

# A Friendly Letter

SAMPLE ISSUE

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Dear Friend,

I'd like to tell you about this newsletter and ask you to consider becoming a subscriber. *A Friendly Letter* started this way:

For more than 15 years, I've been both a convinced Friend and a working journalist. (You might have seen my byline in *Friends Journal* or *Quaker Life*, or in the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post*.) I've long been concerned to see Quakerism maintain a vigorous witness based on frank and informed dialogue about the many important issues we face today, both internally and from without.

Yet during most of those years, I kept hearing about events and issues that were important to the Society, but which were not being covered by existing Quaker publications. To me as a reporter, this recurring fact was a frustrating one; and to me as a Friend, it was unsettling: How were we Quakers going to meet our numerous challenges if the toughest issues facing us kept getting overlooked or swept under the rug?

Finally, in early 1981, I decided to cover some of these unreported issues and events myself. *A Friendly Letter* was the result: a monthly, four-page independent newsletter.

I say *A Friendly Letter* offers Quaker reporting that's different and that makes a difference. Why? Because again and again it has presented accurate, probing accounts of key issues and trends among American Friends long before any other Quaker publication did.

In several important cases, *A Friendly Letter's* reports remain the *only* coverage available to concerned readers like you. And more than once, its disclosures have helped make the difference between issues being ignored or glossed over and having them dealt with openly and constructively.

In the months to come, there are plenty more important matters waiting to be looked into. After you look over this sample issue of *A Friendly Letter*, I hope you'll want to keep up with it by becoming a subscriber.

Yours in the Light,

**Chuck Fager**

Chuck Fager,  
Editor/Publisher

PS. The inside pages of this issue describe some of the many stories that have been the subjects of our earlier issues. And if you'll become a subscriber now, I'll send you three of these exciting back issues of your choice, free. That's a \$3.00 value, at no additional cost.



## REPORTING THAT'S DIFFERENT--AND THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Here's a summary of what *A Friendly Letter* subscribers have been reading about, along with excerpts from some of the hundreds of letters I've received from them:

**\*On Quaker Ecumenism:** "Can Evangelical and Liberal Quakers Get Along? Should They?" That was the question posed in Issue #6 (My research suggests that the answers to both are yes--if we really want to.) Even earlier we had disclosed the rise of a "new Quaker Establishment," in issue #5. Since then we've looked at the meaning of leadership changes in the Evangelical Friends Church--Eastern Region (Issue #27), struggles in Iowa YM over relations with the Friends Committee on National Legislation (Issues #2 and #14), the crazy quilt of current unprogrammed Quaker theology (#28), and the outline of an emerging new Quaker mainstream (#31). There has been plenty of material in these and other issues to spark lively discussions among Friends, so it was no surprise to hear that a number of meetings, such as Milwaukee, Wisconsin and Yellow Springs, Ohio have used it in discussion groups and adult classes. Readers in two other meetings spoke of it this way:

"We share all our resources, one of the most popular being the *Friendly Letter*."  
--From Kickapoo Valley Meeting, Wisconsin

"You would have been pleased to hear the discussion about renewing *A Friendly Letter* at our last Monthly Meeting. We agreed firmly that we did not always agree with you--but we agreed even more firmly that we appreciated your willingness to talk about and present information on subjects Quakers wish would just go away."  
--Des Moines Meeting, Iowa

**\*On Friends Facing Tough Issues:** We reported extensively and exclusively on the schism among Kenyan Friends (Issues #4, #9, #16 & #32), which threatened the success of the Friends International Conference held there in 1982. *A Friendly Letter* has also reported exclusively on controversies over homosexuality and Friends, both in an Indiana Meeting where it almost cost a courageous pastor his job (#15), and in Friends United Meeting, where it jeopardized plans for FUM's 1984 Triennial (#23 & #30). We've also articulated concerns about the poor record of Quaker groups as employers (#25) and the liberal Quaker taboos about fund-raising which have cost Quaker organizations millions of dollars (#33).

"We enjoy reading 'A Friendly Letter' and feel that you are knowledgeable, discerning and compassionate in bringing the issues of our day out into the open for honest discussion and contemplation. Diversity is inherent in Quakerism, but self-righteous fragmentation has long hindered our effectiveness as God's witnesses."  
--Elenita Bales, Kalama Washington

"Keep up the good work--I (we actually) always look forward to seeing what controversy you'll be looking at this month. Congratulations for not tiptoeing around them."  
--Peggy Dyson-Cobb, Strasburg, Virginia

**\*Friends' Witness and Service:** To many people in the general public, the American Friends Service Committee still epitomizes Quakerism. And *A Friendly Letter* has taken several close looks at various aspects of this largest of Quaker agencies. We reported (in Issue #7) on the erosion of its Quaker identity; ours was the first Quaker analysis of its fine 1982 book on the Middle East (#12); and we provided the most detailed refutation of the charges of Communist infiltration being bandied about by people and publications which ought to have known better, including *Readers Digest*, the *Wall Street Journal*, various senators and even the president of the United States (#19).

But there's more to Quaker witness in the world than any one agency, and we have inquired into related topics as various as the loss of any meaningful Quaker testimony on alcohol (#13), and examined the special qualities of Quaker feminism (#24), as well as exploring several new options for Quaker peace witness (#1, #11, & #26).



"Thy objective of reaching out to Friends of all varieties in America is essential, if the Religious Society of Friends is to survive....The newsletter is excellent: firm and fiery, as too many of our publications aren't. Just keep thy criticism loving and positive, to encourage healing rather than further division."

--Jnana, Warren, Ohio

"I do enjoy 'The Friendly Letter'; it's informative, and has the additional virtue, in these days of overwhelming verbiage, of being a quick read. Please don't let anyone beguile you into making it longer!"

--Judith Inskeep, White Plains, New York

\*Friends' Achievements: To be sure, Quakerism today isn't all controversy, and *A Friendly Letter* has not been only about problems. Many of Quakerism's greatest contributions to the world have come through the quiet, dedicated work of individual Friends following their leadings steadfastly and imaginatively. More often than not, such contributions go unheralded, even among Friends. To celebrate and encourage this characteristic of our Faith, *A Friendly Letter* publishes an annual issue devoted to our nominees as Quakers of the Year--Friends such as Miriam and Sam Levering, whose decade of work on the UN Law of the Sea Treaty left a permanent Quaker stamp on what could be a major building block of a peaceful international structure(#10); or the late Herbert Nicholson, a remarkable California Quaker minister, who sparked the only real protest against the U.S. government's confinement of Japanese-Americans in domestic concentration camps(#22); and Don Green, a dynamic Evangelical Friend whose prophetic role in Quaker ecumenical work was tragically cut short by his accidental death in 1982(#22).

In between these annual issues, we have also paid tribute to the ministry of a Quaker woman to an Asian family halfway round the world(#21), the role of a Virginia Quaker printer who stood firm against the forces of racism and McCarthyism in Virginia(#27), and we even looked at the production of Friends-oriented mystery and science fiction novels by Quaker writers(#3).

"Our thanks for the Friendly Letter. It is one of the most essential and rewarding of all Quaker publications."

--Stanley and Jeanne Ellin, Brooklyn, New York

"I think you are doing the most important work among Quakers today, and I have wanted you to know it for some time."

--Sheila Settle, Palo Alto, California

\*On the other hand: To be fair, we must affirm that not every letter that we have received has been favorable. About one letter in 15 has been critical or angry, and has called the newsletter everything from "inaccurate" to "a gutter press."

(Among our most controversial issues have been: #7, on the AFSC; #25, on Quaker groups as employers; #23 and #30, on FUM's struggle over homosexuality.)

Even so, the clear sense of reader response has been that *A Friendly Letter* has been, in George Fox's term, "serviceable" to American Quakers as we worship, work and struggle together in the 1980s. Most of our original subscribers are still with us, which is another sign of confidence.

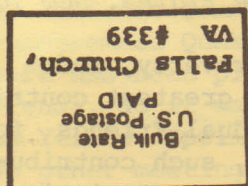
I hope this summary and sampling will encourage you to become a subscriber to *A Friendly Letter*.

Remember that when you return the coupon on the next page, you can pick out any three of the issues mentioned on these pages, and I will send them to you free.

Thank you for your attention, and won't you return the coupon now?



INSIDE: A QUAKER PUBLICATION THAT'S DIFFERENT---  
AND THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE.



From: Chuck Fager, A Friendly Letter  
P.O. Box 1361  
Balleys Crossroads, VA 22041

### THIS MONTH IN QUAKER HISTORY and QUAKER CHUCKLES

Here are two questions: How many Quaker feminists does it take to change a light bulb? And what famous Quaker newsman felt sure he had eliminated Ronald Reagan as a presidential contender?

The answers to these questions, along with many other intriguing and amusing items, turn up in two other regular features of *A Friendly Letter*: *QUAKER CHUCKLES* and *THIS MONTH IN QUAKER HISTORY*.

Quaker history is a rich and endlessly fascinating treasure trove; and Quaker humor has long been recognized to have a special flavor and tang all its own.

You'll get a unique sampling of both every month with your subscription to *A Friendly Letter*. Please use the coupon below to order.

(Oh, and by the way, the Quaker newsman was columnist Drew Pearson. And as for how many Quaker feminists are required to change a light bulb, the correct answer is: only one---and that's not funny, Friend!

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P.O. Box 1361  
Falls Church VA 22041

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Please send me one year(12 issues) of A Friendly Letter, for \$12.00. My payment is enclosed.

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Please send me also the following three back issues, free:

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