

# Quaker House Newsletter

Front-Line Peace Witness Since 1969

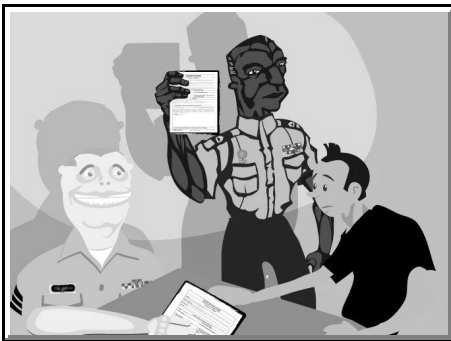
Late Summer 2007

Fayetteville, NC [www.quakerhouse.org](http://www.quakerhouse.org)

Chuck Fager, Director

## Sgt. Abe Comes to Life – And to YouTube: “Before You Sign, Check Every Line!” – Y En Espanol Tambien

For most of two-plus weeks in June, Friend John Stephens sat in our living room, crouched over his laptop, drawing and redrawing new images of our “Sgt. Abe the Honest Recruiter” character.



In the animation, Sgt. Abe intervenes to clear up confusion left by one of his less scrupulous colleagues.

Meeting, and the A.J., Muste Institute, we were able to turn his formidable talents to the work of expanding our resources for Truth in Recruiting work. The results should be of additional use to activists nationwide.

The outcome we worked hardest on is a 41-second animation, like a TV commercial, in which Sgt. Abe warns a young recruit about one of the most disturbing features of the military enlistment form – the buried language which permits enlistments to be extended indefinitely. It is now up on YouTube – and on a new Quaker House-sponsored website, [www.thehonestrecruiter.org](http://www.thehonestrecruiter.org), where we’ve consolidated all our Truth In Recruiting resources for easier searching and access. We hope you’ll check out the animation, the site, and **spread the word.**

In addition, John labored hard over something we’ve been wanting for over a



John created Sgt. Abe as an intern here in 2005. Since the sergeant’s appearance, he has been helping spread accurate information about recruiting pitfalls all across the country.

This summer, with the help of grants from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Kennett (PA)

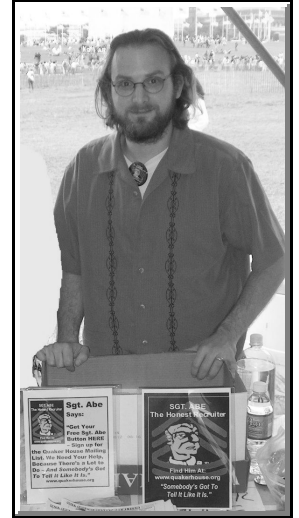
year – putting our centerpiece Sgt. Abe items into Spanish, so they can be of use to a population being heavily targeted by recruiters.

Both the four-page brochure in which Sgt. Abe analyzes the pitfalls of the enlistment agreement that each recruit must sign, and the Letter to Parents in which Sgt. Abe speaks frankly about the heightened risks of military service, are now translated and ready for free download.

These items are only part of the work we have for John Stephens this summer. We’re laboring to get more material into Spanish, to produce at least one more new animation.

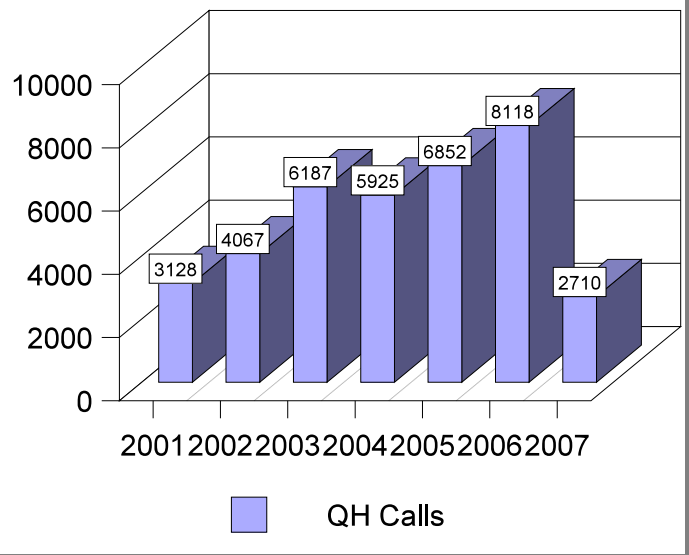
So stand by to hear more from Sgt. Abe – “Because somebody has to tell it like it is.”

Or was that, “*Alguien tiene que decir las cosas como son.*”



John Stephens, Quaker cartoonist extraordinaire.

## QH Hotline Calls: 2001-2006



NOTE: 2001 call total = 3128; total for 2006 = 8118. The 2007 tally of 2710 is for the first quarter, and it is only 418 calls less than the total for the entire year of 2001.

## The Second Quaker Torture Conference: The Work Continues & Expands

A year ago, when the first Quaker Conference on Torture convened at Guilford College, the faith-based movement to end this evil practice was just getting started.



Mary Head, staffer for Evangelicals for Human Rights, at a conference workshop.

But this year, when QUIT (the Quaker Initiative to end Torture) convened its second conference at the same site, the rapid expansion of this movement was unmistakable.

Besides 80-plus Quakers, there were representatives from several other groups: Evangelicals for Human Rights, the National Religious Coalition Against Torture, Stop Torture Now-North Carolina, and an international group, the Paris-based Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture (ACAT).

All but the last are new groups, some not even a year old. ACAT is the exception, having been working in many countries since 1987.

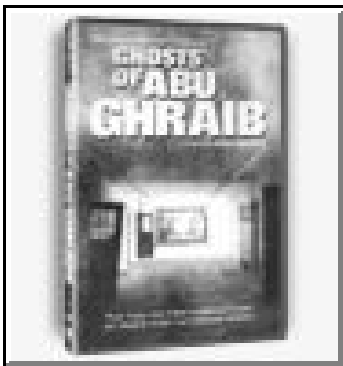
In addition, besides hearing from top-flight experts such as Professor Alfred McCoy of the



Peggy Brick explains her new adult-education course on torture.

University of Wisconsin, author of the book, "A Question of Torture," a leading text in the field, the conference had many more forms of action to discuss, from lobbying to direct action protests.

One new resource was demonstrated by Friend Peggy Brick, who has long worked in adult education: an outline for a course on torture, which can be adapted to fit formats from one hour to several hours.



*Ghosts of Abu Ghraib* was produced by filmmaker Rory Kennedy.

(Complete course information is at the QUIT website, and can be downloaded for free.)

From NRCAT came news of a campaign to sign up 1000 churches and other places of worship to show and discuss a gripping new video documentary, "Ghosts of Abu Ghraib." The film, which includes interviews with participants in the abuse of prisoners, will be shown on HBO in the fall. But it was screened at the conference, and left a powerful impression on viewers.

QUIT's own future course will be shaped by this rapidly-changing environment, as well as the retirement of founder John Calvi, who laid down his involvement to take an extended personal sabbatical. A steering committee will meet in the fall to consider QUIT's future course.

Quaker House is a supporter of both QUIT and NRCAT. We continue to be involved in work to shed light on the extensive "Torture Industrial Complex" that has taken root in North Carolina. Watch for more reports about this work. Watch for more reports on that work as it develops.

### Web Links for More Information On Religious Work To End Torture:

**QUIT:** [www.quit-torture-now.org](http://www.quit-torture-now.org)

**ACAT:** [www.fiacat.org](http://www.fiacat.org)

**NRCAT:** [www.nrcat.org](http://www.nrcat.org)

**Evangelicals for Human Rights:**

<http://www.evangelicalsforhumanrights.org/>

**Presbyterians:** <http://www.no2torture.org/>

**More About "Ghosts of Abu Ghraib":**

<http://www.hbo.com/docs/programs/ghostsofabughraib/index.html>

## GI Counselor's Notebook

### New Birth, New Records

On May 29, our lead GI Hotline counselors, Steve Woolford & Lenore Yarger, expanded their family with the birth of their second child, Charles Quinn Yarger-Woolford.

After a short period of family leave, Steve & Lenore are back on the Hotline phones, helping keep up with the steady, record-breaking increase in calls coming in. Here is an excerpt from their most recent report:

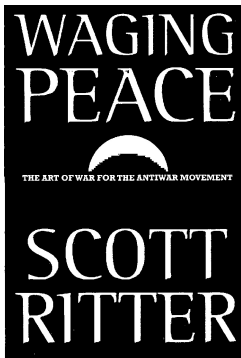
*The current "surge" policy continues to put extreme pressure on the troops. We talked with numerous individuals in an Marine Reserve unit whose command was dishonestly trying to coerce them into switching their military operation specialty to infantry, and then planning to deploy them almost immediately without adequate training. We were able to counsel these soldiers about their rights to not be involuntarily transferred and about grievance procedures.*

*Another caller facing his third deployment to Iraq was contemplating separating from his wife and taking full custody of his child in order to avoid going back (if you don't have a family care plan for your dependent, the Army is supposed to discharge you). His reasons were telling. As part of the original invasion of Iraq in 2003, he saw what a miserable state the people of Iraq were in at the time and felt himself opposed to what the US was doing. "It's pretty much mass murder," he said. He has suffered from PTSD and found the mental health services at his base in the US completely insufficient.*

*He is just one example of soldiers doing anything they can to avoid further deployments in what they perceive to be an unjust war, and trying at the same time to protect their own mental health in the absence of adequate care from the military.*

## Books

***Waging Peace: The Art of War for the Antiwar Movement.*** Scott Ritter. New York: Nation Books, 175 pages, paper, \$13.95.  
Reviewed by Chuck Fager



I looked forward to reading this book. Since moving next door to a major military base, I have been impressed with the idea of strategic thinking and planning, and concerned at the lack of it in the wider peace constituency of which Quaker House is a part.

Most peace action planning I have seen is very short-term, and narrowly on what in military terms are tactics. And tactical thinking alone is grossly inadequate. To quote the patron saint of this field, Sun Tzu, "Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat."

Scott Ritter, who was a top UN weapons inspector in Iraq after the first Gulf War, began his career as a Marine officer. He knows his Sun Tzu, author of *The Art of War*, the towering classic in this field. So I figured his book should be an excellent way to fill this gap.

In many ways it is. Ritter's critical analysis of the peace movement is sharp but apt: *The anti-war movement lacks any notion of strategic thinking, operational planning, or sense of sound tactics. . . . As a result, when the anti-war movement does get it right (and on occasion it does), the success is frittered away. . . . In short, the anti-war movement is little more than a walk-on squad of high school football players drawing plays in the sand, taking on the National Football League Super Bowl Champions.*

These weaknesses are the more damaging because:

*America is pre-programmed for war, and unless the anti-war movement dramatically changes the manner in which it conducts its struggle, America will become a nation of war, for war, and defined by war, and as such a nation that will ultimately be consumed by war.*

To have a chance of changing this programming, Ritter urges above all that peace folk need to *start thinking like a warrior. . . .*

"Start thinking like a warrior." I echo this in my workshops, and neither Ritter nor I mean by it that anyone should prepare to be violent or militaristic. Above all, it's a call to take seriously learning to think and plan strategically. The stakes are very high.

Ritter introduces some key elements of strategic thinking and planning. But Ritter's sense of the peace movement seems weak, perhaps colored by his military background. *There is no central leadership,*" he complains. ". . . it operates as little more than controlled chaos. . . ." True enough. And yet . . .

His proposed remedy: *The anti-war movement needs to develop its own [Incident Command System] that is universally applied throughout the movement, so that an anti-war effort in Seattle, Washington operates the same as an anti-war effort in New York City, and as such can be coordinated and controlled by an overall command staff operating from Denver, Colorado.*

Well, no. Such a centralized command system is impossible, and I think it would be undesirable. The peace movement's variety and decentralism of the U.S. peace movement is ingrained and not always a problem – after all, the major enemies of the U.S. have a similarly decentralized character (think Al Qaeda). Improving our strategic abilities will come more from a spreading "viral" process of education and networking, not the establishment of some "Peace Pentagon."

I've made this case at more length in "A Quaker Declaration of War," available in print and on the Quaker house website. Yet despite its limitations, *Waging Peace* is an important contribution to the work of strategic education of which we are both champions.

## A Challenge For Friends From Quaker House

This summer, Quaker House passed its 38<sup>th</sup> birthday. There was no party, no fanfare; we're too busy. Our workload is higher than it's ever been.

And there's no letup in sight. So in addition to counseling GIs, exposing the chronic untruths of recruiting, protesting the Iraq war and the growth of torture, and offering peace resources to Friends and others – we're also looking ahead.

These renovations and repairs are undramatic but overdue. They are also expensive. That means working to raise funds for a round of major renovations that will put Quaker House itself in shape for another generation (or more) of peace witness on the doorstep of one of the largest military complexes in the nation.

An anonymous donor has given this effort a major boost by offering a challenge: **the donor will match every new donation to our effort of \$500 or more, up to a total of \$20,000.**

Will you join this generous donor in helping us get ready for another generation of peace testimony? **It's a chance to double the value of your gift.**

Please write a check today. Be sure to include the phrase "capital campaign" on your gift. And thank you!

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**Quaker  
HOUSE**

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*Front-Line Peace Witness Since 1969*

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### Late Summer 2007 – Inside:

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- > *And More!*

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## Quaker Chuckles

### A Heady Exchange

“Well, I must be going,” said the rather long-winded Friend.

“Don’t let me keep thee if thee really must go,” the bored, long-suffering host replied politely.

“Yes, I must depart. But, truly, I did enjoy this little visit. Does thee know that when I came in here, I had a headache? But now I’ve lost it entirely.”

“Oh, thee hasn’t really lost it,” came the resigned reply. “It seems I have it now.”

### Fishing for Gold

A persnickety matron came into Friend Scattergood’s fish market, and eyed the specimens arrayed on their bed of ice.

“Hmmm,” she said. “I’m not sure I like the look of that codfish.”

It had been a long day for Scattergood, and his patience was not what it might have been. “Well if it’s looks thee wants,” he answered gruffly, “why don’t thee get a goldfish?”

### A First-Day Revelation

A plain Quaker elder met Tom, the town ne’er-do-well, and much to the latter’s surprise, shook him heartily by the hand.

“I’m so glad thee has turned over a new leaf, ‘Thomas,’” the elder declared. “It was a pleasure to see thee at our meeting for worship last First Day morning.”

“Oh,” said Tom, giving the Friend a puzzled look. “Is that where I was?”

### A Memorable Visit

It may have been the same elder who sought out an opportunity for a visit with his neighbor Hannah Coffin.

“By the way,” he said after a bit, “I was sorry to see thy husband Isaiah leave the meetinghouse last First Day, right in the middle of my message about temperance. I hope nothing was seriously the matter with him?”

“Ah, no, Friend,” Hannah replied. “It was nothing serious. But, thee see, he does have a terrible habit of walking in his sleep.”

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**Thanks for your tax-deductible donations, which make the work of Quaker House possible.  
Have you considered including Quaker House in your estate planning?**

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