

CINCINNATI FRIENDS MEETING 2009 Year-End Committee Reports

Burial Committee Report, 2009

"A Year of Opening the Meeting to End-of-Life Transitions and Reclaiming our History"

In 2009, the Burial Committee experienced a more active year than is typical. That liveliness grew from a desire to connect more closely with Spring Grove Cemetery and introduce our faith community to the wonderful resource we have. Our cemetery within Spring Grove offers so much more than a peaceful, final resting place. It exudes history, offers bountiful natural beauty (located within the larger arboretum) and a space to, perhaps, reconnect with Quakers who have preceded us: some we have known and others who may just inspire us. The centerpiece of our lot is a statue of Levi Coffin, a gift from Cincinnati's early 1900s African American Community.

Spring Grove became Cincinnati Friends burial ground in 1875 after numerous moves of the meeting house and grounds. Unfortunately, in the relocations, there were less of remains to move and several were often deposited into one grave, culminating in many marked "#unknown."

In February, committee members met with Spring Grove officials, who provided detailed maps of lot 101, an up-to-date list of who is known to be buried where, and suggested we prompt those thinking about burial plans to make them and reserve a space. That appointment also urged Spring Grove to make some much-needed physical improvements within our section.

In October, we scheduled a tour of our portion as well as Quakers located in other sections. Over 20 of all ages - including interested Community Friends - attended the well-structured walk-and-talk session conducted by a knowledgeable docent, who loved what she learned about Quakers. It was a beautiful, brisk autumn day on which to view so many architectural and natural riches.

Since then, a number of Cincinnati Friends have made or are in the process making their burial plans. It is gratifying to be an instrument in facilitating that life transition and opening the congregation to this important discussion.

The Burial Committee hopes to continue facilitating those discussions and planning in 2010.

—Cathy Barney, Clerk

Community Life Committee Report, 2009

The Community Life Committee consists of: Jeff Arnold & Joan Effertz (Co-Clerks), Carol Hoffman, Jim & Donna Kimmel.

We planned and executed the following events in 2009:

1. A Spring Celebration at the Highlands Nature Preserve. This was a 2-night retreat over the weekend of May 29 - 31. This was well-attended and enjoyed by all. Good fellowship and community building by all who were there. We plan to do this again in 2010.

2. A repeat of the Swim Party in August at the Fairfax Swim Club. This was fun for those who attended, and we had a good turnout for swimming, conversation, and pizza.

3. The Fall Picnic was planned and then cancelled this year. Too many scheduling conflicts and then we ran out of time.

4. Community Life supported two fall events: We provided a Simple Meal for the Spiritual Retreat on October 3; and refreshments for the Spring Grove tour.

Looking forward into 2010, a Neighborhood Gathering is scheduled for February 7. We will be re-organizing the neighborhoods, selecting new facilitators, looking at neighborhood priorities, and getting some events on their individual calendars.

We will also be asking for a little time to help us set priorities on a few proposed upcoming Community Life events, such as a Star Party in February and another Highlands retreat.

Other possibilities for 2010 include another Swim Party in the summer, the fall picnic (possible bike ride instead of canoe trip this year), and the Holiday Family Craft Party again in December.

—Jeff Arnold & Joan Effertz, Co-Clerks

Education Committee (Laid Down)

Given the inability of members of the Education Committee to find a time when all could meet, the committee was laid down. Instead of an Education Committee, our First Day School teachers function under the leadership of one Friend who serves as “Head Teacher.” So far, the First Day program is running smoothly as follows: on Sundays, the schedule rotates among four teachers, each of whom covers one of the following subjects with the children: First Sunday, a Sharing Circle; Second Sunday, Old Testament/God in Nature; Third Sunday, New Testament; Fourth Sunday, Quaker Faith and History. The Head Teacher takes the class on Fifth Sundays.

As for Adult Education, a Discussion and/or Worship Sharing group meets at 10:00 on Sundays, currently focusing on the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. Quakerism 101 is offered regularly as a study group. Spiritual nurture groups, such as the Centering Prayer Group, the Circle of Trust Group, the Prayer Shawl Ministry Group and the Practice of Poetry Group, continue to nourish the spiritual life of many in the meeting.

Hospitality Committee Report, 2009

Throughout 2009, the Hospitality Committee of Cincinnati Friends Meeting continued to encourage fellowship among members and attenders by coordinating the Meeting's hospitality functions, primarily refreshments after worship. This also entailed related responsibilities, such as replenishing kitchen supplies, cleaning linens, and so forth.

—Sabrina Damowsky, Co-Clerk

Library Committee Report, 2009

In 2009, the Library Committee consisted of Mary Peck (Senior Member), Sharon Kowatch and Kathleen Stern (co-chairs). During this time, the library shelves were re-configured, several pictures and plaques re-framed, and additional books added to the library (see appended sheet).

With the culmination of the book sale in December, 2009, a rotating exhibit of books will be displayed in the entryhall of the Meeting House. Each month, new additions will be highlighted. A synopsis of one selected book will be displayed on the exhibit table; the review of the current selection will be featured in a blog about Quaker faith and spirituality:

<http://friendlycivdecincinnatiLbloRspot.com/>. The first review (on *The Wisdom to Know the Difference* by Eileen Flanagan) is currently available on the blog.

Additions to the library during 2009:

Quaker History and Thought:

Bill, J. Brent: *Holy Silence: Gift of Quaker Spirituality* (2005)

Bill, J. Brent (ed): *Imagination and Spirit* (2002)
 Bill, J. Brent: *Sacred Compass* (2008)
 Buckley, Paul & Angell, Stephen (eds): *Quaker Bible Reader* (2006)
 Buckley, Paul, Ed.: *Twenty-First Century Penn* (2003)
 Flanagan, Eileen: *The Wisdom to Know the Difference* (2009)
 Friends' General Conference: *Lighting Candles in the Dark* (1992)
 Smith, Robert Lawrence: *A Quaker Book of Wisdom* (1999)

Christian History:

Cahill, Thomas: *Desire of the Everlasting Hills* (1999)

Spiritual Practice:

Greer, Colin & Kohl, Herbert (eds): *A Call to Character* (1995)
 Haggerty, Barbara Bradley: *Fingerprints of God* (2009)
 Remen, Rachel Naomi: *Kitchen Table Wisdom* (1996)
 Taylor, Jeremy: *Dream Work* (1983)

Peace:

Kidder, Tracy: *Mountains Beyond Mountains* (2003)
 Kidder, Tracy: *Strength in What Remains* (2009)

—Sharon Kowatch & Kathleen Stern, Co-Clerks

Ministry & Counsel

Ministry & Counsel discerned a need to recognize ministry among all Friends in the Meeting as early Friends did. After many meetings and much discernment, Ministry & Counsel established guidelines for "Encouraging and Affirming Ministry in the Meeting" and as of February 2010, we now have three Clearness Committees for Discernment of Ministry in various stages of the process.

Music Committee Report, 2009

The Music Committee has not functioned since I assumed the position of Clerk last summer. The two members on the committee due to personal responsibilities have basically not been able to attend Meeting or only sporadically. This was an issue I felt needed to be addressed in 2010.

However, I feel that the music ministry has had a positive influence on the worship experience of the Meeting in the past seven months. There has been a definite sense of freedom in Open Worship to request hymns be sung. Christmas Eve service incorporated music offered by several younger people, including Autumn Barney, the granddaughter of Julia Poppe, and Matthew Hawkins and Lauren Prewitt. This was exciting to me as Clerk since they represent the future music ministry of Cincinnati Friends Monthly Meeting.

I wish to thank the following who have been willing to offer their music gifts for First Day worship: Lola Chaney, Julia Poppe, Suzanne Johnson, Uly Marin, and Matthew Hawkins. However, since Christmas Lola Chaney has made the decision to retire from the position of church organist. Julia Poppe has a long-standing tradition of wintering in Florida. As a result it has been more challenging to schedule a variety of musicians for the various First Day services.

In closing, I want to thank the Meeting for their confidence in allowing me to serve in the position of Music Clerk. My calling has been to endeavor to fulfill the words given in the section on the Music Committee in the Cincinnati Friends Monthly Meeting Handbook 2009-2010, page 24:

The purpose of the music ministry is to prepare hearts for the centrality of our Meeting - silent worship, vocal ministry from members, and a message by the minister/guest speaker. The music should not call undue attention to itself or be a vehicle for individuals to "perform." The prelude, especially, should be quiet and worshipful since it leads directly into silent worship.

—Bob Bray, Clerk

Peace & Social Concerns Committee

The Committee relinquished oversight of fund-raising for an Afghan school to a committee organized to aid this important project. The Peace & Social Concerns Committee originated the effort two years ago.

The Committee was unanimous in its decision to concentrate efforts locally or in the service of Quaker organizations, and firm in its resolve to involve the Meeting in its efforts.

The Peace and Social & Concerns Committee initiated and developed the following activities during the past year:

- Prepared and served meals to residents of Tender Mercies, an organization serving homeless persons with histories of emotional and mental disabilities.
- Held a book sale in an effort to raise funds for charitable projects. The sale was successful.
- Organized a month-long "Bucket Brigade" for Bethany House, an organization which offers a full range of housing, education, and assistance to homeless and low-income women and children. Meeting members/attenders contributed cleaning items to fill 20 buckets.

The Committee placed in the Meeting House entryway literature display racks with information on activities and needs of deserving organizations. The aim is to acquaint members/attenders with possible projects.

Though Peace & Social Concerns Committee suffered setbacks because of membership changes, we hope to stabilize the committee in the year ahead.

—Mary Peck, Committee Member

Trustees' Report, 2009

The major projects for 2009 included repairs and upgrades for the building so it can be in good repair for the foreseeable future. This included replacement windows in the Office, Library, and Meeting Room that are more energy-efficient, not susceptible to termites, easy-to-clean, and never need painting. Also, new shingles with 80-MPH wind resistance and a 30-year and guarantee were installed on the pitched roof over the Meeting Room. All previous roofing material was removed and replaced.

Other projects and purchases included:

- New energy-star refrigerator for the kitchen
- Replaced all the light bulbs in the Meeting Room after roof replacement
- Handled the sale of the Persian Rugs to benefit the Afghan Project
- Purchased a new Shop-Vac for cleaning the building
- Worked with pest Control Company to control ants and mice in building
- Worked with our insurer on Personal Injury claim submitted
- Various plumbing-related problems in restrooms were repaired

- Changed Investment Companies plus opened an account with Vanguard
- Working to reduce our holdings in certain securities for safer balance
- Updated guidelines and objectives for our investment holdings
- Hired tree service to remove large damaged tree in lower parking lot
- Moved pews in Meeting Room to obtain better seating arrangement
- Had all furnaces and A/C units serviced on seasonal basis
- Meeting Room furnace needed repair and a new Humidistat installed
- Approved purchasing a Defibrillator for the Meeting
- Contracted for lawn mowing, leaf removal, and snow removal

—*Fred Krisher, Clerk*

Young Friends Committee

Teens from three area Meetings—Cincinnati Friends, Community Friends and Eastern Hills Friends—gathered on the first Friday of each month for fun and fellowship, but they also participated in several service projects:

- winterizing homes in Cincinnati's Over-the-Rhine neighborhood
- working at the FreeStore Foodbank to put together food packets for hungry children
- acting as escorts/helpers at the prom for the developmentally handicapped in lieu of one of their game nights
- helping with the grounds clean-up at our Meetinghouse...(along with much crazy tractor driving).

—*Rachel Ernst, Young Friends Leader & Donna Kimmel, Co-Clerk*