

Clerk's Message

From Sally Weaver Sommer



LAKE ERIE YEARLY MEETING

Bulletin



Sally Weaver
Sommer

This summer during our annual sessions Athens Friends gave us a gift. They brought to our attention an episode of child-to-child sexual abuse that took place within their monthly meeting and during our annual sessions 15 years ago. They shared their dismay that this happened within their midst and they did not recognize it. Then they offered a possible response for us to consider. After careful discernment, the yearly meeting approved the following minute:

LEYM Friends recognize that we in the Religious Society of Friends are not immune to the possibility of sexual abuse in our Meetings. Such abuse may occur between children, not just between adults and children, and by any gender. Such sexual abuse has occurred among LEYM Friends. Let our awareness of this, along with our loving and caring for our children, allow us to honor small feelings of discomfort, to empower us as individuals to speak up and speak out when led, and, thus, to limit the chances of sexual abuse happening in our Meetings in the future.

We are being called to be attentive – to watch, to listen, and to respond when we note feelings of discomfort either within ourselves or in others. As Quakers we have been given the tools to do this. We have learned how to be attentive to the spirit in worship. In the same way we can learn to be attentive to our children and to each other. We need to listen carefully to both verbal and nonverbal cues. This takes being fully present and listening with our full attention.

It is good to see that people are responding to the sexual abuse that happens in all kinds of settings throughout society. Religious bodies throughout the world are discerning how to respond to sexual abuse in their communities. Trainings are held and people are being held accountable in new ways. Personnel at colleges and universities are being trained in their obligations to report sexual abuse. Men are conducting training sessions for other men about sexual assault prevention. Community organizing and education regarding the prevalence of human

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trafficking, much of it involved in the sex trade, is taking place to a greater extent. War time sexual assaults are being reported as the heinous crimes that they are.

I invite all of our meetings to consider carefully the minute that was approved at our annual sessions. Some of us will be led to learn more about the dynamics of sexual abuse and to be trained in both prevention of sexual abuse and healing processes of individuals and communities who have experienced sexual abuse. As we learn to do this in our monthly and yearly meetings, we can reach out to others in our communities and beyond to prevent sexual abuse and to be part of the healing process when abuse has taken place. My prayer is that we can reflect the light that is so desperately needed to dispel the darkness of sexual abuse that is far too prevalent in our families, communities and religious bodies. Thank you, Athens Friends, for your courage, sensitivity and patience in addressing sexual abuse within your monthly meeting and for inviting the rest of us to join in this important work.

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A Special Report on the Olney Friends School

July 24, 2014

Dear Lake Erie Yearly Meeting Friends,

I am pleased to report that Olney Friends School continues its good work after completing another successful year. There are many initiatives underway, but a few may be of particular interest to LEYM and its members.

To begin, Olney has recently acquired a new school building, the former home of the Barnesville Independent School. The building, located directly behind the Stillwater Meeting-house premises, is being converted into a Science and Technology Center. Ohio Yearly Meeting gifted the building to Olney. The building is only 15 years old and will drastically improve the science program. Renovations are being completed this summer with plans to begin using the building when school starts this fall.

Also notable, the Olney community discerned and declared its unwillingness to lease its mineral rights. An offer to buy the mineral rights had been made, and would have solved many of Olney's financial needs. However, the Olney community did not compromise its beliefs. After great deliberation, the school refused the money. The process of considering all options regarding the lease offer renewed the school's identity and commitment to its values.

Finally, Olney is still emphasizing stewardship of the Earth with its students. The students

have a “farm team” that is responsible for collecting eggs from the school chickens and tending to the school gardens. This is an experience that is becoming increasingly rare for high school students.

We are fortunate to have places like Olney with us. LEYM’s support of the school is well directed and very appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,

Greg Mott

A Report of a New Ministry in the Cleveland Meeting

From Linda Brandenburg

A single word can have the power to illuminate to inflame – or to inspire. As Friends we know deeply the strength of the rightly chosen word at the rightly chosen time. Our history has given us a vocabulary: seed, light, calling, clearness, gathered, leading, seasoning, and ministry. These words convey layers of meaning and complexity.

CFM has chosen to focus on one of these words – ministry.

Historically, Friends’ meetings have named, acknowledged and recorded those individuals who were felt to have a gift for ministry, usually focusing on the spoken ministry in meeting for worship. In a reaction to what many perceived as a hierarchy within Quakerism, this practice was discontinued over time. By the 20th Century most unprogrammed meetings did not record ministers – or elders. CFM has chosen to not be limited by past decisions. We feel led to acknowledge each other’s gifts, to nurture those gifts. In response to that leading we have recorded Constance McPeak Green as a minister. We have chosen to name her calling to a listening ministry, a speaking ministry, and a

practice of compassion. Connie has shared these gifts with our meeting, with Lake Erie Yearly Meeting, with FGC and with the world.

There are innumerable examples of Connie’s right use of her gift and we cherish each of these. However, we also feel it is important to acknowledge that each of us has gifts; each of us can be used by God. We are acknowledging the source of these gifts and we are led to focus on – and to use – our own gifts. Recording Connie’s ministry was not essential. Her work and compassion are not defined by labels: God’s work is not contained in a word. This is not a designation of status. It is a call to Connie and to all of us to respond to the work God is doing within us.

News on the Fremont Worship Group

From Theresa and Herbert Lindsay

We enjoy our group. Our numbers are small with typical attendance being 8-12. We share a sense of belonging and value caring for others. We invite others but are not doing much in the way of outreach to attract new members. Our vision of God, of Spirit, and of its role in our human lives is important to us all, but it is fair to say our views vary. Our group is somewhat connected with Grand Rapids Friends.

We schedule our meetings by the quarter to meet every other Sunday evening at 5:30 pm. Hosts rotate as needed to match schedules of members. The host usually offers a query, some of which come from GR Friends, from other Quaker sources, or from books or articles recently read. Sometimes they come from poems or songs, too. Often, queries prompt sharing, but sometimes there is quiet contemplation, although not without praise, gratitude, love and compassion underlying our time together. We help and support each other in small but meaningful ways in our local rural communities.

Many in our group are also involved in Newaygo County People for Peace and related activities organized by this peace-advocating group.

Greetings from the Editors

Welcome, friends, to the fall 2014 issue of the Lake Erie Meeting *Bulletin*. Planning for this issue began in July at the annual conference, where we were entrusted with editing the Bulletin and adopted the LEYM theme: Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges.

We suggested that Friends use this year's theme as inspiration to write for the *Bulletin*, and as a result we have some remarkable reports, beginning with Clerk Sally Weaver Sommer's naming the Athens Meeting's discovery of child-to-child sexual abuse "a gift" because it enabled them to lower barriers that many of us live with and accept. Other accounts of remarkable change include Rosemary Coffey's report of folk dancing in Eastern Congo with dancers from Rwanda and Kenya as well as the US, Deborah Smith's "sacred moment" of connection with a young woman in a homeless shelter, and Les Walden's story of a difficult personal relationship healed.

This issue also contains reports from the Finance Committee, from the LEYM work camp in Detroit, from Olney Friends' School, the Cleveland Meeting, and the Fremont Worship Group. Submitting grave concerns that were discussed at LEYM are Judy Greenberg (clean water) and Brad Cotton (affordable health care). We think all of these reports (even the finance committee's), when read carefully, will yield insights about some metaphorical building we need to do in order to get rid of harmful obstructions.

In the process of putting together this *Bulletin*, we have ourselves discovered barriers and surmounted them. We have also built some rewarding new relationships. So we are grateful for the support and assistance, for the photographs offered to us by Les Walden, Peggy Daub, and Rosemary Coffey, for guidance from the Publications and Archives Committee, and for advice and assistance from Mathilda Navias and Les Walden. We are humbled by this first experience as co-editors; we're pretty sure there are some errors and quite a bit of room for improvement. So we invite comments from readers to help us improve.

In the light,

Susan S. and Berch Carpenter



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News from Finance Committee

By Jeff Cooper

Thank you! On behalf of the Yearly Meeting, the Finance Committee thanks the anonymous donor of a generous gift of \$10,000, received in May 2014. The donor requested that this gift be distributed among the General Fund (\$3000), the High School Teen Retreat Program fund (\$3500), and traveling ministries (also \$3500). To accommodate the last part of this request, a new Traveling Ministries fund was established at Annual Sessions to support the work of appointed traveling ministers from within the Yearly Meeting.

Printed below are the financial report for 2014 Annual Meeting and the approved budget for 2014-15. The budget includes three notable increases: an additional \$1200 in the FWCC Travel line to help Friends from less affluent parts of world attend the next International Representatives Meeting, an additional \$700 for the Spiritual Formation program, and \$1200 to support future service projects; fortunately, all but \$600 of these increases are offset by decreases elsewhere. Please note that budget is based upon a suggested per-member contribution of \$41, up \$1 from last year.

Financial Report for 2014 Annual Meeting

Budget for 2014-15

Income

Fees	
Housing and commuter fees	\$6,735.00
Meals	\$7,156.60
Registration fees	\$5,270.00
Payment for lost key	20.00
Additions and subtractions	
Donations	\$1,022.00
Less program discounts	(\$258.69)
Less scholarships	(\$4,137.88)
Total Income	\$15,807.03

Expenses

Housing and commuter fees	\$6,735.00
Meals	\$7,156.60
Honoraria	\$200.00
Swimming and bowling	\$246.80
Copies	\$86.20
Total Expenses	\$14,424.60

Net Income \$1,382.43

Adjustment \$.18

Adjusted Net Income \$1382.61

(= sum deposited in bank less total paid out)

Travel	3000
Office	50
Contract worker	2040
Finance	50
Publications	3000
Advancement & Outreach	600
Ministry & Nurture	300
Clerk's Fund	300
FGC contribution	4500
Records project	100
FWCC Travel	2400
Youth Activity Fund	1000
High School Retreat Program	6300
Spiritual Formation	800
Friends School in Detroit	4500
Olney Friends School	600
Consultation Fund	0
Ministry scholarships	500
Service projects	1200
Insurance	500
Total Expenses	\$31,740

Contributions 29,725

FFC Payouts 600

Other Income 250

Total Income \$30,575

Deficit \$1165

Suggested contribution per member \$41

THE FRIENDLY FOLKDANCERS TOUR EASTERN CONGO AUGUST 9-23, 2014

Submitted by Rosemary Coffey

As the eight of us left our homes in the US (CA, WI, and PA), Kenya (Nairobi), and Rwanda (Kigali), we were understandably apprehensive about what awaited us: violence? disease? hostility? misunderstandings? What we were getting ourselves into, anyway?

It is good to be able to report that none of the above happened. We got along extremely well as a troupe, despite the need to use at least two languages in our meetings: usually French and English, or English and Swahili. Early on additional people showed up to travel and dance with us – specifically, one of the daughters of our host, Mkoko Boseka, and her husband, the local doctor in charge of the hospital in Abeka. Mkoko's wife Chantal also came along, so that often we were ten people in the back of a van clearly meant for no more than eight, bumping along some of the rockiest and hilliest roads I have ever driven on ... and this doesn't even count the occasions when the bridge was out and we forded a local river or two. Lynne, from Oakland, CA, tore open her right shin the first time she tried to board the van, which led to numerous stitches and frequent re-evaluations by our doctor, though one lucky outcome was that she and her husband henceforth rode in the front of the van instead of being squeezed into the back. (The most recent report from home is that she's doing well.)

We presented nine programs in nine days, all of them on a dirt surface marked by roots and rocks and circumscribed by a symbolic string-made fence. We estimated 400-450 in every audience, most of them small children, sitting or standing on all four sides. It wasn't easy persuading them to join us in some simple dances at the end, but ultimately we succeeded. The local pastors who wrote evaluations were consistently surprised that we were not youngsters in our twenties or thirties! We had to show them that even older folks could indeed dance and entertain them.



Here's the entire group wearing our Middle East suite costumes (from L to R): Hudson (Kenya), Rosemary (US), Antoine (Rwanda), Aline (Rwanda), Peter (US), Guillaume (Congo), Mkoko (our host), Mark (US), Rose (Congo), Lynne (US), and Sarah (Kenya).

Map of Southern Africa



We had plenty to eat throughout, including lots of rice and beans and fish from Lake Tanganyika, but with all the dancing and rehearsing I don't think any of us gained any weight! Our main impression of eastern Congo, however, was one of extreme poverty. The little kids were mostly in rags, numbers of them with the protruding bellies and patches of light-colored hair that speak of kwashiorkor, a form of malnutrition caused by insufficient protein. Everywhere we went we saw needs: for books in the local Quaker school, for a wheelbarrow to move bricks around in the brick making project, for a reliable source of electricity, for replacement of disposable materiel at the hospital (so they won't have to keep on washing the gloves for re-use!), for support for a project aimed at allowing young people from different tribes to get to know each other by forming an orchestra, and others. Stay tuned for information about opportunities to support some of these projects in the future! Congolese Friends are counting on those of us who are more fortunate to help them improve their lives and cement the currently precarious peace in their country.

Report on the 2014 LEYM Workcamp:

Submitted by Peggy Daub

Two groups from Lake Erie Yearly Meeting volunteered their hands and hearts to work with Cass Community Social Services (CCSS) in Detroit this year. Six teens, under the direction of Robb Yurisko, held their summer retreat with CCSS the weekend of July 18-20, followed immediately by an intergenerational group of 12 (11 adults and 1 youth) from Sunday to Thursday, July 20-24. In all, seven monthly meetings within LEYM were represented: Ann Arbor, Athens, Birmingham, Cleveland, Detroit, Pittsburgh, and Red Cedar.



Lunch Break at the Workcamp



Street Cleaning by the LEYM work crew

The work CCSS does in Detroit dates back to the Great Depression of the 1930s, when Cass United Methodist Church decided they would help to feed the hungry. As Reverend Sue Pethoud, the volunteer coordinator, informed us in our introductory meeting, "we have been feeding people ever since and that feels good." They now provide some 1 million meals per year. They have grown in several different directions beyond serving food as way has opened for them, and now provide temporary housing for homeless men, women, children, and individuals with HIV/Aids. Last fall they opened a newly renovated apartment house that provides permanent housing for over 40 formerly homeless individuals whose rent is based on income. They provide activities for developmentally disabled adults that includes employing some of them to sort paper in a shredding operation, with the resulting bales of shredded paper sold for recycling. There are also several other CCSS green

industries which employ formerly homeless men manufacturing doormats and sandals from discarded tires, and coasters from repurposed wood and glass.

In order to accomplish all of this, CCSS welcomes thousands of volunteers each year who work under the direction of their staff. The LEYM teens spent Saturday, July 19, shredding paper in the morning and assisting in the kitchen to cook for CCSS clients in the afternoon. The intergenerational group worked three days and helped to make sandals and doormats, sorted and shredded paper, cooked a meal, played and talked with developmentally disabled adults, and helped to clean up an amazingly overgrown yard of a derelict building directly across the street from the CCSS campus in order to provide a safer environment for clients. Both groups also enjoyed seeing some other sites in Detroit, with some of the teens worshipping with Detroit Meeting on Sunday, and the intergenerational group visiting Detroit's Wailing Wall (built in 1940 to create a segregated neighborhood) and enjoying a dinner of Mediterranean food in Dearborn one evening.

CCSS made this camp easy to organize because they were able to provide housing and meals for volunteers, and did a good job of planning our work. We were able to see the contributions we made and to interact for part of the time with the clients who are helped there.

Robb Yurisko's report on the teens' experience included the following:

On a personal note, this has been my favorite retreat thus far. It was so fun to be part of something greater and be able to process that experience with our teens. We ate breakfast and lunch with the folks receiving services there. We were made a special breakfast of eggs and bagels that the homeless population was not offered and we felt horrible about that and processed it. Lunch was especially hard for some of our teens because there were well over 100 people eating with us and many remarked they were scared because they had never been exposed to this population and it felt different and unsafe. There were lots of opportunities to talk about racism and class-ism during this trip. We made our work fun and had lots of laughs while we worked.



Happy hands at work

The intergenerational group experienced similar realizations and lessons. We were trained in making sandals and doormats by people whose life experiences were totally foreign to us, we were jolted by the simple accommodations and meals, we laughed and worshipped together morning and evening, and fell into bed tired to the bone. This year's theme for our annual sessions of "Breaking Barriers and Building Bridges" was fitting to our experience, as we experienced both barriers and bridges in our short but spirit-filled time in Detroit with CCSS.

Our recommendation for the future is that we alternate between workcamps with a homebase in Bluffton and workcamps based in urban areas. That means planning a workcamp for 2015 that would look more like the one we did last year, which had two half-days of work in Lima with participants arriving a day early here in Bluffton. We had a great return rate of ten people who participated last year and came again this year, but one of the purposes of this presentation is to extend a warm invitation to all of you to join us next year. The combination of hard work and great fellowship will stretch you physically and spiritually.

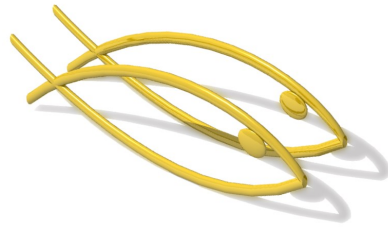


front row: Dave Avner, Becky Morehouse, Rosemary Coffey,
Jonah Brownfain, Nancy Taylor, Ellerie Brownfain, Susan
Hartman

back row: Bill Lefler, Peggy Daub, Dave Goeddeke, Dolores Avner,
Thomas Taylor

A First Step

by Les Walden



More years ago than I can easily count I went to work at a local television station, first as a stagehand, then as a film editor, and finally as a director. I was assigned to work with Larry Chambers, who played Ruffles the Clown on an afternoon children's show.

Larry had even less experience than my nine months and it was difficult for the two of us to get onto the same wavelength and even more difficult for the two of us to talk out our differences when things fell apart, as they often did. I wanted us to do better and I knew we could do better, but how? Each of us had his guard up every time we tried to talk.

Finally, I decided that on the very next occasion when I could possibly say anything nice to Larry about himself – whether it was about the show or not – I would.

That afternoon, as he was ready to get into his clown suit, I noticed he was wearing cufflinks that were shaped like line drawings of fish. I told him they looked very graceful and understated.

Without hesitating, Larry took the cufflinks off and handed them to me. "Here," he said, "I'd like you to have them."

Of course I had to refuse and I did; this wasn't what was supposed to happen. But he insisted over and over until eventually I did take them.

I realized that this was his way of doing just what I was doing, reaching out to open a channel between us and to make it work I had to let him succeed.

Success wasn't instantaneous, but it came fairly quickly and we were soon able to work out our problems by speaking carefully to one another and listening carefully as well.



Teachings from the Streets: Lesson #4

By Deborah Smith

When I contemplated, “What gives me faith?” I realized it is those sacred moments in the midst of ordinary, daily life that strengthen my faith, make it so much harder for me to turn away or drown in doubt.

Take yesterday, for instance. I went to the shelter for homeless youth after being away visiting family. As I walked in, one of the young men, Anthony, smiled and asked tentatively, “Did you miss us?” Reflecting silently for just a moment, I was aware how much I had missed the youth: I thought of them frequently; wondered what they were doing on Thanksgiving; and worried whether I contributed to their sense of abandonment or loneliness by not being there at my usual time. I looked Anthony straight in the eye and said, “Yes, I missed you a lot.” He continued to meet my gaze, then slowly smiled, walked up and hugged me, tentatively. This was our sacred moment, and, in that moment, Anthony knew he was not alone.

As I prepared to leave the shelter later that night, I experienced another sacred moment; this time with a young woman, G. G is really tough. (Fill in any metaphor you want – then add some extra toughness.) While saying goodnight, a mini-fracas erupted as the youth debated what type of cookies I should bake the following week. G suggested Rice Krispie treats -- unanimously and loudly vetoed. As the troops narrowed the selection to chocolate chip and oatmeal raisin to please most, G said, “I like macadamia nut cookies.” Turning to G, I told her I would find a recipe for macadamia nut cookies and include them among the Christmas cookies I planned to bake later in the month. Who would have guessed? That simple little offer reached G’s heart: her eyes widened and she softened – face, body and voice. With a shocked look, she asked, “You’d do that? for me?” (“For me” was not spoken but sounded loudly in the silence.) I almost cried in that sacred moment when G let me in and also entrusted me with the crucial responsibility of remembering to make macadamia nut cookies for her. I won’t forget or betray her fledgling steps towards trusting in another possibility.

I arrived home near midnight, checked email and clicked a link to a blog posting “Faith without Expectations.” When I read the question, “What feeds your faith?” I knew instantly that it is these sacred moments in the midst of daily life – in the trenches if you will. These moments are precious to me: they make me grateful to be alive; they make my life worthwhile; and they make it impossible for me to drown in doubt. I “know” the Divine Presence (for me, God) is in and among us; and I “know” we have the capacity to open to boundless love that makes hope real -- because I have experienced that love and God’s Presence in these moments of shared naked humanity.

It’s Not OK

by Brad Cotton

I never served in Vietnam. Through four decades on the streets and ERs of Cleveland, Columbus, southern Ohio I have been blessed to work with many EMTs, firefighters, police officers, RNs, Docs as fully human as Vietnam nurse Lynda Van Devanter, author of *Home Before Morning*. “Joan of Arcadia” was a rare quality values-driven television show; its theme song often accompanies me on the commute to and from the emergency department: “What if God was one of us/ Just a slob like one of us / Just a stranger on the bus/ Trying to make his way home”.

I spoke on healthcare reform at the annual regional conference of Quakers (more formally known as Religious Society of Friends) last week. Quakers, one may say, are like “Joan of Arcadia”, we do not believe God suddenly shut up 2,000 years ago. Rather God may be heard by and through

every “stranger on the bus” today. We listen and share what comes from the sacred silence together.

I began with confessing to my fellow Quakers that I am not at peace in the silence. The “still small voice” (1 Kings 19:11-13) speaks of the least among us, especially my patients, who suffer and die from economic violence. Like television Vietnam nurse Colleen McMurphy I scream “It’s not OK!” Adam Smith’s “invisible hand” of the market is a malevolent, dangerous, death-dealing hand. Our profit-based US healthcare kills nearly 50,000 of our neighbors yearly, is one of the most unfair (ranked 54th in fact) on equal access to care, while performing very poorly on patient outcomes. US healthcare leads the world in one measure only: cost. We spend twice as much per capita as other nations that guarantee health care to all of their citizens. 31% of all US healthcare spending is wasted on corporate health insurers and pharmaceutical manufacturers profit, marketing, CEO bonuses and overhead. Publicly administered Medicare, on the other hand, runs on 3% overhead.

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, were it allowed to become fully operational if the 24 conservative-led states that are refusing to expand Medicaid saw the light, still only about half the uninsured would be covered while the excessive cost and waste of our profits-first system continues unchecked. Real healthcare reform could have begun, not with a 1200 page bill, but with an eraser. Erase all references to age 65 in the Medicare statutes. Medicare for All: the only means to healthcare fairness and the lessening of economic violence.

The uninsured are our neighbors. They sit next to us in Church. They fix our cars, cut our hair, wait on us in restaurants, watch our children, clean our hotel rooms. They are deserving of care. They are worth infinitely more than their ‘market value’.

I share with you, out of the sacred silent listening, several quotes on healthcare and economic justice:



Pope Francis: “Just as the commandment ‘Thou shalt not kill’ sets a clear limit to safeguard the value of human life, today we also have to say ‘thou shalt not’ to an economy of exclusion and inequality. Such an economy kills.”

Martin Luther King: “Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane.”

Jonathan Gruber, health economist: “The Medicaid rejection states are willing to sacrifice billions of dollars of injections into their economy in order to punish poor people. It really is almost awesome in its evilness.”

Paul Krugman, economist and New York Times columnist: “There is an extraordinary ugliness of spirit abroad in today’s America, which health reform has brought out into the open.”

Toledo's Water Crisis and "The Commons"

By Judy Greenberg

When I began to dip my toes into the language of Earthcare, one of the first puzzlers for me was "the Commons"--things that all life must have to survive—things like air, water, food, space to exist—things we "had in common, needed in common." So, practically everything?! The more I learned, the more overwhelmed and immobilized I got.

Then half a million of us in the Toledo area woke up to learn that our tap water was deadly poisonous, that boiling the water concentrated the toxin and made it worse. Bottled water had flown off store shelves by mid-morning. Workplaces closed, restaurants closed, hospitals hustled to transfer patients as they couldn't assure safe water. We called to warn people we knew who might not have heard, and huddled around our TVs to hear what was happening.

The "Toledo Water Crisis" focused several things for me. The first lesson was **some environmental things are more critical than others, and effectiveness depends on focusing on the most critical "Commons" at the local level. For me, here, this is water.** This means paying attention, even to boring details, about this one subject. I found that studying this very big thing about my own home region was interesting and energizing, and whets my interest to learn more and look for ways to help.

Second lesson: a case like this may seem local, but when it involves blocking access to the Commons, it threatens us all. Our region needs Friends to help us keep close track of developments on this issue. Here are some background facts to help you keep up with news about what is being done to protect our water.

1. Toledo area's drinking water intake valve is located in the western end of Lake Erie where a so-called "algal bloom" with a cyanobacteria named microcystin has spread. Microcystin is a highly toxic bacteria causing liver and kidney damage.
2. The U.S. EPA, though it has been studying this toxin for years, has no federal standards for how much of this in the water becomes dangerous. Thus the Toledo water department was forced to go by the World Health Organization standard of one part per billion to determine when to alert the region.
3. The primary cause of microcystin: more than two thirds of the toxic algae growth is from phosphorous in fertilizer and manure runoff from farms into rivers flowing into western Lake Erie. This area is peppered with huge corporate farms of Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), through watersheds in Northwest Ohio, southeastern Michigan and northeast Indiana.

4.. Second biggest source of the microcystin growth in the rivers and lake is Toledo's antiquated combined sewer system, which when it rains overflows with raw sewage into the waterways (more "nutrients", more phosphorous, more algae, more microcystin).

5. Toledo's water treatment plant , though large, is 75 years old and needs expensive repairs as well as modifications for treating microcystin.

Toledo Blade Editor David Kushma, 9/7/14: "The state needs to enact strict, cost-effective, mandatory standards for the release of farm runoff into tributaries...that flow into Lake Erie. Such regulation should take aim not primarily at family farms , but at the largest factory farms and huge livestock facilities, ..(CAFOs)...A bill passed by the General Assembly this year, before Toledo's water disaster, requires most farmers to earn state certification in fertilizer application, sooner or later. It *excludes CAFOs.*"(my italics.)

We can imagine how Big Agriculture and Big Chemical interest groups are lobbying the state government about these issues! At the same time, we know many caring farmers want very much to reduce their fertilizer runoff because of concern for the Earth, as well as saving costs. **Lesson three: Don't be so quick to judge people regarding error! Respect for that of God in everyone is a Friendly approach to working together to respect our Commons.**



Toledo's Bridge

Submission Deadline
for Winter Bulletin

1/15/2015

LEYM Change of Address

Name _____

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Meeting _____

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<http://leym.org>

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Fall 2014 Bulletin



The theme for this *Bulletin* came from Scilla Wahrhaftig, who gave an inspiring plenary speech titled “Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges.” The bridge shown above, handmade of paper-wrapped boxes, was constructed by members of an LEYM workshop, “We are All Bridge Builders: Telling Stories: How We Build Bridges” led by Scilla Wahrhaftig and Jo Schlesinger before the plenary session. Each box is labeled with a story-generated bridge-building idea such as *kindness, humor, staying calm, courage, your truth*.