Quaker House Report to SAYMA
June 1, 2012

After an extensive search, Steve and Lynn Newsom of Charlotte Friends Meeting have been employed to succeed Chuck Fager when he retires in November, 2012. Technically it is Steve that we are actually hiring but that Lynn will lend her skills to the position as well.

Steve and Lynn are both longtime members of the Society of Friends. Together they have been involved with Monthly Meetings in Chapel Hill, Cincinnati, Roanoke and Charlotte. Lynn served on the early Quaker House board as a representative from the Chapel Hill Meeting. Since 2007, they together have served on the QH board from the Charlotte Meeting. They know what we are all about. In addition, Steve has experience growing up in a military family, as a veteran, and as a volunteer with the Plowshares Peace Center in Roanoke and the Center for Peace Education in Cincinnati.

Quaker House continues to pursue its primary mission of participating in the national GI Rights Hotline. The following description of the full array of GI Rights services available through QH is available on the website (http://quakerhouse.org/):

"If you are in the military, we can help you understand your rights:

- Discharge procedures & regulations
- Delayed Enlistment Program (DEP): If you have signed up for DEP and want to get out
- If you are AWOL or UA we can advise you on how to resolve your status.
- Conscientious Objection: If your conscience or religious faith is telling you not to take part in war, you may be a Conscientious Objector (CO), and the military is supposed to respect your beliefs. We can advise you about CO claims and help you through the process.
- Truth in Recruiting: If you or someone you know is thinking about joining the military, read this *important information* first, especially the messages from Sgt. Abe the Honest Recruiter.

We offer an individual sounding board, to help you understand your options so you can make up your mind in an informed manner. Our service is free and private. We do not report to any military or government agency. We are supported by private donations."

In addition to GI Rights, Quaker House participates in other initiatives commensurate with its mission, reflecting the energies and talents of Chuck Fager, our current director. Two important examples are helping to organize a local response to homophobic statements by clergy provoked by the acrimony surrounding a state constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage. Second, Chuck continues his work against torture as one of the coordinators of QUIT, the Quaker Initiative to End Torture. They hope to develop ways to remind Friends of the continuing need for accountability in order to begin to return the US to the ranks of law-abiding nations. The larger goal is to resist the pressure to forget about US official torture. Chuck continues to visit the Johnston County Commission to witness monthly against the continued use of the airport there for torture flights. He has also developed a new "Investigate Torture, Mr. President," postcard to help build pressure for accountability. To get a free packet of postcards for yourself or your Meeting, write Chuck at Quaker House.

Financially, Quaker House is operating within its budget but our new directors will need to keep their eye on maintaining and extending its donor base to remain strong in the coming years in terms of program support and maintenance of the physical facilities. SAYMA remains a strategic partner in the good work of Quaker House.

Submitted,

Guy Larry Osborne
West Knoxville Friends Meeting