

WHAT IS A BEETHOVEN LETTER? John Calvi is a remarkable Friend who has been released to follow his calling as a healing touch therapist, working with victims of major trauma and illness. Calvi describes his ongoing labor in occasional epistles which he calls his "Beethoven Letters". When I saw his latest missive, I wanted to share it with you. So, with his permission, it is inside.

A Friendly Letter

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Dear Friend,

Did you see the letter in the 3/26/90 issue of *The New Republic*, printed under the Heading *Oops (cont'd.)*? It began as follows: "*As a Quaker and a journalist who has covered local, national and international stories for American newspapers and magazines, I am appalled with what must be your ignorance, irresponsibility, or plain outright propaganda regarding the upcoming elections in Nicaragua.*"

It continued: "*Your thinking that anybody but Daniel Ortega will win the election is like believing Americans would have voted for a British candidate for the American presidency after George Washington and his loyal band of courageous Americans had won the American Revolution.... I ask you for more journalistic responsibility, investigation, and up-front honesty*", the letter concluded. "*You should be ashamed of yourselves.*"

No, I didn't write it. (Though I *did* write an essay, in 1972, entitled *Why McGovern Can't Lose*.) It was signed by Jerry Copeland of Florence, Oregon. And since he cited his Quakerism as a basis for his complaint and prediction, the letter seemed worthy of some attention.

So I called Friend Copeland to ask what he thought of how the election actually turned out, with Daniel Ortega going down decisively to defeat. He was, he agreed, "absolutely nonplussed by it. I can't understand why the Sandinistas lost." Though he had heard from people returning from Nicaragua since the elections that, contrary to his expectations, most voters really did want a change.

Copeland's views on Nicaragua were shaped by a six-week visit there in the fall of 1988, during which time he lived with a peasant family and made some videos. The videos were intended to persuade Oregon farmers to sell wheat to Nicaragua at a reduced rate, to ease the impact of the American economic embargo on the peasants; and he says they worked, pulling in many tons of wheat.

Copeland also acknowledged, however, that while there he did not attempt to apply his journalistic skills to examining the various conflicting sides of the situation there. He visited many Sandinista officials and government-sponsored projects, and taped heart-rending interviews with widows of Contra terrorism. But he did not speak with any opposition figures, nor with any

Contras. He was later told that he had been followed, presumably to make sure he did not wander off the beaten track; but he says that didn't bother him.

In sum, Copeland's experience there did not prepare him to understand the actual complexity of Nicaraguan society and politics. He saw that the Contra war and the American trade embargo were outrageous, which they surely were. But he also accepted without question an officially-sponsored view of internal Nicaraguan conditions and attitudes, which the elections decisively showed was so one-sided as to be largely false.

I don't mean to single out Jerry Copeland for criticism; his views echo those of most Friends who have been activists on Central American issues--and even the White House expected Ortega to win. Yet I am convinced there is a lesson for Friends in Copeland's public embarrassment, one that applies far beyond Nicaragua:

We are called to seek and tell the truth, and never more so than in situations of conflict involving our testimonies. It is a default on this calling to swallow and rehash without examination the propaganda of governments or movements, even those being victimized by our own government. Ignorance, irresponsibility and "plain outright propaganda" are as unworthy of Friends dealing with such situations as they are of professional journalists.

South Africa is another place where mindless acceptance of propaganda has served us poorly. Who among us was prepared by the nonstop sloganeering over sanctions and divestment to anticipate the murderous intra-black civil war raging there as this was written? Yet competent, though obscure, reports indicate it is not new, and has taken a greater toll than repression by the white government there in recent years. How do we relate to this bloodbath constructively? Is it right for American Friends to be so assimilated into the pro-ANC side of this war? Who will tell us the truth about it? And what will it take to get us to listen?

Yours in the Light,

Chuck Fager

Chuck Fager

POPEYE THE QUAKER MAN: AN UNCONVINCING FRIEND

So you thought oatmeal was just cereal, did you? Gloppy grey stuff in a bowl, and maybe you like it and maybe you don't?

Think again. Oatmeal is more than something to eat; it is the key to a gold mine called the Hot Cereal market. And that means business. Big business.

No, more than that: the breakfast tables of America, in your home and mine, are Hot Cereal battlefields, arenas of life-and-death struggle between mighty combatants, where victory is never permanent and defeat always looms. If you stop and think about what's really going, it's enough to ruin a quiet morning.

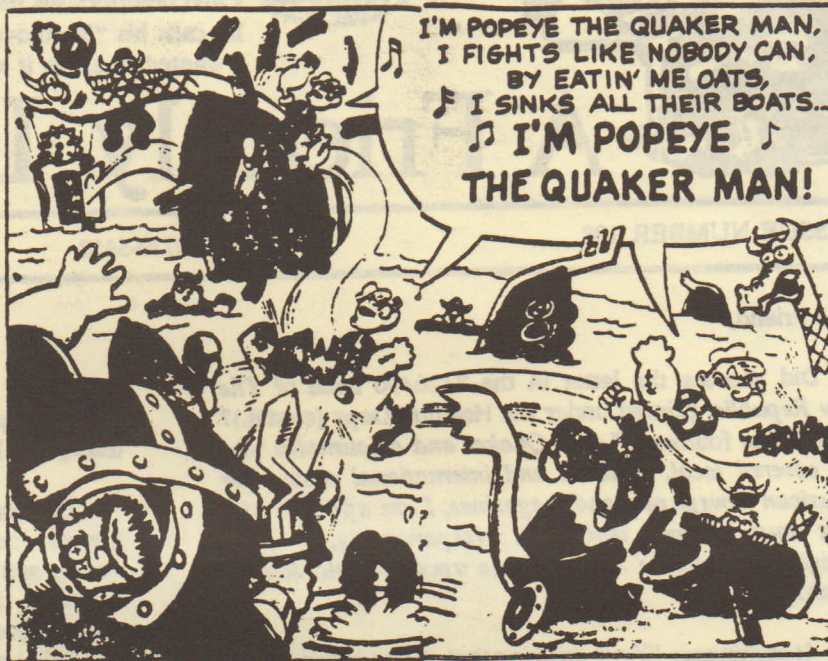
This war heats up every autumn, when the weather turns cold and we Americans want something warm in our bellies before facing the world. And it isn't enough just to put a reasonably nutritious cereal in front of us; we want more--we want convenience; we want color and flash; we want action! Americans are demanding and fickle about our oatmeal; it's a jungle in here.

Doing Well The "Quaker" Way

Nobody knows this treacherous terrain better than the Quaker Oats Company. This corporate behemoth (it ranked #88 in the Fortune 500 in 1988, with sales of \$5.7 billion) has been winning Hot Cereal skirmishes since before the turn of the century, when it launched a successful campaign to revamp the image of its product. Until then, oatmeal was *declassé*; it had been derisively defined in Samuel Johnson's famous dictionary as "a grain, which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people."

To counter this prejudice, Quaker Oats hyped oatmeal as good for you, and was the first to put the stuff in packages. And the company has been a big advertiser and a packaging innovator ever since.

It was, of course, in connection with this successful image makeover that their familiar Quaker Man logo proved so valuable. The company was actually started by Scotch Presbyterians; but no



one ever suggested they call it Presbyterian Oats. No, Quaker=Plain but solid; substantial, good for you; no frills, no nonsense, just the oats, ma'am. The link worked so well that Quaker Oats has played on this theme ever since; as we noted in AFL#87 in another connection, when Quaker introduced its Oat Squares a couple of years back, it did so with the slogan "Honest taste from an honest face," and repeated the word "Honest" seven more times in the copy on the box.

As a result of all this effort, Quaker Oats has been Number One in the Hot Cereal market for decades; but the breakfast business isn't getting any easier. Competitors are all around, sniping not only at Quaker Oats' market share, but at the Hot Cereal business itself, which now accounts for only about a tenth of the total breakfast cereal market.

Have A Nintendo For Breakfast

And nowadays, the task of marketing cereal, especially to kids, presents ever bigger challenges. It's bad enough that there are now three flavors of Cheerios; but how do you counter the direct tie-ins to popular culture that have produced bowl-filling incarnations of Pac-Man, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, and Nintendo games? (Cereal shaped like turtles? Believe it.) Let's face it, in this kind of environment, a

smiling, middle-aged, white-haired fellow in grey (dark blue actually) has his virtues, but is he, well, cool? Can he move the kids the way the Mario Brothers do? Yo, Quake, be real.

So the company and its ad agency went looking for a popular cartoon character which could keep its oatmeal's image up to the minute. And that's where Popeye came in. The scrappy sailor was clearly a smart choice: he's well-established, almost archetypal; and he's both good-natured and two-fisted. Further, he gets his crucial bursts of energy from eating nutritious food, traditionally spinach.

And thus came the refrain, "Can the Spinach, I wants me Instant Quaker Oatmeal," and the new, improved Popeye the Quaker Man. He was introduced at the beginning of the 1989-90 Hot Cereal season, last fall, with the whole nine yards of promotional paraphernalia: pictures on the box; little comic books inside; offers of premiums, including multicolored shoelaces (shoelaces??) and plastic cereal bowls emblazoned with the "Popeye the Quaker Man" slogan; all of which were, of course, backed up by commercials during Saturday morning cartoon shows.

For awhile, the campaign went off without a hitch. Actual sales figures are not available, but there was every reason to think that Quaker Oats' hold

on the top spot in the Hot Cereal market would be successfully defended one more time. Certainly the company can't be accused of doing things halfway: Quaker Oats spent \$344 million on advertising last year (not all of it for oatmeal, of course, but still...).

But then, as the boxes bearing Popeye's pipesmoking visage made their way across the country, the little comics and the commercials eventually caught the eye of some Quaker children. (Actually, I suspect it was some Quaker parents who really noticed them, but that is unconfirmed.) And after three-plus centuries of sensitivity to Friends' Reputation of Truth, some Quaker eyebrows went up, then creased into disapproving frowns. "Popeye the Quaker Man"??? Hmhmhmhm.

The Friendly Counterattack

Soon complaints began to arrive at Quaker Oats' Chicago headquarters. Not a flood, exactly; the company insists it was only a few. But they were bothersome, especially when *Business Week* magazine heard about them and started calling around.

"It is totally, totally offensive to Quakers," thundered Marty Walton, executive Secretary of Friends General Conference. The 26 children of Durham, NC Meeting sent a letter affirming that "We think anyone calling himself a Quaker should act like one and stick with Quaker philosophy." The youth of Wellesley Meeting, MA, put up a protest petition also. And the General Board of Friends United Meeting, the largest of the Quaker associations, declared in its letter that the campaign was "repugnant to foundational Quaker testimonies...."

Is it really that bad? Let's do a bit of Quaker deconstruction on the comic, *Popeye and the Time Machine*, which was in the box I bought a week ago:

Popeye, Olive Oyl and Swee' Pea are accidentally sent back 700 years in Wimpy's time machine, landing amid a flotilla of bloodthirsty Vikings. The Vikings attack, and Popeye, after gulping his oatmeal, demolishes them, boats and all, before bringing the time machine safely back to the present.

To Beverly Kloehn, Quaker Oats'

Director of Consumer Response, this is no more than "a character asserting himself in the way of taking care of the good versus evil concept, and deriving his strength from eating oatmeal."

Ah, but would a real "Quaker Man" not try to settle the conflict peaceably rather than with such destruction? And then there's Olive Oyl. What "Quaker Woman" would be so completely passive, except for cooking and serving Popeye, and then respond to his combat by swooning with pleasure? (Her response has a clearly erotic aspect; is this an insidiously implicit S&M motif?)

For that matter, does the story not unfairly stereotype Scandinavians as bloodthirsty savages? (And this is not to mention that Popeye also smokes, and has absolutely atrocious grammar.)

To be sure, in comparison to the general run of what is shown on Saturday TV, these comics and their implicit messages are hardly extreme. In its general environment, Quaker Oats has been known as a fairly responsible corporate citizen. But as an emblem of Quakers, Popeye won't wash.

Taking On The Oatmeal Trust

(This is not, incidentally, the first time Friends have tangled with what was once called the Oatmeal Trust: in 1915, Friends lobbied Congress for a law banning the use of a church name on a commercial product; but even then, lawmakers knew how to choose between serving God and mammon, and Big Oatmeal won. The same thing, alas, happened a few years later when Friends took on the makers of Old Quaker whiskey.)

In 1990, while the company may be vastly larger, Quaker guerilla tactics are also more sophisticated, and corporate image-making is a much more delicate business. The FUM letter spoke of this, diplomatically but unmistakably: "Many of us have long used and enjoyed Quaker Oats products. We hope you will preserve this consumer confidence, and respect our Quaker faith, by ending the association of violent and demeaning images with the Quaker name." It's not far from this to talking about a boycott of Quaker Oats over the Popeye crisis, and the company would be exposed to such pressure on

many fronts: Besides cereal, it is also Number One in pork and beans (Van Camp) and "sports beverages" (Gatorade), Number Two in dog food (Gaines, Cycle), a major player in toys (Fisher-Price), and lots more.

But it probably won't come to anything so drastic. Company spokesperson Beverly Kloehn was evasive on most matters of statistics, and about whether Popeye would be back next season; she was also amazed to learn that Quakers were concerned with such things as women's roles.

But she was clear and direct about one thing: "If we use Popeye again, we will not identify him as 'The Quaker Man'. It was certainly not our desire to offend any group through our advertising." She also said, sounding relieved, that the Hot Cereal "season" was over, so the commercials had ended and no new comics were going into the boxes.

Here's a Better Idea

Yet there's no real need to get rid of Popeye. As the children of Durham Meeting pointed out, they would be happy if the sailor used his strength in a "Quakerly manner--for example, by rescuing children from a fire or supporting a broken dam." And once you start thinking about it, there are lots of ways to Quakerize ol' Popeye:

Take the Time machine plot again. First of all, Popeye cooks his own--organic--oatmeal. Then he negotiates safe passage with the Vikings; but if he gets in a real jam, Olive Oyl rescues him. Then before the time machine leaves, all their trash is composted or recycled, and they pause for silent worship. (Or, if he's to be a pastoral Quaker, maybe a verse of "Amazing Grace.") You could think of it, Beverly, as the "Blessed are the peacemakers" concept. Sounds like a hit to me.

Somewhat more soberly, the surprise with which officials of the company and its advertising agencies greeted these protests pointed up rather painfully just how invisible Quakerism as a religious movement has become in American culture at large. And it also suggests that at least for Friends, Quakerism is too important to be left to an Oatmeal company. Or a sailor, even minus a pipe.

ALL BLESSINGS FLOW: A STORY

By Lynne Christensen

The small group of Quakers settled into the appropriately uncomfortable folding metal chairs, each Friend preparing to "center down" or wait on the Lord or catch a few extra minutes of Sunday morning sleep. Some throats cleared. Some hands relaxed palms up in Eastern supplication while others folded together in Western entreaty. Silence descended.

I really must say this thing, Esther thought. It will certainly be as profound to them as it was to me. She sat behind her son Kevin, waiting for the inspiration to raise her to her feet. Inarguably, the revelation was divine. And, although she'd originally had the thought last Monday and had immediately gone to the phone to call Kevin and enlighten his life, Esther was confident that the other meeting members would find it equally illuminating.



The choir across the street was singing a hymn, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow..." Esther knew the words. She missed singing hymns. As a girl, she had soloed in the Methodist choir, and she still believed that her voice was lilting and a joy to hear. She would wait to speak until the singing ended.

Half her mind rehearsed the words of her message while the other sang along to the hymn's end in an imagined rich and resonant tone. Such mental division was second nature to her from all the years of rehearsing theatrical lines while driving or chatting on common topics about which she had already, previously formulated her ideas.

The song ended. A mufflerless car drove by on the road between the two churches. Someone in meeting was breathing loudly. Glancing from the corners of her eyes, Esther couldn't see who was asleep. She hoped her message wouldn't be missed by, at least, the unconscious mind of whoever it was. Tsk, in the garden of Gethsemane, she

thought.

She pulled herself up with her hand on the back of Kevin's chair. Intentionally, she drew her fingers over Kevin's shoulder, wanting to reassure her son that she was there.

Esther lifted her head, balanced her weight evenly on both tastefully shod feet, and with her eyes closed and focused on the infinite, she began to speak. "I was remembering just now," she said, pausing to allow the others to align their silent thoughts to hers; to abandon their private petty concerns for the greater message, "about a time when I was teasing my mother with a fact that I knew and she didn't. I remember her saying to me, 'Well, of course, you will know more than I, Esther. You know every-thing that I know, and you will learn much more than that in your lifetime.'" Again, she paused. A perfectly timed pause is a most effective technique, and one of the most important lessons she taught her acting students.

In that pause, she also deliberately recalled the feeling she'd had when this about-to-be-revealed insight came to her a week ago. She relaxed into the memory, and when she resumed speaking her voice quavered with remembered emotion. "I am so grateful for the men and women..."



Abruptly, someone to her right began to cough a choking, airless cough.

Esther hesitated, thoughtfully, refusing to open her eyes and pass judgement on the offender. There was a recovering gasp, then restored silence. Esther could hear the ears aimed patiently in her direction. "Grateful for the men and women who came before me..."

A nasal snort preceded another outburst of coughing. Without looking, Esther recognized the sound of Melody across the aisle in her wheel chair. She

gripped the back of Kevin's chair in intense, forgiving tolerance and let the other woman hold the floor with her momentary paroxysm. Esther knew the others were impatient to hear the rest of the truth she was sharing, but she felt it was only basic courtesy not to talk over someone else's temporary distress. Again after a gasping, gagging struggle for control, Melody quieted herself.

Esther had used the interruption to rethink her wording. She really should include the others in the revelation, in order to make it more germane to them. "I am grateful for the ones who came before us and wrote down their spiritual insights. There is such comfort..."

Melody sputtered, then began coughing harder than before, as though her breakfast might at any moment hit the floor. The hearts and minds of the other people in the room were clearly slipping from Esther's message to private wagers regarding Melody's predicament. Esther couldn't afford to let the message be lost. She had been intrusted to deliver it, and the time was now. She raised her voice and continued, imagining the situation as just one of those unexpected events that happen when one works the live stage. "There is comfort in their words..."



Sonja, being the first to break from the Quakerly discipline of denying problems, rose from her chair next to Kevin, obliterating half of the meeting's view of Esther. As quietly as possible on a creaky wooden floor, she hurried into the adjoining kitchen, opened a squeaking cupboard door for a glass and gently turned on the old faucet. The pipes thumped loudly with the feeble and cavitating water pressure. Melody was crimson and near collapse when Sonja returned with the glass of water.

Esther, her voice raised nobly above the distraction, was finishing her wise advisement. "...Their works give us reason to keep on this spiritual path



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when we are feeling lost and confused." She sat down, knowing God was pleased that she had at least tried.

Melody gulped loudly a few times, then the room returned to the usual quasi-silence of thirty people unconsciously striving to breathe in unison.

In less time than is tacitly agreed upon between soliloquies, Lydia, without rising, said timidly, "What Esther said spoke directly to me." Then, as though no one would understand just what she meant by that, she extemporaneously went on to say how she appreciated what other people had thought before her. Lydia often spoke after Esther in this manner, feeling divinely prompted to interpret Esther's profound wisdom. And then she added her usual coda to anything she said in or out of meeting, "But I don't think that I myself am contributing too much of anything."



Again, without sufficient time for those who were there to hear their own inner wisdom, another voice broke the silence. This time it was Earle, who always let his words precede his feet; always well into his topic before he was off his chair. "We all have to rely on something," he said, leaving the thought to hang in the air until he was completely upright and had scanned the audience for supportive glances. "We've all had times of trouble. I certainly have. Most recently on my bus trip to Pendle Hill."

A subtle but still discernable collective sigh rose from the meeting members as they braced for yet another rambling discussion of Earle's rebirth. He, most of all the frequent speakers, seemed to get his inspiration at the very end of long-winded dissertations. The meeting served for him as a backboard from which his meandering words rebounded, and he volleyed until one of them ricocheted back into his heart, at which point, he'd smile knowingly and return to his seat. And so, after a circuitous monologue and a misquoted reference to George Fox, he did indeed finally sit down.

But the meeting remained disrupted by a contagious stimulation to think, and four more voices echoed the human vagueness that passes for impromptu understanding. Across the street, the choir again sang about the guidance of God, followed by muffled shuffling, indicating the end of that church's service.

Then the children were led in from first day school, a reminder that only fifteen minutes remained before asleep and arthritic limbs could move freely again. Just as the children's feet ceased scuffling and each child had found a seat next to a friend or on a parent's lap, Lowell, the most pedantic elder of the meeting, stood and said, "Esther."

His tone was strident and authoritative. It startled her from a reverie in which she was imagining the surprise on Kevin's face when she showed her son the brand new car, parked outside the meeting house, which she had just bought for herself. The following pause was so long, she wondered uneasily if Lowell intended for her to respond, to enter into a formal conversation right there in the middle of silent worship.

"Esther, I think the children would like to hear your message."

There followed much stifled murmuring among the other members. Oh, my Lord, what did I say? Esther thought, and called on her professional skill to quell the urge to panic. All she could immediately remember was being interrupted by Melody's ill-timed ill-health. But, of course, she must say something. And, after all, is that not what years in the theatre teach you? Go on with a line, any line, it will come back to you if you can just ad-lib long enough.



"Oh, Lowell," she demurred, rising again, "you are kind." She adjusted her dress with a time garnering bit of stage business, still trying to reassemble the thought. She'd had it all week, now what was it?

"It was a thought that came to me at the time, but of course I'm sure it

would be of value to the children," she said, glancing benignly at the younger ones. None of them seemed aware they were being addressed. Two boys made faces at each other across the room, and another boy tugged jealously at his sister's shoe lace as the little girl sat nestled on her mother's lap. None of the children were looking at Esther.

"Yes, we all have brought to life our special gifts," she started, reconstructing her thoughts a syllable ahead of her words.

The sound of the neighboring parishioners in conversation on the sidewalk outside required that she raise her voice. The essence of her message, Esther suspected, was getting lost in the incessant need to accommodate intrusions upon her oratory. "Different generations bring different gifts..."

Directly outside the meeting door, two voices called loudly, "Good-bye", and a car door slammed. Then a car engine, with bad timing and a seriously fatigued starter motor, sputtered to start, coughed and choked and died. The key was turned again and again as the car's motor made every conceivable mechanical noise except the ones necessary to motivate it down the street.



Esther, undaunted and projecting to her full capacity like Demosthenes against the sea, shouted clearly, "Make your gifts count." That sounded close enough, she thought, sitting down in the honor of the humiliation she had so grandly borne.

The car started cleanly and drove away. The members hesitated in their seats a moment longer, then meeting was adjourned by the usual shaking of hands within easy reach.

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Lynne Christensen attends San Diego Meeting in California.



The Sixth Beethoven Letter

by John Calvi

Dear Friends,

It has been a long time since you last heard from me in this form. I hope you understand that I have been very busy in the nearly two years since the previous Beethoven letter. I write this letter to request your support. I have a spiritual blessing to release pain in others. This blessing is a great comfort to the people I work with, particularly those with Aids and tortured refugees. This work is supported by gifts. I hope you will consider this request to help me.

Eight years ago I began doing massage on people recovering from trauma. It started with a friend who had been tortured and raped. With massage her recovery was unexpectedly swift. In 1983 I began a program called Soft Touch to give full body massage to people with Aids in Colorado. While working with my first client with Aids, my hands became so hot the palms began to peel. His physical and emotional pain left him. Gradually I understood that the energy pulsing out my palms could release pain and bring calmness, even without massage, and that this was a spiritual gift. This was in the beginning of the epidemic before a virus had been isolated, when all seemed to be pain and despair, diagnosis and death. I began fundraising with the Beethoven letter in the spring of 1984 to support myself while giving this gift away. Soft Touch became a gift I gave from those who cared to those in need. I didn't know I was setting out on a life's work but there were clues. Although I completed my massage certification, I could not get a paying job doing massage because it was known that I was doing Aids work and fear of contagion was insidious.

Beginning in 1985, I began to teach about my work. I returned to Vermont to live and traveled to Aids organizations, men's conferences, church groups, prisons, and other groups with members experiencing trauma. Two years later, my Quaker Meeting in Vermont declared me a Released Friend. By doing this, my religious community stated they found my work genuine and worthy of support. They began to accept tax-deductible contributions on my behalf. (Gifts can still be made directly to me or through Putney Meeting.) This faith in my efforts proved tremendously helpful and allowed donors anonymity plus tax benefits.

After moving to Washington, D.C., I began to work with tortured refugees, in the United States with COMADRES—Mothers of the Disappeared of El Salvador; and in Canada with the Quaker Refugee Committee of Toronto. As a result, a wonderful opportunity occurred last December in Costa Rica. I presented my anti-burnout workshop at an international conference on torture. I worked with clerics, psychologists, and social workers from around the world helping them to focus on ways to make a sustained contribution without absorbing the despair or becoming exhausted. This was exciting work. Professionals from places as diverse as South Africa, Gaza, and Cambodia found my ideas very useful. Tortured people from around the world came to my room for energy work in the evenings. I was grateful for this chance to be so well used. Along with Aids work, this aspect of my work continues to increase.

While in Washington, D.C., I work with people with Aids, refugees, and others in need of this kind of care. Requests for my work keep me on the road five months of the year. I teach a wide range of workshops:

- o "Easy Clothes-On Massage" for beginners;
- o "Massage for Trauma;"
- o "Soft Touch" to learn energy work;
- o "Healing from Lifewounds" for recovery from trauma; and
- o "Helping Without Hurting" for caregivers avoiding burnout.

Between my work with people in D.C. and teaching on the road, I have been too busy. Other projects that I have worked on for some time have been delayed. This has disappointed and frustrated me. The pace is hectic, as you can see by my June, 1990, schedule.

June 7-10 Aids: Living in Recovery; Cincinnati, Ohio. Two workshop presentations.

June 15-17 Friends World Committee for Consultation; Monument Beach, Massachusetts. Speaker.

June 22-24 Massage for Aids; Stony Point, New York. Two workshop presentations.

June 30-July 7 Friends General Conference; Northfield, Minnesota. Closing plenary speaker.

There are two particularly dear projects which have been postponed as a result of the schedule, my book and my recording. The Dance Between Hope and Fear: Healing from Trauma is delayed. Already there is considerable demand for this book. With it, I will share what I have learned about healing with a wider audience. I also plan a cassette recording of original songs. In concert and in other artists' performances, I see my songs make people aware and hopeful in the face of hard times. Meg Christian's recording of "The Ones Who Aren't Here" at Carnegie Hall, the Short Sisters' recording of "A Little Gracefulness," and Suede's version of "One's..." have rave reviews and air play across the country.

These projects demand more time. This is hard to schedule but progress is being made. I am plotting some seclusion this spring to complete a manuscript, perhaps at Pendle Hill, the Quaker study center in Pennsylvania. Songs are being transcribed and musicians found. Time to practice both on and off stage are the next tasks.

Following our delightful wedding under the care of Putney Meeting on a sun-soaked hilltop in Vermont last August, Marshall and I decided to plan a return to Vermont to build a home. I find it very difficult to keep my spiritual balance while attending to a full schedule in an urban setting. It is our hope to make a home that will serve as a refuge following exhausting travel work and for it to be a good place to do healing work on others. I know only some of you can readily support this idea; I hope you will consider its importance and whether there is a way you can help us acquire land. Help has always come in many different ways.

Along with letting you know how my work is going and asking for your help, I want to say thank you to the many people who have kept me on the road with this adventure. Your letters, calls, and prayers move me deeply. Your financial support allowed me to trade in my ancient VW bus for one only two years old which safely took me on 25,000 miles of travel work in 1989. Your trust and affection feed my spirit and I am very grateful.

For 8 years I have made a gift of healing touch to people who need it. I rely on your support for everything from massage oil to gasoline, typewriter ribbons to long distance phone calls, in addition to food and shelter. Your generosity means I can extend my own in a cycle of giving. I still need your help.

Sincerely,

John Calvi

John Calvi
February, 1990

You may contact me at:

1744 Swann Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20009; phone: 202-387-8445; or
P.O. Box 301, Putney, VT 05346

Contributions can be sent to me directly or made payable and sent to:
Putney Friends Meeting (noted "for John Calvi"), P.O. Box 381, Putney, VT 05346; or

Canadians also may make tax deductible contributions through:
Refugee Committee (noted "for John Calvi") c/o Toronto Friends Meeting, 60 Lowther Avenue,
Toronto, ONT M5R 2C7



INSIDE: THE RISE AND (MAYBE) FALL OF
POPEYE THE QUAKER MAN; ALSO,
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Address Correction Requested

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

This Month In Quaker History

Chalkley Gillingham, the Friend who settled near Alexandria, Virginia in the 1840s, turned up in this space in Issue #104, sharing his Woodlawn Meetinghouse with rifle-toting Union soldiers during the Civil War. Such relative calm in the midst of war did not come easy, however. In the first weeks of war, Gillingham and his family were as confused and frightened by the growing chaos as anyone else. As recorded, in his Journal, Fourth Month, 1861, was particularly trying.

On 4/21/1861, he writes, "we held a Conference...to [consider] what course we should pursue...with rebel soldiers coming and encamping all around us to attack the City of Washington. We felt we were in great danger, our families exposed to the marauding and merciless soldiers whose business it was to tear down & destroy the government. We being of northern birth, would be likely objects of their vengeance. So we concluded to take our families north of Washington, until things assumed a different appearance here."

The next day Gillingham left his farm, "with the wife and other females"; most of the rest of the settlers fled the next day. The group headed for Sandy Spring, Maryland, an old Quaker settlement north of the capitol. But while

welcome there, they found little relief: "...We found the people in great alarm about the rebellion. The people of Baltimore[were] refusing to let the U.S. troops pass thru Baltimore or even over Maryland soil to protect the City of Washington. We all met in the evening and concluded to journey on...leaving all behind us; not knowing if we should ever see our things again. We expected the stock of Cattle and Horses that were left behind to be carried off by the rebel soldiers and the buildings burned."

Gillingham's company trekked on to Uniontown, Maryland, near the Pennsylvania border. From there most went east to New Jersey, while Gillingham and a few others stayed with a local farming family, helping with spring planting. For three weeks, Gillingham wrote, "we went to work every day, watching the newspapers to ascertain what was becoming of our homes."

Union troops did get through Maryland, rushing to the defense of Washington, and a rebel attack on the capital did not materialize. As the situation there seemed to stabilize(more or less), the Gillingham family soon returned to Virginia. They found their cattle gone, their farm raided, but their buildings unburned, and resolved to wait out the war at their home.

Quaker Chuckles

"Do you know why," explained the Orthodox Quaker to the Quaker pastor, "those Hicksite Quakers sing hymns so slowly when they come to ecumenical Quaker worship meetings?" "I've always wondered about that," said the pastor. "It's because," the Orthodox Friend said, "they're reading ahead, to see if they agree with the words."

Then there was the Friend who was led to visit India and find the Light Within the revered Hindu sages. Armed only with a traveling minute, he trudged from village to village, seeking out the swamis. One day, on a trail to a

remote village, the Friend saw he was being followed by a large, hungry-looking tiger. Seeing no trees that he could climb, and knowing he could not outrun a tiger, the Friend did the only other thing he could think of: he sat down in silent worship. To his amazement, the tiger came and sat down quietly next to him, the long striped head lifted toward the heavens. "Hallelujah!" cried the Friend. "God has saved me! It's a miracle!" At this the tiger turned to him and said, "Will thee please be quiet? I'm trying to say grace."

--Thanks to G.M. Smith, the Swami of Princeton