

GEORGE ORWELL WAS RIGHT: One of the New York State Lottery's newest games is called "Invest in Kids", and is part of the Lottery's "Safe Streets, Safe City" program. Tickets cost \$2, and the maximum prize is \$25,000. Maybe next we'll have a federal lottery called, "Full Employment, Disarmament, Recycling, and a cure for AIDS." *O Tempora! O mores!*

# A Friendly Letter

ISSUE NUMBER 127

Selected for Who's Who In Religion

TWELFTH MONTH, 1991

Dear Friend,

In AFL#105 this decade was dubbed "the Gray Nineties," forecasting the continued squeezing of most Americans' living standards. Almost two years later, it seems timely to take stock: How are the '90s turning out? Rather than debate dry statistics (although I think they support the prediction), I'd like to reflect on a few personal experiences which have shaped my own sense of the trend of events. Consider, then, the following:

♦ Late last year, we spent two chilly nights camped outside a highly-regarded magnet public school, to assure a place in its sixth grade class for our daughter, Gulielma. By the morning of the signup hundreds were on hand, looking like a yuppified Woodstock reunion. Some local poohbahs complained that the mob scene was tacky and undignified. But too bad for them: Guli loves the school, and with public education being cut everywhere (and Quaker schools out of our price range), we'll do it again, you bet, a couple autumns hence on behalf of son Asa.

♦ One evening about a month ago, walking the dog in our unluxurious yet comfortable neighborhood, I stumbled upon a homeless man asleep under a tree. He was the first I've seen here in fourteen years' residence.

♦ More recently, I sat in on a training class for new postal employees, mostly part-time temporaries hired at less than \$10 per hour, with no benefits. Conversation soon revealed that among them were two former airline pilots and a trained psychologist, all glad to have the work. (I won't dwell on the Postal Service's plan to cut 100,000 jobs in three years; mine is safe...I think.)

♦ Our life insurance is group term from a federal employees benefit association in Kansas City. Or so I thought, until a couple months back. Came then an embarrassed letter from the retired generals who run it, explaining that the group was actually underwritten by Mutual Benefit Life of New Jersey. Remember that name? It's the big, old, formerly respectable outfit that was seized by the state to keep it from sinking under junk bonds and bad real estate deals. The generals' letter explained apologetically that if I died, they should still be able to pay up; but any cash value, and that tax-deferred annuity account I opened last winter were, er, temporarily unavailable; stand by for further details. Fortunately,

I've been lax about making deposits in the annuity account, and there's not much in it.

♦ *A Friendly Letter* banks just up the street at what was the Alexandria National Bank of Northern Virginia when we started. Now, though, it's First American Bank. You may remember it, too--the one secretly owned by BCCI, the international crooks' bank. That's bad enough, but the local business news now says that it also is almost bust (more bad real estate deals), and the smart money, a billion-plus already, is quietly fleeing from it. "Don't worry," an affable local banker purred, "FDIC will take care of you." But then I read that the FDIC is broke. What, me worry? Nope; but I am changing banks.

♦ Have you heard about "job lock"? I came across the term in the *New York Times* last summer. It's the condition of being tied to a job, like it or not, because of health insurance. Once you or a family member has a serious illness, chances of getting decent coverage elsewhere drastically decline. Well, last spring my wife MaryLou had a cancerous breast lump removed. It was a scare, but the treatments are over now, and the prognosis excellent. (Whew!) When I saw that term "job lock", though, I could almost hear the hasp clicking shut around me. It's not just a theory for this family.

Now, I don't want to leave the wrong impression with this downbeat list. Life is not bad here; we're not poor. We even managed a getaway to England last summer, climbed Pendle Hill, visited Swarthmoor Hall, and helped marry two fine Friends in a venerable Yorkshire meetinghouse. Our Langley Hill meeting is growing and spiritually rich, as is Baltimore Yearly Meeting. What's to complain about?

So I won't complain. But I *do* feel precarious, vulnerable and squeezed. And the "Gray Nineties" still sounds like the right term for this decade. Thus far, anyway. And how are *you* doing, Friends?

Yours in the Light,

*Chuck Fager*

Chuck Fager



## AFSC AND NEW LEADERSHIP: THE TIME FOR A CHANGE

As the Corporation and Board of the American Friends Service Committee gathered for its annual meeting on 11/15-17, AFSC was on the brink of important change: A new Board Clerk has taken hold. A new Executive Secretary, the most pivotal Quaker staff appointment of the decade, will soon be named (1/24/92 is the target date). And a major strategic planning process is underway.

For those Friends who have been calling for a redirection of AFSC, for its reweaving into the fabric of the Society of Friends, which created it and from which it draws its legitimacy, this time of transition is a season of hope. The prospects for constructive change seem better than they have for a generation. But will the impending changes be constructive and daring, or will they result in no more than a streamlined version of AFSC's status quo? That is the question of the hour.

### FINANCIAL DANGER SIGNALS

Another mark of change at the meeting was in the rhetoric: again and again, expressions of concern were voiced about "*Disaffected Friends*," (DFs for short), specifically Quakers who had long supported AFSC but do so no more, or only with considerable criticism. Though specifics were scarce, many pledges were made that AFSC is determined to repair its relationships with DFs, and with the Society of Friends generally.

Yet another indicator came in a ten-year summary and analysis of AFSC's financial performance. This sobering report deserves a closer look. It showed that through the 1980s AFSC's real income was basically flat, keeping up with inflation but little more. More disturbing, the report included a chart showing the average real income growth in the 1980s of two sets of groups somewhat like AFSC: One set, a batch of "public benefit" (i.e., peace) groups, was up 69% for the 1980s, while the other, "human services" group was up by 29%.

These comparisons were unsettling enough, but there was more to the financial picture than that. For

two years and more, from AFSC sources around the country, I have been hearing of budget and staff cuts. More surfaced at the annual meeting. These are so consistent and widespread that they cast doubt on whether the official portrayal of keeping up with inflation is really the whole story.

Against this background, one might think the 10-year report would have hit like a bombshell. But when she introduced it, National Board Clerk Dulany Bennett commented that many Quakers have "*a real revulsion about things financial*." This was prescient: After a few desultory questions, the group wanted to move on.

The supremely concrete question of money relates directly, if dialectically, to the highly abstract question of AFSC's frayed relationship with the Society of Friends, DFs in particular. That's because the record shows that its donors, especially big donors, give money because of the reputation, deserved or not, of Friends. As one Board member put it, "*If you look down the list of major donors, people say again and again, 'I'm giving money to AFSC because it's a Quaker organization and when Quakers do peace work, they do it right.'*"

### LETTERS FROM INDIANA & OHIO

Many other mainline church agencies are in financial trouble, largely due to losses in legitimacy in the eyes of their rank and file. Presbyterians, Lutherans, the National Council of Churches, even the Catholic bishops--all have felt the pinch. This is a trend that AFSC ignores at its peril.

Nor was this erosion of legitimacy a hypothetical question at the annual meeting, due to two letters from yearly meetings which were read early on. The most significant was from Indiana Yearly Meeting, announcing the severing of all ties with AFSC. This decision had been expected (see AFL #119), and in fact elicited little reaction beyond expressions of regret. It seemed to fall into the same well of denial as the financial report.

The letters deserved more

attention. Despite its many warts, Indiana is the heartland of midwestern Quakerism. Its loss should have rung like a fire bell in the night. Without it, any group with "American Friends" in its name has sprung a big leak in its Quaker identity and credibility.

Much the same could be said of the other letter, from Ohio Conservative YM. While maintaining formal ties, Ohio has taken AFSC out of its budget, after contributing almost since its inception 74 years ago. The money involved is hardly a drop in AFSC's \$25 million bucket; and Ohio YM has only a few hundred members. But it is important beyond its size: Ohio is the principal outpost of a crucial, if currently neglected, Quaker stream, the plain, Wilburite tradition. A Quaker body out of meaningful touch with it has lost another major piece of a Quaker identity.

### TOO MANY FREUDIAN SLIPS

At the political level, the differences between AFSC and these two groups of DFs center on issues for which there is no easy remedy, such as gay rights and abortion. AFSC has long been on one side of these, and the two YMs have increasingly been moving toward the other. But at a deeper level, their alienation is the predictable result of long neglect: Both YMs spoke of a broader loss of a sense of connection. And the hard truth is that after years of paying them little attention, AFSC is now reaping what it sowed.

Still, perhaps the DFs' harping on these old patterns has had some effect, because there seemed to be growing awareness at the annual meeting that they had to change. And if the right person is selected as Executive Secretary, the momentum for change could become irresistible.

A Search Committee has been at work since summer, and reported that it had narrowed its work to a group of six candidates. Its clerk, Stephanie Judson, a teacher at Friends Select School in Philadelphia, emphasized that the Committee was determined to find a candidate who would pay attention to the AFSC's relationship to Friends and



DFs in particular.

This oft-repeated declaration was undercut, however, by a committee mailing to meetings dated 9/27, soliciting nominations for the post and including a two-page summary job description. Nowhere in it was there any mention of dealing with Friends.

When asked, several Search Committee members were all nonplussed by the omission, and could explain it only as an inadvertent oversight. But to DF readers, it looked more like a telling Freudian slip; such oversights have been all too common with AFSC, and reveal an attitude of taking Friends for granted, or simply ignoring them. One committee member later showed me a revised, even longer job description; it included a single sentence about relating to Friends. This was better, but not by much.

#### APOLOGIZING FOR FRIENDS

DF misgivings about the search were sharpened when Judson told the corporation of her deep sadness that the pool, despite the committee's best efforts, did not meet AFSC's affirmative action standards. It included women, but no nonwhites or open gays and lesbians. They had done the best they could, she said, given the deficiencies of American Friends.

Her abjectly apologetic tone did not protect Judson from sharp questioning by some Corporation members, who demanded to know how the Search Committee could go forward with such a deficient pool. Judson repeated that they had done their best. Here Dulany Bennett said she had asked the Board last spring if they wished to permit the hiring of a non-Friend, in order to surface the question. Although the Board decided that *"this was not the time"* to be considering the question, comments from the floor made it clear there would be some support for such a change.

One Search Committee member, an openly gay man, said they had sought out Friends who met the affirmative action criteria, but they were not available to apply. (Since the meeting, Judson reported that the "final pool" had been expanded to eight, but

was still all straight and white.)

One category well represented in the pool, however, is AFSC staff. And while the committee's work is confidential, there was much informal speculation doubting the likelihood of a non-status quo appointment. DFs point to the presence of two staff members on the Search Committee as decreasing the chances of an adventurous, change-oriented selection.

We will see how that goes; but numerous Friends who know AFSC well --staff, former staff, Board and committee members--have told me they believe the front runner is Warren Witte, now Associate Executive Secretary for Information Services. Given what Stephanie Judson said the Search Committee is seeking, this speculation makes sense. (For the record, Witte declined to be interviewed on this topic, refusing to confirm or deny whether he had even applied for the job.)

#### AN IDEAL INSIDE CANDIDATE?

Witte is well-positioned as an inside candidate. He has travelled widely as AFSC's main public relations man; his job keeps him well-informed about most AFSC activities. His AFSC career began in Iowa and includes a stint as regional executive in Seattle. He is a certified Friend, attending at Philadelphia's Chestnut Hill Meeting. Last summer he was at the Friends World Conference in Kenya, along with Dulany Bennett, on behalf of AFSC.

Perhaps even more useful, in view of the talk about placating the DFs, Witte has been sent on Quaker fence-mending missions at least twice. Once was last year, to the Friends United Meeting Triennial in Indiana. This foray did not amount to much: when he held a meeting to hear concerns and answer questions, almost no one showed up, though they packed an independent session to hear grievances.

More successful, and more revealing, was a troubleshooting mission to Intermountain Yearly Meeting. Intermountain is home to several distinguished "Disaffected Friends," including Kenneth Boulding, Jack Powelson, and others. Some of them, having repeatedly failed to get

their concerns heard and engaged informally, had raised the question of whether Intermountain should cut ties to AFSC, as Indiana has now done.

A retreat was held with Albuquerque Meeting in 1/1988 for extended threshing of the issue. There Dulany Bennett (then Clerk of AFSC's Personnel Committee), along with Witte and other key committee and staff people, made their case.

A detailed report of the retreat was circulated among IYM meetings. In it was a lengthy summary of Witte's presentation, which undertook to explain why the number of Quakers on the AFSC staff is so low, about 15 per cent. He made perhaps as good a presentation of AFSC's notions on this matter as one could hope to find. What it comes down to is this:

#### REFINEMENT, QUAKER STYLE

Building on its experiences in the Vietnam war, the civil rights movement and other *"powerful events and processes,"* Witte said that *"AFSC has been challenged to build relationships with other communities....Special operational frameworks, languages, assumptions and styles of the AFSC have evolved from attempts to do this. The AFSC has become a 'refined' experiment in Quakerism, one which may have diminishing overlap with the experience of other parts of the Society of Friends....Friends have a hard time fitting into the operational 'style' of the AFSC, developed through the years of struggling with social issues not familiar to many Friends."*

While this is delicately, even elegantly phrased, its essentially condescending and patronizing character is unmistakable. The message delivered, more baldly stated, comes down to this: AFSC has attained a degree of enlightenment and political virtue that is simply out of the league of Quakers, who are so provincial, unenlightened, and bourgeois that only a select few can attain the level of illumination that qualifies them for employment therein. Give me a break.

Perhaps Witte shouldn't be criticized too harshly for mouthing this claptrap; it was AFSC doctrine, and defending it was his job. But no matter



how politely expressed, such malarkey makes a DF's blood boil. Yet in the short run, the Albuquerque mission succeeded; Intermountain retained its ties to AFSC. But few of its DFs were mollified, as many have told me since. And in the past two years, events like the loss of Indiana have made the longer term damage being done by such blatant institutional conceit increasingly difficult to ignore.

The defects of this attitude are legion. One of the most egregious is its massive ignorance of the real Society of Friends, its variety and experience in the world. In place of real Quakerism there has been enshrined a version of political correctness. This is predictable given the narrow range of Quaker experience reflected in AFSC's inner circles, and the scarcity of Friends on its staff. Another is the presumption that, to the extent there is any truth in their description of the hopelessly benighted condition of real Quakers (and there is not much), that the proper response is to exclude them. Yet a third is its confirmation of the DFs' charge that AFSC has come to see itself as not merely having transcended ordinary Quakerism, but as having become the superior arbiter of Quaker authenticity—certainly superior to those donors who naively believe that their \$25 million is going to "the Quakers." A "refined experiment" indeed.

#### LOSS OF A REAL CONSTITUENCY

Strong echoes from Albuquerque could still be heard at the 1991 annual meeting, particularly when some staff began talking of AFSC's "responsibilities" to its "constituencies." In such parlance, Quakers are reduced to merely one constituency among many, with only marginal significance.

Do I exaggerate? Not much. Consider Witte's account in Albuquerque of the consultations for AFSC's mid-1980s statement on Central America, which lasted nine months:

*"The following perspectives were taken account of in formulating the statement: that of the AFSC staff in Central America; the AFSC Peace education staff around the US; the AFSC Native American Concerns staff;*

*the AFSC Third World Coalition, the AFSC women's program; the AFSC Board itself, and, through the Board, the diversity of views among Friends in various Yearly Meetings."*

Note here that Friends came last, after five (mostly non-Quaker) staff groups, and their views were "taken account of" at second hand, via an unrepresentative board which does not consult its base. In nine months, there was not time to consult with, say, the clerks of Peace and Social Concern in the affiliated YMs. Doubtless they lacked the "refinement" and "style" to offer useful input. You get the idea.

In 1991 one could dare to hope that such arrogance has lately been on the defensive, as the destructive impact of this archaic orthodoxy has begun to become evident. Thus the scent of change in the air. But again, the "constituency talk" leaves in doubt whether it will be only cosmetic, a matter of better public relations and damage control, or something more substantial. The Search Committee's choice will be one crucial bellwether.

#### WANTED: REAL LEADERSHIP

Yet it may not be possible to quickly gauge the impact of its appointment. After all, Warren Witte may have learned something since 1988, and like Nixon going to China, perhaps he could help turn AFSC toward genuine, respectful interaction with its Quaker base community. These criticisms of his Albuquerque talk are not meant as a condemnation of his presumed candidacy; there will be no endorsements here.

But if neutral as to names, I am partisan about priorities. The Search Committee, and the Board which must approve its nominee, need to take affirmative action to ensure that such offensive attitudes are not perpetuated by AFSC's new chief executive; in fact, she or he should be explicitly charged with overcoming them. Such a change of institutional attitude cannot be taken for granted; it requires a mandate, and real leadership.

Such leadership should not come only from the Executive Secretary. The Board clerk has often been a key figure in AFSC's evolution (See AFL#80 for

reflections on Henry Cadbury's role as clerk). In Dulany Bennett, AFSC has a clerk who clearly intends to leave her mark on it. She was very much in charge at the annual meeting: poised, astute in her clerking, and displaying a sure grasp of the dynamics of AFSC's organizational leviathan.

Bennett also showed every intention of shaking up its ossified status quo. Her principal vehicle is to be a Planning Committee she persuaded the Board to establish over the summer. Its task, as part of the impending 75th anniversary observances, is to examine AFSC from top to bottom and prepare a set of recommendations for change to present to the Board in early 1993.

Further, as originator and ex-officio member of the committee, Bennett has already set much of its agenda. She explained to the Corporation that in her first year as Clerk she had travelled widely among AFSC regions. Her journeys had convinced her that important changes were needed. She then laid out a lengthy list of concerns and problems:

#### DULANY'S LAUNDRY LIST

AFSC's organizational structure lacks clarity, simplicity and coherence;

It probably is attempting to do much more than it efficiently can, with an inadequate sense of organizational priorities;

There is a widespread sense of a financial crunch overtaking programs and staff;

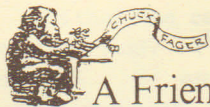
Tensions between national and regional offices, burnout and turnover among regional secretaries, and the relationship with the Society of Friends are all crying out for attention;

There is a high level of stress and tension, even mistrust, among staff, and between staff and committees.

Although she carefully prefaced this list with fulsome praise for the dedication of staff and committees, and the high overall quality of their work, Bennett's catalog of difficulties was more lengthy, trenchant, and candid.

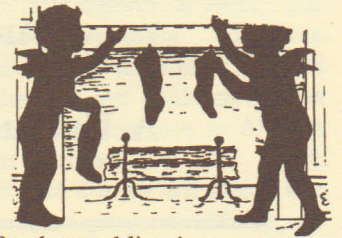
As this list suggests, any serious self-examination is sure to beget conflict inside AFSC, as priorities are questioned, structures realigned and budget cuts made. Conflict will be





## A Friendly Letter

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---Anne Carriere, New York City

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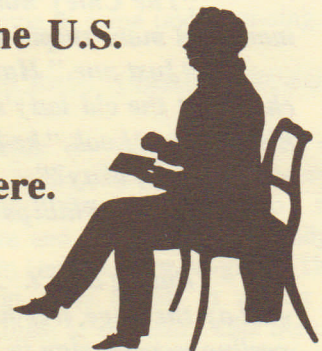
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*Hammerman stooped to pick up some papers that had fallen to the office floor. "Uh-oh!" he exclaimed. "Here's our wiseguy again." He handed a sheet to Fred.*

*"Oh. no," Phillips groaned.*

*The paper was stamped TOP SECRET, and headed "The Enterprise: Final Contingencies." Across it was scribbled, in large red magic marker letters: "THIS MUST NOT GO ON ANY LONGER! IF YOU WON'T TELL THE AUTHORITIES ABOUT IT, I SHALL!"*

*"The Chief won't like it," Phillips said. "Another breach of a secure office, and I look more and more stupid reporting them without any explanations or arrests. You got any ideas?"*

*"Just one," Hammerman said. "And you already don't like it. But it's all I've got. Let's check out the old lady's Quaker meeting tomorrow." He saw Phillips rolling his eyes, and put up his hands. "Look," he bargained. "I'll pick you up about 9:45. If you've got a better idea by then, we'll skip it, okay?"*

*"OK," Phillips answered with a sigh. "I better come up with something...."*

*But he didn't. At ten AM, Hammerman's Toyota turned off Georgetown Pike, a half mile west of the huge, tree-hidden CIA headquarters, into the driveway of a white clapboard church. The peeling wooden sign in its postage stamp front yard read "Langley Hill Friends Meeting."*

*"That's weird," Hammerman said, looking up at the building. "A steeple. Quakers aren't supposed to go for steeples."*

*"Oh yeah?" Phillips wasn't really interested. He yawned. "What do they believe?"*

*"I'm not exactly sure," Hammerman said. "But I seem to recall it doesn't include steeples. They're plain, you know; like the guy on the oatmeal box."*

*Now Phillips was getting uncomfortable. "You mean funny clothes? You taking me to some cult group, Hammerman?"*

*The driver grinned. "We'll see. But hey, Fred, you're a combat veteran, black belt in karate, and an expert pistol shot; you can handle these Quakers."*

*"Maybe," Phillips grumbled. "But I forgot my gun."*

---

Yes, the CIA thought they got a good deal in the early 1980s when they took over the fine old house built by a Quaker woman in the woods next to their Virginia headquarters. But then things began going wrong, dangerously wrong, for the riskiest CIA spy mission of the Reagan years....

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more intense if it dares to challenge to some of the obsolete leftist shibboleths that have long been AFSC dogma.

In that case, can Dulany Bennett take the heat? Does she have backbone? Her history contains an intriguing indicator: In 1988, when she was head of the Wilmington(Delaware) Friends School, there was an ugly racial incident which, she concluded, involved the threat of violence against a black student by four white seniors. She expelled the four whites, then faced down a storm of protest from outraged parents, who took their case to the local press and the school's board.

The board waffled, but Bennett didn't. She told them she would resign unless they backed her up; eventually they did. (Bennett hastens to add, in recounting this story, that she helped the expelled students find places in other schools and get into the colleges they had applied to.)

#### DFs IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

So it seems she can be tough. There was an initial public display of her determination at the annual meeting in a debate over whether to create a 3-person adjunct to the Planning Committee, specifically to ferret out the views of DFs, so they could be included in its deliberations.

This modest proposal came from Tom Angell, a retiring Corporation member from New York YM. Angell has been a persistent, if lonely, voice questioning AFSC's status quo. He noted that of the Planning Committee's 20-plus members, half were staff, and only seven were Friends. He doubted whether such an inside-dominated group could be counted on to seek out and include the views of Friends outside AFSC, and DFs in particular.

Bennett saw to it that the proposal was threshed and brought back to the floor. Then she kept it alive despite comments like the one from a California corporation member, who opined flatly, in the finest Albuquerque manner, *"I don't see why we should include anybody in this process who disagrees with us."* The 3-member advisory group was finally approved, as *"a confidence-building*

*measure."* It has yet to be appointed, and could in its turn be stacked with insiders and staff; but it was a positive gesture all the same, and we shall see.

So Dulany Bennett has skill and backbone. But then we come to perhaps the most telling questions about her as part of AFSC's new leadership: does she have vision, an idea of where she wants AFSC to go? Above all, does she intend to re-connect AFSC with its base constituency, the Society of Friends? Or will her tenure be that of a skilled technocrat, simply making AFSC somewhat "leaner and meaner" and more deft in public relations?

Here the jury is still out. Her background is vintage Philadelphia: Swarthmore College, teaching in Friends schools around the city, and working with AFSC; that about sums up her career. This is an authentic brand of Quakerism, but one that tends, to put it mildly, to be very provincial.

#### TAKING THE BLINDERS OFF

For instance, Bennett was still a bit fuzzy last month as to just how many yearly meetings there are in North Carolina--the state with the largest Quaker population. (Admittedly, the answer is complex: four YMs are represented there, plus the Piedmont Friends Fellowship, an ecumenical quasi-yearly meeting, and two unaffiliated monthly meetings.) Confusion on such points may be tolerable in you or me; but the Clerk of the **American Friends Service Committee** should have them down pat.

In this regard, Bennett had the good luck last year to move to Portland, Oregon where her husband found a job. There she is in close proximity to the finest flower of Evangelical Quakerism, at George Fox College in Newberg and at Portland's Reedwood Friends Church. Thus she has the chance, if she will only take it, to develop a sense of Quakerism far beyond the insular, insulting notions displayed in Albuquerque.

Bennett says she has been to Reedwood, but not yet to George Fox, and is in a women's study group with several evangelicals. Even this much

contact probably puts her ahead of most of her predecessors at AFSC; but it is still only a beginning. The same goes for her visit to the Kenya Friends World Conference last summer; it was her first extended exposure to African and British Friends. The wider understanding of Quakerism which she has within her grasp would be an invaluable asset in guiding the planning process she has initiated. It is what could make her tenure at the helm not merely effective, but wise.

Bennett says she knows this, and plans to pursue it. She announced one future foray at the annual meeting: When Ohio's letter was read, Bennett told the Corporation that the clerk who signed it, Susan Smith, was a Swarthmore classmate of hers, and she intended to visit Smith and see if they could come to some understanding.

#### VISIT SCENIC HARRISONBURG

Such a visit will be an eye-opener. Susan Smith, once a successful professor, abandoned all to turn Wilburite and move with her family to a farm in Harrisonburg, Virginia. There her plain dress blends in among the many Amish in the area. Like Bennett, Smith is an accomplished clerk, but in the distinctly different Ohio Wilburite style. In AFL #113 we described the breathtaking moment when Smith confronted Asia Bennett at Ohio Yearly Meeting and asked, of her and AFSC, *"Can you change?"* Smith's Quaker experience is a far cry from the bland variety in AFSC's Philadelphia.

As these reflections indicate, skepticism of AFSC's seriousness about re-rooting itself in Quakerism runs deep among DFs. But caveats aside, with Bennett's accession and a new Executive Secretary, AFSC has a chance to address a tide of inescapable change in ways that could begin to move it toward being what it started out to be, a vibrant expression of the religious experience of the Society of Friends in the form of service in the world. The hope for this is precarious and possibly fleeting, but it is real, at last.

\* \* \* \* \*

(NOTE: DF concerns are detailed in the book *Quaker Service At The Crossroads*, \$6.00 postpaid from my address.)



INSIDE: The American Friends Service Committee  
On the Brink of Major Change

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Baileys Crossroads, VA 22041

## THIS MONTH IN QUAKER HISTORY

In 12/1861, the North Carolina legislature considered "an ordinance concerning test oaths and sedition," under which every free male over sixteen in the state was to be required to appear publicly, renounce all allegiance to the United States, and agree to support, maintain and defend the new Confederate regime. Refusal meant banishment within thirty days.

North Carolina had been slow to join the nascent rebellion. South Carolina had seceded in 12th Month 1860, and Virginia in Fourth Month, 1861. Rebel agitators had toured the Tarheel state that darkening spring, demanding that it join them.

One reason North Carolina was slow to secede was because of North Carolina Yearly Meeting. This large body of Friends was totally against the rebellion; in one heavily Quaker county, the vote on secession was 45 for and 2570 against. But the rebel firebrands were implacable, and finally, on 5/20/1861, 38 days after Fort Sumter, the state declared for the South.

In part because of the reluctance about seceding, there was pressure to ensure the loyalty of the citizenry. The new public oath law was one result of the pressure. And as the Quaker historian Fernando Cartland says,

*"The reader will at once see the peculiar bearing of this statute upon Friends....They were opposed to slavery and war, they had been loyal to the United States, and had voted against secession, and they had no unity with a new government which they believed would perpetuate slavery."*

Fortunately, weighty Friends knew local politicians, and lobbied them intensely. When the bill came to the floor, Cartland quotes one legislator as saying it "would amount to a decree of wholesale expatriation of the Quakers, and on the expulsion of such a people from our midst the whole civilized world would say 'shame.'"

Ultimately the bill was defeated, the yearly meeting records noted. But "not so the hostility that was capable of suggesting it. In the excitement that now prevailed throughout the state, in the effort to promote volunteering, Friends were in various ways exposed to much anxiety. Many left the State, though every means was now used to prevent this, and several parties of emigrants were arrested and brought back."

Draft age Carolina Quakers were subjected to especially difficult trials: the Confederate conscription laws steadily broadened their reach as the war dragged on, ultimately covering all between sixteen and sixty.

## QUAKER CHUCKLE

Harold Smuck of Indiana Yearly Meeting tells of visiting his brother Robert on his farm not long ago. He found Robert entertaining a pair of young granddaughters with stories of his youth on the farm. "When I was a boy," he said, "I used to have a pet fish that I kept in the pond over there. And the fish would come when I called it, and I would put it on a leash and take it for walks."

The young faces looked up at him in amazement. "Then one day," he went on, "I was walking with my

*fish over the bridge, and he slipped out of the leash, fell off the bridge into the water, and the poor thing drowned."*

The younger girl's mouth dropped open in astonishment. But her older sister thought for a moment and then said, "Grandpa, I don't believe you."

"Well, why on earth not, dear?" asked Robert.

"Because," she answered perceptively, "you don't have a bridge."