

Community Companion

Community Friends Meeting

Volume 15, Issue 3

(513) 861-4353

March 2009

Presiding Clerk:

Ken Bordwell

Assistant Clerk:

Doug Burks

Recording Clerk:

Betty Waite

Ministry & Counsel:

Eileen Bagus

Ken Bordwell (ex officio)

Byron Branson

Lisa Cayard

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Treasurer:

Mary Anne Curtiss

Newsletter Editor:

Deborah Jordan

(djordan@fuse.net)

*Submissions due March 31st
for April newsletter*

Calendar

All events and meetings take place at the Meeting House unless otherwise noted.

- March 1st** Intergenerational games and Carry In Meal following Worship
- March 3rd** 7:30pm, Adult Discussion: **“The Heart of Christianity”** by Marcus Borg. 1st in a series . Contact Tim Leonard for more information.
- March 6th** Friday, 6:30pm, **Spaghetti Dinner** at Quaker House to Fundraise for Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting Teen Alaska Spirit Camp (see announcement p. 5)
- March 7th** Saturday, 10am to 2pm, **Cheesemaking** RSVP to Sue Brungs or Judy Trombly-Ganance.
- March 8th** **Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business**
- March 14th** **90th Birthday Party for Agnes Moon** (See announcement p. 6)
- March 14th** Saturday, 7pm , **Simple, Sample Craft Night** sponsored by Community Committee
- March 15th** Second Hour: **“The Gift of Local, Sustainable Food: Feeding the Body and Spirit”** – Bill Cahalan and Deborah Jordan
- March 17th** 7:30pm, Adult Discussion: 2nd in a series “The Heart of Christianity” by Marcus Borg. Contact Tim Leonard for more information.
- March 21st and 22nd** **Young Adult Friends (YAF) retreat**
- March 21st** 7pm **Coffee House Social** hosted by YAFs
- March 22nd** Second Hour: **“College Students in SW Ohio and Their Views of Peace”** - Doug Burks
- March 29th** Second Hour: **“Part 2: More History on Friends in Cincinnati”** - Byron Branson
- March 31st** 7:30pm, Adult Discussion: **“The Heart of Christianity”** 3rd in a series.

Hold in the Light

“ But all Friends, mind that which is eternal, which gathers your hearts together up to the Lord, and lets you see that ye are written in one another’s hearts.” George Fox

Peace Focus: The Human Rights Campaign (www.hrc.org)

Human Rights Campaign Mission Statement

HRC envisions an America where all LGBT people are ensured equality and are embraced as full members of the American family at home, at work and in every community.

Did you know that the Human Rights Campaign was started in 1980 to promote fairness for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people and in 2003 established a permanent headquarters at 1640 Rhode Island Ave., Washington DC in the former B'nai B'rith headquarters? I knew a little about HRC but after "stumbling" on HRC's impressive nine story headquarters while sightseeing in DC, I realized there was much more to learn! What follows is some of what I have learned since joining shortly after my DC visit.

HRC is comprised of three separate entities:

- HRC itself is home to core legislative, grassroots, communications, membership and media programs. HRC lobbies the federal government on issues like marriage, workplace discrimination, hate crimes, immigration reform, family rights, AIDS funding, and lesbian-related health care concerns.
- HRC-PAC is a bipartisan political action committee that makes financial and in-kind contributions to fair-minded candidates. HRC-PAC organizes and mobilizes voters, raises money, sends staff to campaigns, and educates candidates and voters about LGBT issues.
- HRC Foundation works to increase public awareness about discrimination faced by LGBT Americans. It also conducts opinion research, develops educational materials, and sponsors training and outreach programs.

HRC is working for, among other things:

- federal action against anti-gay hate crimes
- protection from anti-LGBT workplace discrimination in all 50 states
- relationship recognition for same-sex couples and their families
- full and equal access to all benefits of federal Social Security and other benefits
- corporate employment practices that treat LGBT workers with full equality
- a new conversation about LGBT lives in America's faith communities
- an end to the military ban on gay and lesbian service
-

Two tools which HRC publishes which can help all of us make informed choices are:

- THE CONGRESSIONAL SCORECARD outlines Bills proposed in both the House and the Senate and lists the voting records of each member of Congress on issues relevant to HRC.
- BUYING FOR EQUALITY a guide to companies, products and services that support LGBT equality.

Both publications are available from HRC or can be downloaded from their website.

Another publication, THE CORPORATE EQUALITY INDEX rates major US businesses on their employment and workplace practices regarding LGBT workers. It is very encouraging that the 2009 Index gives a 100% rating to 260 major US businesses, up 1/3 from last year's 195 businesses that scored 100%!

In closing I would ask that each of you consider membership in HRC. When I joined I received a letter from Joe Solmonese, HRC President in which he wrote:

"Right-wing groups like the Family Research Council and the Traditional Values Coalition work vigorously to ensure that their narrow views hold sway in America. They're out in record numbers to leaflet, work phone banks, turn out voters, and pressure candidates and lawmakers. This relatively small group multiplies its impact through a commitment to take personal action."

While the election of Barack Obama on November 4th was certainly a victory for equality in our country, on the same day Proposition 8 was passed in California and Arkansas, Florida and Arizona also passed legislation that denies the same freedoms to the LGBT community as are afforded to heterosexual Americans.

There is still much need for personal action to ensure equality and inclusion for all Americans.

Alice Eberhard

"The fact I want to stress here is that one's inner life, one's spirit, is as specific, as palpable and material, as the shape of one's hair." *MC Richards*

How do Friends Center into Worship?

Some of us notice our sitting and relax into a comfortable position and empty our minds and bodies of distractions to be open to God's promptings. (Breathing, relaxation of tense spots, using a short prayer, scripture, a line of poetry to become open and present to NOW are a few ways Friends do this.)

Readings of some Friends and others can be helpful (George Fox, Sandra Cronk, Isaac and Mary Pennington, Thomas Kelly, Douglas and Dorothy Steere, Anthony Bloom, Brother Lawrence are a few who come to mind.) Learning to accept distractions and noting our responses to distractions but not focusing on these things takes practice and no one says it's quick to learn. Brother Lawrence: The Practice of the Presence of God has been especially helpful to many for several centuries.

Learning to accept distractions – the comings and goings of people into and out of the meeting room, sounds, fussy babies, restless youngsters, street and neighborhood noises such as crows, sirens, dogs – all are a part of our world, even in worship. Learning not to focus on them, but gently reminding ourselves that here in worship we can trust God – and open ourselves to that holy presence which surrounds us always and in all places, we may be gathered together and given a gift of new awareness.

All of us can also do things to minimize distractions: unfasten and/or remove outer garments before entering the meeting room, unwrap cough drops outside, wait to enter the meeting room until children and teachers leave about 10:15am and do so quietly. Together we can all enrich our worship as we mindfully come together.

Evie Hoffmann, Ministry and Counsel

Before Meeting Groups

Many suggestions for nourishing Meeting often arise as a result of the sharing we do at our annual Renewals. Two requests some people made were for more opportunities to form Spiritual Friendships and for some type of programming before Meeting for Worship. One of our newer attenders had an original way of combining both ideas. In some of the small group discussions during the Renewal, he met two people, one new member and one long-time member, with whom he wanted to share regarding spiritual journeys. I was a part of this “Spiritual Trio”. We initially agreed to meet before Meeting for three Sundays, then later agreed to another three sessions. We will probably continue for a while in a similar format.

Other Friends may be inspired to create their own innovations on some version of this format with two, three, or some small number of Friends gathering before worship, perhaps

at Quaker House, perhaps over breakfast—whatever works for you. You can try it for an agreed number of sessions at whatever your preferred time interval is. If you like the way you grow together, maybe the mini-group may become open-ended. About ten years ago I met a Spiritual Friend at a Friends General Conference Gathering morning class. When the Gathering ended, we agreed to alternate telephoning each other every two to three weeks. We have never lived in the same state. For five years she lived in France, but no barriers have managed to prevent our conversations. We have become important parts of each other’s lives. I hope some of you may find your own path to the joy of Spiritual Friendships.

Eileen Bagus, from Ministry and Counsel discussion

Second Hour with Karen Campbell

Karen Campbell, who is a Quaker and librarian at the Waynesville Public Library in Waynesville, Ohio spoke at the Second Hour on Feb. 22. Her focus was on Abraham Lincoln, his relationships with Quakers, and Quakers in southwestern Ohio during the Civil War. There were southwestern Ohio Quakers who resisted fighting in the war, and some who took up arms. Several meetings disowned members who fought, but often these persons were reinstated in their meetings after the war. Lincoln, she said, understood this conflict among Friends as they were addressed to him by Eliza Gurney,

the widow of the evangelical Friend, Joseph John Gurney. Lincoln was moved by the silent worship Ms. Gurney and her friends conducted with him at the White House, yet he was convinced the coming of war was, in fact out of his hands. Lincoln had come to believe the war was God's will, and punishment for the institution of slavery in the south and the condoning of it in the north.

Karen also announced several events at the Waynesville library this spring honoring the 200 years since Lincoln's birth.

Tim Leonard

Food Focus

Making global development a key tool of foreign policy is a goal expressed by the current U.S. administration. Our meeting has an opportunity to support this emphasis with special attention to food, the focus chosen by our Peace and Social Concerns Committee (P&SC) for 2009.

One of the considerations that must be brought to the table is how U.S. foreign assistance policy can help us achieve the U.N.'s Millennium Development Goals to alleviate world hunger and poverty. "Bread for The World," an activist Christian non-profit anti-hunger lobbying organization, has chosen as its theme for 2009 working toward modernizing U.S. foreign assistance policy.

The current U.S. system of foreign aid was developed by President Kennedy in 1961 and is woefully out of date. It isn't set up to guide global development as effectively as it must, given our economic and foreign policy challenges. Many agencies run many programs with no overall strategy. Furthermore, too much foreign assistance takes the form of military aid. Greater efficiency will foster increased justice for the world's hungry people—and thus peace. If global development is to take its rightful place as a primary tool in the U.S. foreign policy tool kit, the system must be completely redesigned. Development experts must be given a seat at the table when key foreign policy decisions are made.

During 2009, Bread for The World will be reaching out to congregations (and meetings such as ours) and coordinating our power to reshape our government's aid strategies. This author and the Clerk of P&SC have been in touch with "Bread" and will bring progress and developments on this issue to the attention of the meeting.

Ken Bordwell

(Editor's note: Friends in Unity with Nature has also had a focus on food, as well as the Meeting supporting the publication of the Central Ohio River Valley Local Food Guide in 2008.)

SPAGHETTI DINNER

AT QUAKER HOUSE

Friday, March 6, 2009,
6:30 pm

Why: Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting
Teen fundraiser
to attend Spirit Camp, Alaska this
summer

Suggested donation \$7.50/adult,
\$5/child 10 and under

Who: All are welcome! Please come
and bring your neighbors!

How: RSVP appreciated by March 1,
2009
Contact Dylan Cahalan
dcool11@gmail.com or call 513-251-
2558

Where: Community Friends Meeting
3960 Winding Way
Cincinnati, Ohio 45229



Announcements:

Open House for Agnes L. Moon's 90th Birthday: Saturday, March 14th from 1 to 4pm at Community Friends Meeting.

RSVP to Susan Hyde email: susanhyde@aol.com H: 937-767-7756 Cell:937-776-3291

Memory Book: Send ahead or bring with you a contribution for Agnes's Memory book. Whatever you send, bring or write when you arrive, please sign your first and last name and how you know Agnes. If appropriate, include in your contribution who, what, where and when. The contribution could be a memory, a story, an anecdote, a picture, or a birthday wish. Thank you, in advance, for helping to make this a special day.

Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting **Nominating Committee** is seeking guidance regarding a new assistant clerk, who will eventually step up to be our yearly meeting presiding clerk, and a new assistant treasurer. Contact Byron Branson, a member of OVYM Nominating Committee.

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3960 Winding Way
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Address Correction Requested