

# Community Companion

Quaker House: 3960 Winding Way, Cincinnati, OH 45229-1950  
(513) 861-4353 [www.communityfriendsmeeting.com](http://www.communityfriendsmeeting.com)

Volume 17, Issue 3

March, 2011

**Presiding Clerk:**

Doug Burks

**Assistant Clerk:**

Frank Huss

**Recording****Clerk:**

Betty Waite

**Treasurer:**

Mary Anne

Curtiss

**Ministry and****Counsel:**

Eileen Bagus

Byron Branson

Doug Burks (ex

officio)

Lisa Cayard

Evie Hoffmann

Frank Huss

Tim Leonard

Paulette Meier

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Submissions for March newsletter due  
by: Monday, March 28, 2011



## Calendar

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

**Singing 9:45 am, Meeting for Worship 10 am**

**Second Hour or Carry in Potluck @ 11:40 am**

- March 6 carry in  
March 13 Second Hour: Meeting for Business  
March 18 7:00 pm at Cincinnati Friends Meeting: The Friends Church Peace Team  
March 20 Second Hour: Betty Waite: my work with hospice and my inspirational blog  
March 27 Second Hour: Bill Cahallan: Natural Burials and Frank Huss: Quaker section at Spring Grove Cemetery

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### Third Query from OVYM Book of Discipline: Social Relations; Universal Love

Are love and unity fostered among you? Do you manifest a forgiving spirit and a care for the reputation of others? If differences threaten harmony among your members, is prompt action taken in a spirit of meekness and love? Do you visit one another frequently? Do you keep in touch with inactive and distant members?

### So-how many Quakers.....

How many Quakers does it take to change a light bulb?

It only takes one before the bulb actually burns out. After that, it can't be done because there's no way to hold the topic in the light.

How many Quakers does it take to change a light bulb?

Just one. After the Committee to Discern the Need to Change the Light Bulb has failed to unite in a way forward to change the light bulb, a lone exasperated Friend will just go and change the d@#n thing.

**Summary: Minutes from Community Friends Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, Second Month 13, 2011**

The meeting opened with centering worship.

1. **Clerk's Report:** Doug reported that committee clerks are in the process of contacting potential Nominating Committee members, and that recommendations for a new Nominating Committee will be brought before the Meeting next month.
2. **Recommendation from Nominating Committee:** Mary Anne Curtiss brought forward the recommendation of Frank Huss to serve as Assistant Presiding Clerk for the remainder of the year, and as Presiding Clerk for the following two years. After some discussion about our practices regarding naming someone for a second term as Clerk, the meeting gratefully APPROVED the nomination of Frank as Assistant Clerk, moving into the Clerk position in June 2011.
3. **Clarification of Practices:** Based on the preceding discussion, Doug Burks will bring a recommendation to our next monthly meeting clarifying our Meeting's practices for naming a Clerk for a second term, with a suggested space of years between terms. It was noted that the Pendle Hill workshop on clerking is made available to anyone considering the clerking responsibility or to others in the meeting who would like to better understand business meeting practices.
4. **Report on Quaker Heights Retirement Community:** Eugenia Mills presented the report, highlighting the Quaker values that are the foundation of this organization, which is the largest mission of Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting. Many members of Community Friends Meeting have served on the Board of Quaker Heights over the years. The current financial status of the organization is endangered. There is a need to consider offering new options, such as more private rooms to accommodate the expectations of the retiring "baby boomer" generation, and renovating the dining room to be more comfortable and less institutional. These renovations will require additional capital. Quaker Heights has hired a Quaker chaplain, who provides valued spiritual support to staff as well as to patients. Donations are being sought to sustain this position. Eugenia emphasized how important it is for each meeting in OVYM to contribute financially to support Quaker Heights, as well as encouraging support from individuals. This important mission will cease to be Quaker-directed without more support from the Yearly Meeting.
5. **Report from Stewardship Committee:** Mary Anne Curtiss reported that the Capital Campaign is officially over. There are still some windows needing replacement, including the bedroom windows in the caretakers' apartment. The Meeting is still accepting donations for this purpose, and there will continue to be a line item in the budget for these directed donations. Friends may also give directed donations for "greening" the Meetinghouse. These projects have already been approved by the Meeting. We were also encouraged to make in-kind donations of needed items. Currently our policy states that any donated items worth more than \$250 must be approved by the Meeting. It was suggested that this limit should be raised, and that smaller donated items should be brought to the appropriate committee to make sure they are needed. It was therefore APPROVED that only in-kind donations worth over \$500 would need to be approved by the monthly meeting.
6. **House and Grounds Committee Report:** Doug Burks and Eric Wolff reported that the committee is looking at the issue of handicap parking space being set aside in front of the building. There was some discussion about how many spaces are needed. It was noted that there is also a need for parking near the elevator entrance. House and Grounds was asked to address this need. House and Grounds would like to replace the toilet in the first floor rest room, which cannot be repaired. A report on decreasing energy usage at the Meetinghouse was reviewed. Due to our energy-saving projects, gas and electric usage has decreased 52% from 2008 to 2010, saving approximately \$4,000 a year.
7. **Peace and Social Concerns Committee Report:** Kate Anthony reported that Peace and Social Concerns hosted the Peace Church Brunch on First Month 29. The video "No Impact Man" was shown, with small group discussions afterwards. They are working on having someone from FCNL come to Cincinnati to do a workshop on lobbying, if 20 participants are interested in attending. The committee will be sharing information about the Culture of Peace group in the Newsletter. This group is bringing in speakers and working on getting Xavier students involved in peace issues.
8. **Friends in Unity with Nature Committee Report:** Kate Anthony reported that the showing of "No Impact Man" was well received. They are working on follow up to encourage reducing our impact on the environment. A work day in the woods is planned. The committee is planning a Second Hour on using native plantings in our yards and gardens. The committee's local foods initiative noted the closing of local grocery stores in Clifton, and highlighted the importance of supporting small local grocers. There will be a plant sale in May. Friends were encouraged to use the pop can crusher and the composting toilet in the Meetinghouse.
9. **Appreciation** was expressed for our refreshments.

The meeting closed with silent worship.

Minutes recorded by Lisa Cayard.

### The Culture of Peace by Tim Leonard

Jerry Pottebaum has been in publishing all his life with a primary interest in the spiritual and religious development of children. Lately he has turned his attention to issues of peace and peace education. A year ago he authorized a grant of \$25,000 through The Human Foundations Institute to bring Greg Mortenson, author of *Three Cups of Tea* to Cincinnati to speak on the campus of Xavier University. The effort raised \$200,000.00 and brought out 4500 people to the Xavier campus to hear a story of peace building through establishing schools for girls in Afghanistan.

Jerry is an old friend of mine, and I participated in that effort. After it was over, he asked “What next?” He and I and a few others have been forming plans to extend the energy of our earlier project in the interest of making, building, and celebrating a culture of peace in the city of Cincinnati. One of our basic inspirational documents is the Quaker sociologist Elise Boulding’s *Cultures of Peace*.

Currently, we are studying and making contacts with as many of the peace-oriented organizations in greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky as we can in an attempt to bring them together and find what they are doing and how they are connected or not-yet connected to each other. Out of this effort we hope to generate convocations, seminars, and public events that will build a more fertile field upon which to sew the message of peace. This we hope may enable us to bring other internationally known speakers to Cincinnati for celebrations of peace here in our own community.

Wouldn’t it be great to have a community like that to celebrate the World Choir Games when they come to Cincinnati in 2012?

So far, the Peace and Social Concerns Committee is supporting this effort. If anybody who reads this has contacts that would help us in this work, please call me at 513-871-0219 or email at [timaryleonard@fuse.net](mailto:timaryleonard@fuse.net).

### Book Review by Karen Arnett

Recently I’ve been reading the Reminiscences of Levi Coffin, The Reputed President of the Underground Railroad, chosen by the Cincinnati Friends Q101 class for ongoing study and discussion. I embarked on this lengthy tome (unabridged version is 732 pages) hoping to find descriptions of Underground Railroad activity in my own neighborhood of Mt. Healthy, which is reputed to have been active in moving escaped slaves northward. I expected, and did find, a vivid picture of Cincinnati as a way station on the Underground Railroad, and gained a clearer sense of life during the time of slavery. What I did not expect was a 19<sup>th</sup> century memoir that spoke directly to my spiritual seeking. This book was for me a stirring testament of deep faith, a portrait of a life lived in the integrity that flowed from that faith.

Coffin immediately begins his preface by saying that, while he kept a diary all of his life, he had no intention of publishing his life story, stating with typical Quakerly modesty that “what I had done was simply a Christian duty...” He admits that friends prevailed upon him to share these stories as an obligation to future generations; he, as primary source, must protect his contribution to history from being lost. It would be easy to be cynical and suspect Coffin of false modesty and an underlying motive of inflating his image for posterity. I’m often quick to be skeptical, and yet as I read Reminiscences I found that I could not suspect Coffin of self-serving motives. His simple, direct style, his ability to fill more than 700 pages with story after story of his aid to escaped slaves, and the consistency of his message convey an integrity that you just can’t fake or embellish into existence.

Reminiscences of Levi Coffin, The Reputed President of the Underground Railroad, Continued

This is no ordinary memoir: we get little mention of Coffin's family life or his personal interests. There are few “incidentals” apart from an introductory chapter on the genealogy of the Coffin family; in fact, Coffin mentions only once that he even had children. (He had six.) Apart from the occasional scintillations of what seems to have been a healthy sense of humor, (he enjoyed pulling the wool over the eyes of slave-chasers and then letting them in on the joke), he mentions nothing frivolous or light. Interestingly to me, he does not even talk about the life of his Meeting, which surely was the warp and weft of the social fabric of his life. This book's entire focus is the irresistibility of abolition for Coffin, and the living out of this Leading. The book opens with the sentence: “I date my conversion to Abolitionism from an incident which occurred when I was about seven years old,” and it ends with the tongue-in-cheek valediction “Amid much applause, I resigned my office [“President” of the Underground Railroad] and declared the operations of the Underground Railroad at an end.” Cover to cover, it is a witness to almost 70 years of service to the restoration of humanity to the victims of the institution of slavery and racism.

And yet the chronicle of this Leading, fleshed out in the many drama-in-real life fugitive slave stories that had me sitting on the edge of my chair in suspense, and Coffin's accounts of historically important episodes such as the split of the Indiana Yearly Meeting over the issue of abolition, his venturing into Free Labor, his efforts with the Freedmen's Society to assist the emancipated thousands during and after the Civil War, seem to be but an outer garment enfolding a deeper story. Coffin acknowledges again and again the guiding principles of his life: following “the precepts of the gospel... which teaches us to do unto others as we would that they should do unto us; and to feed the hungry, [and] clothe the naked...” As I made my way through story after gripping story, it slowly dawned on me that this book serves not merely to illuminate a chapter in American history. At core, it contains a profound teaching by example: here is a life lived, unwaveringly, on the example and teachings of Jesus. This is an old-fashioned faith, something I've felt inclined to view with cynicism for much of my life. While I was still a young child my mother, a Holocaust survivor, told me that she simply could not believe in a God after the suffering she'd seen. For most of my life I've understood the real question to be “what can God mean after Auschwitz?”, and yet I'm taken in by the simple faith of Levi Coffin, for whom compassion and the golden rule were a life practice. The unadorned guiding principle: to care for people, the stranger, the enemy and the friend alike, with the same love and consideration one would show to one's own siblings, this is a timeless principle that calls for an open, awakened heart. The light of faith radiates through these many stories; the effect is of a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. At one point Coffin relates how a grateful beneficiary of his activism commends him to a reward in heaven for his good deeds, and he replies that good works alone would not be sufficient, but that they must be accompanied by faith. Coffin keeps modestly silent about his faith – limited to a few scant references to the strengthening power of prayer - yet the radiance of this inward Light can be inferred through his rich outward life of compassionate service. To use a phrase I've learned in recent months, Coffin certainly seems to have lived according to his measure of the Light. Somehow that Light, even in the retelling and 140 years later, still shines.

**Miami Quarterly Meeting** was held at Community Friends Meeting on Second Month 20, 2011. Many Friends from the Quarter joined us for worship and a bountiful carry in meal. After the meal, the teens headed off for more adventures together and the adults settled into a program led by Richard Mitchell from Lexington. We broke into 4 small groups to discuss why we attend quarterly meetings and what we would like at future quarterly meeting. Many good ideas were generated. Creating a sense of Community, good food, and meaningful programming topped every list. Below are photos of the energetic youth getting ready to leave for an afternoon of fun, small group discussion, delicious carry in meal, Alvin Jose, and Mary Anne Curtiss.



**American Friends Service Committee at Cincinnati Friends meeting**

Community Friends members and attenders are invited to Cincinnati Friends Meeting on Sunday March 6. Karen Light, Development Associate for the AFSC Great Lakes Regional Office in Chicago and Migwe Kimemia, Director of the Dayton, Ohio AFSC Office will be talking about their important work. Immediately after our carry-in meal, they will give us an overview of AFSC and describe their Dayton Immigrant Justice Program. The program will begin at 12:30 pm and end promptly at 1:30. Sponsored by Cincinnati Friends Meeting Peace and Social Concerns Committee.

**Bible Study from a Quaker Perspective.**

A Rhetorician Rereads the Bible. Monday evenings March 7, 14, 21, 28 at 6:30-8 pm. Cincinnati Friends Meeting House, 8075 Keller Rd. Presented by Jim Crocker-Lakness.

Jim writes: "As a rhetorician who studies the Bible, I am interested in the competing purposes of Biblical writers in the formation of Judaism and Christianity. Who [really] wrote the various texts of the Bible? To whom? In what order? For what social and theological purpose in the competing purposes of Biblical writers?"

My approach is a close reading of the texts in various translations—including those quoted by George Fox and other 17<sup>th</sup> century Quakers and the only modern translation to which Friends contributed. I consider the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts and cite the most recent Biblical scholarship and interpretive understanding. I want to show how a clear understanding of the Bible can enhance one's religious faith. "

The current session in March will read the Gospel of John, often called the Quaker gospel. John is radically different than the other gospels and is unique in its stated purpose to persuade. In the Gospel John we will see a very different and sometimes conflicting picture of Jesus than is presented in the Synoptic Gospels. Contact Jim Crocker-Lakness, 891-9450, [crockejw@gmail.com](mailto:crockejw@gmail.com).

Jim is a Professor Emeritus of Communication at UC whose research specialty is religious rhetoric. He has studied the Bible as a scholar and for spiritual guidance for over 40 years. He has presented his Bible Seminars at various churches and summer camps. He has been a Quaker since 1970.

**CHILDREN AT PLAY IN THE MEETING HOUSE**



You're invited to a program at Cincinnati Friends Meeting, 8075 Keller Road

Friday, March 18th 7:00 pm  
presenting :

**Healing from and Preventing Election Violence in Kenya.  
By Getry Agizah, Coordinator  
The Friends Church Peace Team**

During the post election violence in Kenya in early 2008, the Quakers in Kenya quickly formed the Friends Church Peace Teams (FCPT) to address the many problems brought about by the violence. FCPT provided humanitarian relief, visited both the internally displaced people (IDP) and their home communities that pushed out the IDPs, and escorted the IDPs back when the Kenyan Government closed the camps. FCPT has continued to be actively involved in the very violent Turbo Division in the Rift Valley Province. It has helped to start the Turbo Division Interfaith Peace Task Force and has begun a non-violent conflict resolution project with the youth of the Division who were responsible for much of the post election violence. FCPT plans to put as many resources as it can into this Division as a model on how to change a very volatile community into one of peaceful coexistence for the next Kenyan election in 2012. Eden Grace of the Friends United Meeting—Africa Office has called this activity “the most significant work that Quakers are doing anywhere in the world.” Getry Agizah, the Coordinator of Friends Church Peace Teams, will describe FCPT’s activities in the past and plans for the future.

**Getry A. Agizah**

Getry A. Agizah is a Kenyan citizen born in the western region of the country and follows the beliefs of the Friends (Quaker) Church. She is 29 years old and mother of a daughter, aged 6 years. Since she finished schooling, she has worked with various organizations on reproductive health, youth empowerment and peace building/ human rights. For seven years she was the Project Coordinator of Friends in Peace and Community. She organized the building of the Friends Peace Center-Lubao and made sure the Peace Center and its peacebuilding programs were smoothly run. This included over 250 one day to two week workshops, many for youth, after the 2008 post election violence. Getry Agizah is now the Coordinator of the Friends Church Peace Teams, Kenya. Peace has been her call and feels most comfortable when dealing with matters that concern Peace. She says, “I have vowed to myself to help the community that lives in denial about conflict to come up and be aware of the things that affect them.”