

# A Friendly Letter

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First Month, 1984

Dear Friend,

This month marks our third annual issue nominating Quakers of the Year. This time out the list of nominees is a rather lengthy one, probably several hundred in all. (Details inside.)

But first let me pause and point out two new entries in my "I Wish I'd Published That" department: 1. *Holistic Economics and Social Protest*, Pendle Hill Pamphlet #252 by Jack Powelson of Boulder, Colorado Meeting; and from Progresiv Publishr (it's not misspelled; he espouses spelling reforms to make English easier to read and understand), *Non-Christian Quakers, Their Faith And Message*. Ken Ives, of 57th St. Meeting in Chicago, is the editor.

Jack Powelson, an economist with many years of experience in numerous foreign countries, challenges the strategies and tactics of many current protest movements aimed at making change in the Third World, particularly by boycotts. The many Friends who have supported such protests ought in my view to consider Powelson's arguments very carefully. There has in my judgment been far too little probing analysis of the overall effectiveness and value of these campaigns. Powelson's perspective, while hardly the last word, opens such a constructive dialogue, which I hope others will want to join. His pamphlet is available from Pendle Hill, Wallingford PA 19086 for \$1.50 plus 60¢ postage.

In *Non-Christian Quakers, Their Faith And Message*, Ken Ives brings together statements by Friends of Jewish and Hindu origins, an essay from the Quaker Universalist Group and others. All the essays provide generous helpings of food for thought, especially by Friends who consider the Society to be solely a subset of Christianity. I would commend it particularly to Evangelical Friends. One writer in the book quotes a remark to the effect that "Quakerism is too good to be reserved only for Christians." Is that true? If not, why not? This is another excellent dialogue, which has already begun among General Conference Friends, but needs to be enlarged, and Ives' book is an excellent tool for that enlargement. It is available for \$4.00 from Progresiv Publishr, 401 E. 32, #1002, Chicago IL 60616.

Yours in the Light,

*Chuck Fager*

Chuck Fager

PS. My thanks to all of you who sent in gift subscriptions during the holiday season. The special gift sub price of \$10 for a year is still available, if there is a person or Meeting you'd like to see receive it.



## QUAKER SERVICE AND QUAKERS OF THE YEAR

Once upon a time, when one thought of Quaker service, one thought of the AFSC, and two types of programs it epitomized: material aids and work camps. There were several features of the "good old days" such projects represent that many Friends now miss: First, the chance they offered for Friends of all ages and walks of life to take part; second, a special concern for involvement of young Friends, so that work camps, etc. became a kind of School of Applied Quakerism; and third, the fact that such projects again and again drew into the Quaker orbit people who otherwise might never have found what became their spiritual home.

The turmoil of the 1960s put an end to the old style of work camps and youth programs. This was too bad, but it was probably inevitable given the times. Further, since then the AFSC has become increasingly professionalized, and has deemphasized material aids work and volunteer involvement. For a number of years these changes left a large gap, even a vacuum in service opportunities, especially for young Friends, under Friends' auspices. There has been continuing pressure on AFSC to recreate a meaningful youth service and volunteer program emphasis, pressure which has yet to yield much in the way of concrete results. But even if AFSC does resume a significant role in this area, that will not fill the gap entirely.

### *Filling the Service Vacuum With a Disaster Service, and More*

In the last few years, however, this gap has begun to be filled by a number of exciting projects generated independently by Meetings and related groups. It is not yet clear whether these efforts amount to a trend, or portend a new generation of Quaker service efforts. But I, for one, hope that's what they add up to. And it is in pursuit of that hope, as well as in recognition of the faith and initiative they represent, that we are devoting this issue to them.

Perhaps the senior of these projects is the Friends Disaster Service, organized ten years ago in Ohio by Dean Johnson of the Evangelical Friends Church--Eastern Region. FDS gathers volunteers and equipment to do relief work in the wake of floods and other natural calamities. Starting as the idea and concern of one person, FDS has become a major institutional program in Eastern region, and has spawned at least one spinoff unit in Mid-America YM. FDS deserves to be better-known, and imitated, among unprogrammed Friends, who have gotten almost completely away from such service work. (For information, write to: Dean Johnson, FDS, 241 Keenan Rd., Peninsula OH 44264.)

Another impressive effort is the Quaker Volunteer Witness, being developed by Friends United Meeting. QVW organizes service "units" or houses of 5-8 people who live simply and cooperatively, for a year at a time, working with the elderly, handicapped, youth or on peace concerns. There are two QVW units now operating, in Ohio and Indiana, and FUM staff say they have three more ready to go, in Iowa, North Carolina and Indiana, when volunteers can be found. While most volunteers have been college age or a little older, there have also been volunteers in their 50s and 60s. This program, too, deserves to be better known among Friends at large. (For information, write: Frank Massey, FUM 101 Quaker Hill Dr., Richmond IN 47374.)

### *Shelter for the Homeless, and a New World*

Some projects have been more limited in time and scope, but are worth mentioning just the same: A shelter for homeless persons operated by New York Monthly Meeting in its Manhattan meetinghouse during the bitter winter of 1983, an effort spearheaded by meeting clerk John L.P. Maynard. Or the work of Sue Devokaitis in New England, where she was led to serve that YM as a peace secretary for a year, starting with no assurance of funds and proceeding as way opened, which it did. There are undoubtedly other such projects of which we have yet to hear.

Two such new programs, however, seem to me to warrant closer inspection, as particularly impressive examples of such grassroots Quaker service, 1980s style.



The first is Friends for a Nonviolent World in Minneapolis, Minnesota. FNVW was created in 1981 when the AFSC's Des Moines Region decided to close its Minnesota area office. Many Minneapolis Friends from three very active area Meetings--Twin Cities, Minneapolis and Prospect Hill--were very unhappy with the idea of losing the facility and its staff, not to mention the wide range of programs it was involved in. And after some weighing of the matter, they decided to keep it going. FNVW was the result: an independent, nonprofit corporation, which raised \$30,000 in its first year and took over the staff and the office from AFSC in Tenth Month, 1981.

FNVW volunteers say "Peace Center" when answering the phone, and that's what its office has been for Minneapolis and increasingly the rest of Minnesota as well. The state nuclear freeze campaign was born there, and grew til it needed its own space. Such issues as Central America, the Middle East and South Africa are also on FNVW's crowded agenda, as is nonviolence training and a summer family peace camp. In addition, both Twin Cities and Minneapolis Meetings have sponsored summer youth internships there.

What is impressive about FNVW is not only the range of its activity, but also the fact that it has been created and sustained by a vigorous cadre of predominantly Friendly volunteers--volunteer fundraisers, bookkeepers and secretaries, as well as issues activists. It still coordinates efforts with AFSC, FCNL and other larger groups, but the effort, the skills and the finances are all home-grown. (For more information, write: Jeanette Raymond, FNVW, 1925 Nicollet Ave., Suite 101, Minneapolis MN 55403.)

### *Finding New Service Options For Youth*

The other program I want to feature here is the Youth Service Opportunity Program in New York City. YSOP is barely a year old. Yet in that time it has conducted a major conference on community service through schools, organized summer programs involving Quaker and other teenagers in work on refugee and hunger issues, and continued similar efforts into the current school year. Furthermore, it has done all this in a self-consciously religious style, programming in periods of silence, retreats and other reflective activities as parts of all its work, adding an unmistakable, if soft-spoken evangelical emphasis which is rather remarkable, and rare, among such projects among unprogrammed Friends today.

YSOP's 1984 budget is \$50,000. While it is technically an independent organization, it is intimately involved with area Quaker agencies: it is housed in the New York Quarterly Meeting office, has borrowed staff from the New York AFSC and the Friends Seminary in Manhattan, and has operated much of its programs at Brooklyn Meeting and at Powell House, New York Yearly Meeting's conference center near Albany.

One of YSOP's coordinators explained that the project grew out of a combination of factors: not least was a burgeoning interest on the part of Quaker parents, former 1960s activists of the generation that undermined the old style of youth work, for Friends-oriented service opportunities for their now-teenaged offspring. There has also been increasing interest in service work in private and some public schools; and there were a number of AFSC programs in the New York area in which youth involvement was becoming more possible and useful.

### *Still Evolving, But Already With a Remarkable Record*

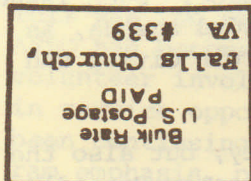
Last summer's programs were on a 3-day a week schedule: one group of teenagers ran a day camp for Haitian refugee children, while the other worked in various soup kitchens, both two days per week. The third day each week was set aside for reflective activity, which in a variety of ways sought to focus attention on the spiritual roots of service. About 30 youths took part in the summer programs, and their response was enthusiastic. Plans for next summer are already in the works. (For More information write: YSOP, 15 Rutherford Place, New York NY 10003.)

This is but a quick sampling of new developments in Quaker service. I've mentioned few names here, because there are too many Friends involved in these efforts either to list exhaustively or to select among fairly. But all of those making these programs happen are making Quaker service again a live option for any concerned Friend; and all of you who are doing it are, in our humble opinion, entitled to be called Quakers of the Year!



INSIDE: OUR THIRD NOMINATIONS FOR  
QUAKERS OF THE YEAR

From: Chuck Fager, A Friendly Letter  
P.O. Box 1361  
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THIS MONTH IN QUAKER HISTORY

Two historic Quaker undertakings began in this month. In 1972, a Philadelphia Quaker banker named Barton Lewis read the draft proposals for a United Nations Law of the Sea Treaty being submitted by that much-reviled Quaker president, Richard Nixon. Barton saw that Nixon's proposals were promising; so he called another Quaker industrialist, William Fischer, to talk about how to promote and improve the treaty's prospects. From their talk came a call to the Friends Committee on National Legislation, and then in turn to the clerk of FCNL's Executive Committee, Sam Levering, a Quaker apple grower in southern Virginia. Could FCNL undertake a public education project in support of the law of the sea treaty? Sam Levering could; all his apple buds has just been frozen by a sudden cold snap. The upshot was that Sam and Miriam Levering spent a decade working brilliantly in support of a workable, peace-promoting treaty through the Ocean Education Project. We wrote about the Leverings' work in our first Quaker of the Year issue(#10). Now, in First Month, 1984, their Ocean Education Project is being laid down; the treaty is complete, and their direct work is largely done.

Also in this month, but back in 1892, an Evangelical Quaker missionary in Alaska attempted singlehandedly to stop a boat full of liquor smugglers from delivering their cargo to a group of Alaska Indians. For his trouble, Charles Edwards was shot and killed by the smugglers. Edwards' death sparked other Friends to step forward to take his place, however, and from that event is dated the beginning of the extensive Quaker missions in Alaska.

QUAKER CHUCKLES

Friend Leonard Kenworthy, formerly of Brooklyn Meeting, recently moved into the Quaker retirement center Kendal at Longwood, not far from Philadelphia. And from him we recently received an assortment of Kendal Quips, among them:

"Our buffets are referred to as 'The Week in Review.'"

"People say here that if you haven't heard a rumor by 10 AM, it's your duty to start one."

"It is reported that we have 61 married women; the rest are loose women."

"One elderly woman, after hearing a fire truck screaming past on the nearby highway, said she just loved to hear the geese honking on their way south or north."

"And some here divide the residents into the Cains(or Canes) and the Abels(Ables)."

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