

NOISE_{LETTER}

*The Newsletter of the Right to Quiet Society
for Soundscape Awareness and Protection*
SPRING 2022

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Charitable Registration BN: 11915 4680 RR 0001

Celebrating International Noise Awareness Day



RIGHT TO QUIET TRANSIT SHELTER POSTER

Thanks to *City of Vancouver* Cultural Services, poster artist Alex Dewar, photographer Elvira Lount.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

by Laurence Keane, editor@quiet.org

It's a two-edge sword as we look back to *Right To Quiet's* beginnings and look forward to its future. The fact that *Right To Quiet* has endured speaks to the tenacity of its membership and its volunteers. The fact that it continues to exist after such a long tenure speaks to the tenacity of the problem. Like vision, sound is a vital part of the human existence. Without it we would be deprived of some of nature's wonders, the ability to hear the joyous voices of our children at play, and a myriad other delights as we go about our every day.

Vision is another of our marvellous senses. But imagine the blinding sun directed at our eyes. All the wonders of that sense would be negated. But with vision, at least we always have the option of closing our eyes, putting on sunglasses, or turning our faces away. We can't do that with sound. It's pervasive. It can be all encompassing. It can overwhelm. It can change our emotions. It can make us unwell.

While our factories of the past, churning away gadgets, gizmos and widgets, have been mostly off-loaded to Southeast Asia (unlucky them, with all of that accompanying pollution and noise now an increasing problem overseas), things have not improved in our

"post-industrial" society. We've increasingly industrialized garden maintenance. The roar of the leaf blower has replaced the grating of the rake, the whirring of hedge trimmers has replaced the clip-clip of the pruning shears and the rumble of the gas powered lawn mower has obliterated the memory of that squeaking wheel on the old manual mower I pushed as a kid – never thought I'd miss that!

Of course that's just a start on the list of "modern" day sound issues. Whether it be the massive container freighters parked all over our waterways with their diesel generators going 24/7, the sky above us a freeway for non-stop air traffic, our streets becoming house-building factories as home construction booms, it seems we are fighting a never ending battle for peace and quiet.

There seems to be a mistaken belief that everybody, be it person or corporation, has a Right To Make Noise – as much as they wish. They are wrong. We each have a right to quiet. Remember smoking? When it was all-pervasive? When you politely asked a smoker not to blow the smoke into your face and often they might say they had a right to. Well, that changed. How? Enough people were made aware of the toxic effects of cigarette smoke on health. One of the goals of *Right to Quiet* is to inform the public as to the toxic effects of noise on health. *RTQ* wants to ensure everyone's health and wellbeing by working towards a more peaceful, quiet world. So if you believe in this please join, and help make the next 40 years even more successful. Help create a quieter, more liveable and healthier world.

INAD INITIATIVES 2022

1. Transit Shelter Advertising

We were approved for the *City of Vancouver* Transit Shelter Advertising Program designed for non-profits and cultural organizations. The poster is being displayed from April 4 to May 2 in 10 bus shelters around the city and we are distributing a smaller version in local libraries and other venues.

2. Online Zoom Event: "Quiet Parks and Quiet Spaces" April 27, 2022 12-1:30pm (PT). This virtual forum will address the health impacts of noise and the need for quiet spaces in urban parks, especially as density increases.

3. Book Donations to Public Libraries

In honour of the 40th Anniversary of *Right To Quiet*, we plan to donate 40 books to libraries in and around Vancouver and the Lower Mainland.

JOIN OR RENEW MEMBERSHIP

<https://quiet.org/join-us>

In this Spring 2022 edition

Looking to the Future

INAD Initiatives 2022

Quiet Parks and Quiet Spaces Zoom Meeting April 27

Brief History of INAD

Gulf Islands Freighter Invasion

On Being a Good Neighbor

40 Years of Protecting Soundscapes

Considering a Heat Pump?

Quiet Reads

Call to Action - Noisy Motor Boats

I ♥ Quiet

You are invited to a Zoom meeting
International Noise Awareness Day (INAD)
 Wednesday April 27, 2022 12pm - 1:30pm (PT)

REGISTER HERE

QUIET PARKS AND QUIET SPACES



Quiet Parks and Quiet Spaces will address the health impacts of noise and the need for quiet spaces in urban parks, especially as density increases.

In observation of the 27th annual *International Noise Awareness Day (INAD)*, and to commemorate the 40th anniversary of Vancouver based *Right to Quiet*, we invite you to a virtual forum examining the health enhancing benefits of quiet green spaces, and the importance of protecting such spaces from noise pollution for the benefit of humans and urban wildlife.

MODERATOR: [CATHERINE EVANS](#) *Vancouver Park Board* Commissioner 2014-2018; background in law, policy and communications; experienced community builder, facilitator and designer of public policy processes; passionate about public space.

INAD INTRO: [ARLINE L. BRONZAFI, Ph.D.](#) (New York) Environmental psychologist; Professor Emerita *City University New York*; *Right To Quiet* Board; Co-Founder *The Quiet Coalition* and *INAD*; advisor to five New York City mayors as chairperson of the Noise Committee *GrowNYC*; advisor *Quiet Parks International*; co- author "*Why Noise Matters*."

PANELISTS: [ULF BOHMAN](#) (Sweden) Director of Urban Parks for *Quiet Parks International*; City of Stockholm *Guide to Silence*, a project that aims to help people find green, calm places that promote well-being and inner stillness, particularly in green places in cities of the world; implemented many *Urban Quiet Parks* in Sweden and would like to do that across the globe.

[FRANCESCO ALETTA](#) (UK/Italy) Research Associate at the *Institute for Environmental Design and Engineering, The Bartlett, University College London*; *Italian Acoustical Society (AIA)* member; active for over 10 years in soundscape studies and environmental acoustics; Secretary Technical Committee *Noise European Acoustics Association (EAA)*; wrote NOISE chapter of United Nations Environment Programme *UNEP Report "Frontiers 2022: Noise, Blazes and Mismatches"*. "*Listening to Cities: From Noisy Environments to Positive Soundscapes*".

[DAVID SADOWAY](#) (British Columbia) faculty Geography and Environment Dept *Kwantlen Polytechnic University*, Surrey, BC; urban planner and an environmental manager; regional representative *Quiet Parks International*; lived and worked in Asia for over 15 years teaching and researching soundscapes and noise impacts on urban quality of life and livability; has lived in five Canadian provinces.

QUIET PARKS RESOURCES

<https://quiet.org/quiet-parks-and-quiet-spaces>

<https://noiseawareness.org>

<https://www.quietparks.org>

<https://quietcommunities.org>

<https://www.grownyc.org>

<https://www.counterfire.org/articles/book-reviews/15488-why-noise-matters>

<http://www.guidetosilence.org/now.html>

<https://www.unep.org/resources/frontiers-2022-noise-blazes-and-mismatches>

A BRIEF HISTORY OF INTERNATIONAL NOISE AWARENESS DAY

by Arline Bronzaft, Ph.D.



On Wednesday, April 27th organizations worldwide will be recognizing *International Noise Awareness Day (INAD)*. This will be the 27th year of an event that was initiated originally in 1996 by the *Center for Hearing and Communication (CHC)*. The CHC had been interested in environmental noise years before this initiative and wanted to make people worldwide more aware of the dangers of noise to our hearing, mental and physical health, and

quality of life. In 1986 I had been asked to speak at a panel discussion entitled "*Report on Noise in the '80s.*" Thus I was thrilled when Nancy Nadler, Deputy Executive Director of the Center, asked me to join her and CHC in establishing *International Noise Awareness Day (INAD)*.

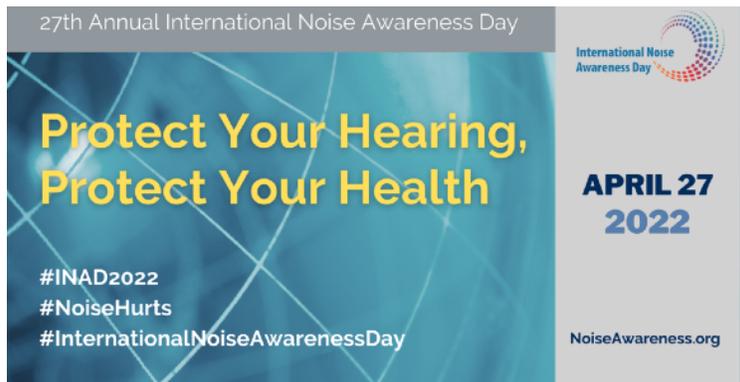
This first year of INAD in New York City was extremely exciting. INAD was recognized by former Mayor Rudolph Giuliani who presented a proclamation honoring *International Noise Awareness Day* to CHC representatives at a City Hall celebration. Also several schools in Brooklyn held contests asking students to design posters speaking to the dangers of noise and the benefits of quiet. The Brooklyn Borough President honored winning posters by inviting the students and their parents to a reception at Borough Hall. Several of the winning posters were put on display on the Manhattan Broadway Jumbotron.

Of course that first year of *International Noise Awareness Day* was initially planned as a local activity in New York City to fight noise pollution in "*Loud New York City.*" However interest grew and within four years this local event became International. By 2000 there were participants from every state in the Union as well as participants from 38 countries globally. The message that noise pollution is harmful and actions must be taken to lessen the effects of this dangerous pollutant really struck a chord, a quiet, but resonant, one!

In 2000, CHC published a special issue of its "*Hearing and Rehabilitation Quarterly*" entitled "*Controlling Noise is in Your Hands.*" This special issue focused on what could be done about noise and it sent

out a message - "*each person has the ability to take an active role in reducing noise in our communities.*" An outstanding article in the issue was a report of an investigation of sound levels in an elementary school in Ohio carried out by fifth-graders.

For *International Noise Awareness Day* the CHC suggests a number of activities for your community, such as vans offering free hearing screenings, dissemination of information on hearing protection, school programs to educate children to the dangers of noise, panel discussions on noise, and one minute set aside at 2:15 pm for "*non-noise time.*" These activities have been employed successfully in New York City during INAD. Everyone is urged to participate on this day by speaking out for changes that will reduce environmental noise pollution. Yes, we still need to do that. However, on a positive note, more organizations have been formed to advocate for reducing noise, especially with respect to aircraft noise.



FYI: *The Center for Hearing and Communication* website provides hashtags and INAD logos to assist you in advocating for greater quiet and less noise in our environment. The site also provides information on activities that you can initiate to promote this goal. We encourage you to explore the site to learn more about sound and noise, especially by reviewing some of its articles. My hope is that this short history of *International Noise Awareness Day* will encourage more groups to join in the day that calls for less noise and greater quiet in our lives - our health and well-being depend on it!

INAD RESOURCES

<https://noiseawareness.org/info-center/noise-schools>

<https://noiseawareness.org/act-now>

<https://noiseawareness.org/info-center/controlling-noise-nadler>

<https://www.chcheating.org>

SOUNDING OFF

*Noisy Freighter Invasion
of the Gulf Islands Intensifies*

This winter was, by far, the noisiest of the 6 years since we retired to formerly quiet Salt Spring Island. More foreign ships than ever were anchored here, for longer periods, with lights and generators blazing around the clock. On any given day there are roughly 25 huge freighters anchored adjacent to Gulf Island residential neighbourhoods; three of them directly outside our home.

In August, 2021, after years of residents writing MP's, petitions to Parliament, press publications and other actions, the *Minister of Transport* announced a new system to reduce anchorage demand — *Active Vessel Traffic Management*. It is unknown, however, how or if this program is being implemented. It is not a transparent, inclusive-of-resident's-input process. There has been no reduction in freighter traffic, just the opposite. There have only been a handful of freighter free days since this "mitigation" promise. Authorities may even have plans to expand beyond the current 33 anchorages before a *National Marine Conservation Area* can take effect in this environmentally fragile area.

Without banning freighters from our Islands, bays, estuaries and coast lines, we may never enjoy another peaceful day by the water. Two-hundred-meter-long ships destroy sleep at night and outdoor relaxation during the day. A doctor says our recent cortisol and blood sugar changes are most likely caused by the loud, low-frequency generator noise disturbing sleep and rest. It's torture, actually.

Few government members seem concerned about this virtual condemnation of homes through converting adjacent waters into industrial parking lots. If ship engine and generator noise is harming people, it is likely harming marine life as well. Water and air pollution are often visible by day and some ships are so lit up at night they drown out the stars. We witness fewer seals, whales, otters and even sea birds when the ships are here. When freighters leave, the animals return.

Residents far from shore are often unaware of the noise. They are more concerned about environmental degradation and impacts on tourism. Only a lucky minority nearer the ocean seem to suffer noise-related health impacts. They need relief now. Public hearings and real actions to protect the island seas should follow.



Photo Credit Elvira Lount

The *Port of Vancouver* recently added container ships to the existing coal and grain ship invasion. Last fall the burning container ship *MV ZIM Kingston* dumped toxic chemicals and other cargo into the sea off Victoria. Freighters frequently drag anchor. Two of these drifting ships collided last year. In addition to the dangerous chemicals these ships can carry, their massive fuel tanks can rupture in a stranding or collision, putting the whole environment in jeopardy.

Bottom line is giant freighters belong in port. The *Port of Vancouver* must stop using the fragile waters of the Gulf Islands for stacking its overflow or a precious marine habitat may be lost for everyone. If ship engine and generator noise can have serious impact on human health and well-being, imagine the effects on marine animals. It is going to take an organized and highly vocal citizenry to challenge the powerful shipping industry, *Transport Canada* and the *Port of Vancouver*. Please consider contacting the below authorities to ask them to stop the noisy and dangerous industrial invasion of the Gulf Island seas.

— a Salt Spring Island family

Omar Alghabra, Minister of Transport omar.alghabra@parl.gc.ca

Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change steven.guilbeault@parl.gc.ca

Joyce Murray, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard joyce.murray@parl.gc.ca

Port of Vancouver Community.Feedback@portvancouver.com

FREIGHTER RESOURCES

<https://www.protect-the-islands-sea.org/index.html>

<https://nofreighteranchorages.ca/take-action-now>

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/apr/12/ocean-of-noise-sonic-pollution-hurting-marine-life>

ON BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOR

by Jeanine Botta

In March 2022, media outlets around the world covered a noise dispute in New York City that resulted in murder. A young couple was arguing loudly in their room at 3:00 a.m. when their roommate asked them to lower their voices. Returning to his room, he played loud music to muffle the sound of the argument. Seeming to be offended by perceived retaliation, the couple responded by stabbing their roommate to death. In July of 2020, in another New York City neighborhood, a group of men had been using commercial grade fireworks every night into the early morning hours. A local couple asked one of the men to stop using the fireworks, citing the area's residential nature, and the man retaliated by shooting them; the woman later died.

There are different kinds of retaliation related to noise, and murderous violence is rare. Some retaliate against noisemakers by making noise. Others retaliate against those who ask them to reduce noise or take a noisy activity elsewhere. Some forms of retaliation can be prolonged, turning into a regular harassment campaign. A suburban Ontario resident gathered the courage to ask his neighbors to use a quieter method to confirm they'd locked their cars, rather than use the horn sound that was a standard alert. Most vehicle lock and security systems can be configured to flash the lights, or to lock silently. The neighboring household, which included grown children and multiple cars, retaliated from then on by honking their horns several times whenever they left or arrived home. The children asked visiting friends to do the same. It is easy to understand why people can be so fearful of retaliation that they won't approach neighbors about noise - or why many prefer calling police or code enforcement to deal with the issue.

In a comprehensive article on solving noise problems, *GrowNYC* lists several suggestions about "considering quiet for others" that begin with "Respect your neighbor's right to quiet. Keep your radios, stereos, and television turned down." As one tinnitus sufferer and anti-noise advocate asked, "Why can't we all just follow the Golden Rule?"

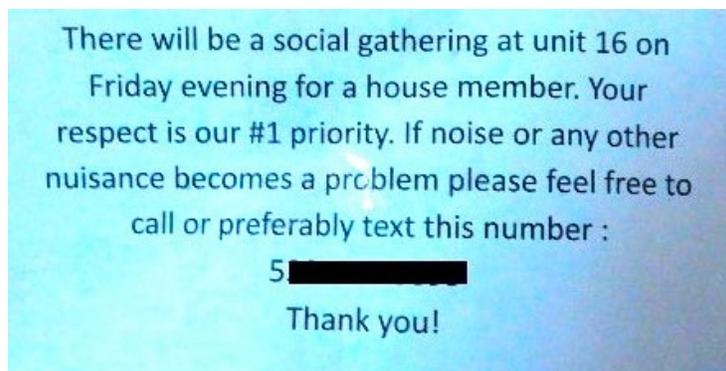
There are many ways to be mindful of your own noise, but is there more one can do? There are less passive, and more observably kind ways to set a friendly tone and send a message. If you're moving into an apartment building, you might leave a note for the downstairs neighbor introducing yourself, providing



your phone number, and suggesting the neighbor let you know if you are ever disturbing them. Some building managers send out advance notice when a resident will be having construction done, providing dates and times. Some noise between neighbors is unavoidable, but knowing your neighbors care and act considerately can make the occasional dropped item or family gathering seem like no big deal.

Another way to prevent noise conflict is to post a note in a common area to announce a future party or gathering. A resident of Lake Tahoe shared a note he'd found posted in his residential complex that read: "If noise or any other nuisance becomes a problem, please feel free to call." He reported that there had been some noise, but that it bothered him less because he'd expected it and knew that he could call or text if he wanted to.

Social media offers collections of humorous notes people leave for neighbors who live in close quarters, some related to noise. In the mailroom of a New York City apartment building, one resident left a jar of earplugs, a jar of chocolates, and a note explaining that she is learning to play the bugle for an audition. She promised, "It will end before March." (cont. next page)



(ON BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOR cont.)

There are some notes one has to resist writing – much less posting – although they must be greatly satisfying to write. They are mean notes, and they are so much fun to read. But if your goal is to be a good neighbor and generate goodwill – especially as relates to noise – there is nothing to be gained by posting angry or sarcastic notes.

Above all else, if you are in a situation where you're being exposed to inappropriate or purposefully harassing noise, devise a plan, find out who can and could be helping you, take the high road at every failure, and continue trying. Whatever you do, no matter how frustrated and stressed you become, never, ever, ever retaliate – the momentary satisfaction passes quickly, and your retaliatory action fuels a cycle that you don't want to be part of.

40 YEARS OF PROTECTING SOUNDSCAPES

by Karl Raab, VP RTQ

In 1982, influenced by the work of the late R. Murray Schafer at *Simon Fraser University* (Fall 2021 *NOISE*Letter), John Beltz and four other British Columbians, including composer Hildegard Westerkamp, (still a member), founded the *Society for Soundscape Awareness and Protection (SSAP)*. The efforts of this group had already led to the enactment of the *Burnaby Noise or Sound Abatement Bylaw* of 1979. When the *Federal Environmental Review Panel* began hearings in 1988 on expansion of Vancouver's International Airport, (YVR), Hans Schmid, an Austrian immigrant, became actively involved. SSAP subsequently obtained funds to research low frequencies and infrasound generated by large aircraft.

In 1996 Vancouver's Mayor Philip Owen joined New York City's Mayor in declaring *International Noise Awareness Day*. A year later, with our slogan *Right to Quiet* better known than the Society's name itself, an executive decision was made and we became the *Right to Quiet Society for Soundscape Awareness and Protection*.

In 1998, new *Right to Quiet* President Peter Donnelly of Victoria BC thanked Hans for his production of a video, *Noise: A Serious Global Problem*, for "getting young people to think about noise in our environment" (gratis, still available). Then came the handbook, *What You Can Do About Noise in British Columbia*. We distributed copies to all 236 branches of the BC Public Libraries. Since then we have continued to donate books to BC libraries, including 40 books this year to libraries in Vancouver, the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island.

GOOD NEIGHBOR RESOURCES

Dispute over noise takes a murderous turn
<https://quietcommunities.org/dispute-over-noise-take-murderous-turn>

NYC couple accused of fatally stabbing roommate in noise dispute
<https://nypost.com/2022/03/05/bronx-couple-accused-of-stabbing-roommate-in-noise-dispute>

Woman fatally shot after asking man to stop setting off fireworks
<https://nypost.com/2020/07/18/woman-fatally-shot-after-asking-man-to-stop-setting-off-fireworks>

Solving Noise Problems
<https://www.grownyc.org/noise/solving>

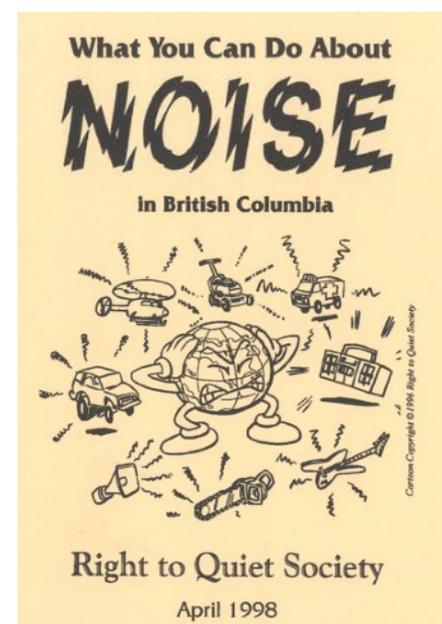
Instagram account tracks hilarious notes left by NYC neighbors
<https://nypost.com/2022/03/12/hilarious-notes-left-by-nyc-neighbors>

More Hilarious Notes From Annoyed Neighbors
<https://www.domesticatedcompanion.com/check-out-these-hilarious-notes-from-annoyed-neighbors-part2>

When the *City of Vancouver* launched the Urban Noise Task Force, *Right to Quiet* representative Roy Silverson, Barry Truax, of the *SFU World Soundscape Project*, and eight other community leaders delivered *CITYNOISE*, a 1997 report which emphasized public education solutions and uses *Right to Quiet's* original globe man as its headline. Of the 165 recommendations, 50 were approved immediately, more later and 35 referred for action by other jurisdictions. But notably, the increasingly widespread noise generated by mechanical equipment, from heavy machinery to small home appliances, remains hardly addressed since the 1982 SSAP Constitution first called for its control. North America still has much work ahead to catch up with Europe, where strict regulation of such noise has been in place for decades.

For the past four decades *Right to Quiet* has consistently promoted discussion of public policies affecting urban soundscapes and the natural environment. This involves diverse issues such as leaf

(cont. next page)



(40 YEARS OF PROTECTING SOUNDSCAPES cont.)

blowers, audible motor vehicle remote locking technology, consumer fireworks, amplified music in public spaces, party boats in Vancouver harbour, noisy motor boats, freighter anchorages around the Gulf Islands, and most recently, heat pumps.

As the third president of *Right to Quiet* for many years of its existence, Hans Schmid, produced the *NOISE*Letter, answered inquiries, and even managed financial affairs until his retirement in 2018. The current administration consists of a diverse board of directors from across North America, who work together with our fourth president, John Martyn, to assure that *Right to Quiet* defends our collective awareness and promotes the protection of soundscapes for at least another 40 years.

Considering a HEAT PUMP?

As covered in a recent *Right To Quiet* blog post, the *City of Vancouver* Green Buildings Team is proposing a *Climate Emergency: Home Heating and Cooling Program*. Staff are developing regulations for detached homes to encourage more energy-efficient heating/

Heat pump exhibit

Locations and dates

- Hillcrest Community Centre
- Feb 16 to April 6
- Kitsilano Community Centre
- April 6 to May 1
- City Hall - May 1 to July 11
- Killarney Community Centre
- July 11 to August 15



cooling equipment. While we applaud the *COV* initiatives, residents have expressed concerns about noise from heat pumps. In keeping with the idea of being a good neighbour, and for your own sake, we recommend doing your research on the quietest heat pumps available. *QUIET MARK* recommends several models, including the Daikin, the quiet model that the City has on display over the next few months.

HEAT PUMP RESOURCES

<https://quiet.org/call-to-action-city-of-vancouver-survey-heat-pump-noise>

<https://www.quietmark.com/products/awarded-products/centralheating/heatpumps>

RTQ 40 YEARS RESOURCES

<https://council.vancouver.ca/970513/citynoisereport/index.htm>

<https://jcaa.caa-aca.ca/index.php/jcaa/article/view/1078/807>



Hans Schmid receives a Hidden Hero award from Vancouver Quadra MP Joyce Murray.

CALL TO ACTION

RTQ supports the *Decibel Coalition* safequiet.ca

Please act by May 13 to deal with excessively noisy motor boats. Choose Option 5 at <https://letstalktransportation.ca/svne>

QUIET READS

Sounds Wild and Broken by David Haskell
Zoom Event April 28

