Announcements: Some members of our group will be reading at the Cazenovia Counterpoint Arts Festival on Saturday, July 13 at 3:00 p.m. Pete can supply more details about the venue location.

**Dialogue Exercise**

Writing dialogue is a hard thing to do in creative nonfiction. Writers often wonder: How much dialogue should I include? What pieces of dialogue are most essential? If I can’t quite remember exactly what was said, is it OK to recreate it? In the book *Tell It Slant*, Brenda Miller and Suzanne Paola explain that dialogue is important in that it helps move the action of the scene forward and creates memorable character impressions for the reader. They caution writers against "information dumping," or using dialogue as a vehicle for supplying too much information to the reader. Instead, dialogue should supply the reader with a sense of a character’s real voice. When writing dialogue, writers need to try to recapture the cadences of their characters’ speech, which may involve slang, speaking in fragmented sentences, or the use of colloquial expressions—moves we usually wouldn’t make in our best prose. Miller & Paola point out that most people do not speak in complex or compound sentences, but rather in simple phrases and sentences. They also advise against over-using "tag-lines," such as "he said," or "she replied." Their general rule of thumb is that "in a dialogue between two people taglines are often dispensable after the first two," and they also say that when using taglines, you should keep your vocabulary very simple; stick to verbs like "said" and "asked."

Using these guidelines, construct a mini-dialogue of your own, drawing on language you actually remember with some precision. Supply as much context as you need, and feel free to use as little or as much quoted language as you think works in the scene. An encounter between two people could involve very little quoted language but still be considered a dialogue. Aim for 1-2 pp. of writing.