new technologies from being released prematurely and to uphold the precautionary principle."<sup>20</sup>

A study from Brazil of genetically modified (but not gene drive) mosquitoes found that they behaved very differently from what the company that engineered them anticipated. Rather than crashing local populations of disease-carrying mosquitoes, the edited mosquitoes bred successfully with the native populations and continued to spread their modified genetic material beyond the trial area. "The claim was that genes from the release strain would not get into the general population because offspring would die," said researcher Jeffrey Powell. "That obviously was not what happened."<sup>21</sup> This seems to be yet another reminder of how difficult it is to predict what the results of genetic modifications will be outside of the lab.

What's more, a Brazilian biologist involved with regulating the experiment, José Maria Gusman Ferraz, told local news that he warned the regulatory committee that the edited mosquitoes might crossbreed with native mosquitoes and establish themselves permanently in the area. He says these concerns were largely ignored. Gusman Ferraz further said that local people were not informed about the risks of the experiment and did not sign a Free and Informed Consent form.<sup>22</sup>



## COVID-19, editing humans, and more: synthetic biology update 2020

Once a year we share with you a brief, simple, and non-technical rundown of the key issues making headlines in the weird world of synthetic biology.

Synthetic what? It's already happening. Many scientists, biohackers, and corporations are trying to create novel life forms. They want to move from evolution through natural selection into a phase of ever more human designed life.

This year's update looks at: COVID-19, gene editing of humans, disturbing business ties, attempts to crash mosquito populations in the wild, and genetically altered animals—from monkeys with human genes that may make them smarter, to cows with a surprise the company that edited them missed, to tiny living “programmable” beings designed by artificial intelligence and built from frogs' skin and heart cells.

<https://quakerservice.ca/SB2020>