

**Quaker Earthcare Witness Steering Committee**  
**Minutes of the Meeting at the Cenacle, Chicago, Illinois**  
2009 April 23-26

**Present:** Marcia Ankrom, Stan Becker, Jack Bradin, Carol Ciscel, David Ciscel, Al Connor, Louis Cox, Ed Dreby, Elaine Emmi, Marshall Gibson, Mary Gilbert, Dick Grossman, Gay Grossman, John Hackman, Nancy Halliday, Alice Howenstine, Bill Howenstine, Rob Jones, eric joy, Mary Jo Klingel, Hollister Knowlton, Ken Lawrence, Steve McConnell, David Millar, Joe Morris, John Payton, Susan Swanstrom, Ruah Swennerfelt, Roy Taylor, Roy Treadway, and Rod Zwirner.

**First Meeting for Worship for Business, Thursday, 2009 April 23, 7:30 p.m.**

We opened with silence. Mary Jo Klingel read an opening thought, "A Call to Spiritual Discipline" from John Calvi, *Friends Journal*, 2007 May.

Friends today are called to put out so many fires of injustice, cruelty, militarism and poverty; it may be that we haven't been so busy since the days of King Charles and Cromwell. If this is so, then Friends should be called to greater spiritual discipline than ever before – spiritual disciplines because the crux of our faith is to listen for the Divine message and act upon it. Listening and acting have become more difficult as the noise of the world from suffering and deceit have risen.

So what disciplines should we attend to? Perhaps these:  
*enough silence, listening for the Divine, trying not to hear yourself*  
*enough rest and nurture to be clear vessels to receive Light*  
*enough stillness to feel our humility as fragile carriers of Light*  
*enough comfort to offer our best effort*  
*enough strength kept up for the long haul*  
*enough concentration to focus while listening*  
*enough love of life to see beauty . . . .*

**Introductions, Reminders, and Continuing Counsel Actions**

Ruah reminded us of courtesies, use of internet access, and copying materials for QEW.

Sister Dorothy of the Cenacle greeted us and told us about the background of the Cenacle. She instructed us about using the Cenacle.

We introduced ourselves using a talking stick, answering the query: "A change in consciousness changes everything. This is about spiritual relationship with earth. Friends process is an effective way of seeking and nurturing collective discovery within the context of oneness, wholeness, and a sense of unity. When do you feel in unity with nature?"

Hollister and Dick began their report on the work of Continuing Counsel since the 2008 Fall Annual Meeting. CC has met six times in person or by phone. All of CC minutes are being sent to SC and posted on the QEW Website. Dick Grossman has been active as Alternative Clerk. Donn Kesselheim was approved as Clerk of Sustainability: Faith and Action Working Group, replacing Dick Grossman who asked to be released; several sub groups of Sustainability: Faith and Action Working Group have been formed. QEW has been involved with the United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI). CC approved \$200 to support Barbara Williamson to attend a conference on Mountain Top Removal as a representative of QEW. CC has also asked the Finance Committee to set guidelines for financial support for persons attending QEW meetings. Because some Friends wanted to add comments to the Epistle from the 2008 Fall Annual Meetings which they felt were missing, the Epistle was delayed in being sent. CC recommends that the work of the epistle committee be posted on the QEW website as written, with the possibility that some additional statements from the 2009 Chicago meetings also be

posted.

### **Nominating Committee – Rod Zwirner**

SC members Rod Zwirner and John Payton will complete their at-large terms on SC but hope to be named by their yearly meetings as representatives to SC. A Naming Committee will be formed at the 2009 Fall Annual Meeting to nominate a replacement for Elaine Emmi on Nominating Committee.

### **QEW Purpose Statement**

QEW has been working on a purpose statement for some time, but has not approved one. Hollister distributed a document with queries and a draft statement – drawn from the comments of small groups at the 2008 April SC meetings and many individual Friends – for consideration in small, worshipful groups on Friday evening of this SC meeting.

### **2009 Annual Meetings**

The QEW 2009 Annual Meeting will be held in Bellingham, WA, October 8-12. Those interested in a group rate on Amtrak from Chicago to Bellingham should let Ruah know.

### **Testimony on Harmony with Creation – Joe Morris**

Joe Morris from Pacific Yearly Meeting reported on the development of a new Testimony on Harmony with Creation in several yearly meetings worldwide, including Pacific YM. The Pacific YM Friends in Unity with Nature Committee is learning what monthly meetings in Pacific YM are doing. Although this is a slow process, the process lets Pacific YM learn what it can do. Joe offered to talk with others about what they are doing, and we set aside the rest of evening as a sharing time to learn what is going on in our yearly meetings with regard to earthcare and Faith and Practice as well as work on testimonies.

We closed with silence.

### **Second Meeting for Worship for Business, Friday, 2009 April 23, 9:05 a.m.**

We opened with silence and readings from indigenous people by Eric Joy.

John Hackman read from Proverbs.

19:2 Desire without knowledge is not good, and one who moves too hurriedly misses the way.

18:24 Some friends play at friendship, but a true friend sticks closer than one's nearest kin.

### **Announcements**

Several announcements were made. We welcomed persons joining us. We were reminded that we agreed last Spring to use non-disposable utensils, such as coffee mugs, and to compost our food wastes.

### **Yearly Meeting Representatives and Ambassadors**

Hollister and Ruah gave an introduction to the training sessions planned for the weekend. Hollister clarified the various categories of steering committee members: 1) yearly meeting representatives, 2) at-large members, and 3) persons who are on QEW committees but not yearly meeting representatives or at large

members. Ruah introduced the idea of QEW Ambassadors. Ruah and Hollister will present the role and responsibilities of yearly meeting representatives Friday afternoon and of QEW Ambassadors Saturday morning.

**FCNL Support Working Group, Friends Testimonies and Economics (FTE), and Growth Dilemma Network – Al Connor**

The FCNL Support Working Group introduced a proposal that FTE function under the guidance of the FCNL Support WG. QEW would appoint two overseers and the Earthcare Working Group of Philadelphia YM, which jointly sponsors FTE and handles its finances, would also appoint two overseers. Also, a Growth Dilemma Network has also been proposed, working mostly by email and phone.

We closed with silence.

**Third Meeting for Worship for Business, Saturday, 2009 April 25, 1:40 p.m.**

We opened with worship. Marcia Ankrom read a poem from "Look to the Earth" from *Earth Medicine* by Kenneth Meadows.

Look to the Earth  
and to the Skies  
The Sun, the Moon, and to the stars  
You who would be wise.  
For they contain the full measure of man  
The height, the breadth, the depth, the span  
Of his entirety.

Look to the Earth  
And to the Skies  
And watch them turn  
Like pages of a holy book  
But one untouched by human hand  
You who would be wise.

Look to the Earth  
And to the Skies  
For in that which can be seen Without  
Can true knowledge come  
Of unseen mysteries that lie Within

To you who would be wise.

Look to the Earth  
And to the Skies  
In Spring and Summer,  
Winter and in the Fall.  
Watch life begin, unfold, then fade and die  
To rise anew  
Time and again for Time Untold  
You who would be wise.

Look to the Earth  
And to the Skies  
And in your looking, learn this mystery:  
That you who look to the Earth  
And to the Skies  
Shall be given eyes to see  
Shall be given eyes  
To make you wise  
Eternally.

**Continuing Counsel Activities and Future Plans of QEW – Dick Grossman**

Continuing Counsel has made several decisions since QEW's 2008 Fall Annual meeting. Ruah is planning to retire in 2012 with the possibility that Ruah would take on reduced time as a bookkeeper. An *Ad Hoc* Committee on Transition will be formed, including a member of each of the Finance and Personnel Committees, to plan for the transition of the leadership of QEW.

As announced earlier, the 2009 Annual QEW Meeting will be held in Bellingham, WA, October 8-12. Kathy Hyzy, *Western Friend* editor, will give the key note address. The theme will be on *Story Telling*. Further information will be coming this summer. The 2010 Annual Meeting will be in Houston at the end of October. The possibility of holding the 2011 Annual Meeting in Charleston, SC, is complicated by the lack of suitable

lodging on site. Ruah will also explore sites in Southern California, Colorado, and Utah for annual meetings.

Mary Gilbert was supported by QEW to attend Rhode Island Power and Light Conference.

### ***Ad Hoc Committee on the Copenhagen Conference on Climate Change***

**SC Minute 2009.04.01. Steering Committee approved forming an *Ad Hoc Committee on the Copenhagen Conference on Climate Change*, consisting of Mary Gilbert, Elaine Emmi, Roy Taylor, Al Connor, and Ruah Swennerfelt to address how QEW, as a faith-based group, should respond on policy and action prior to and during the international meetings on climate change in Copenhagen in 2009 December. Ruah will convene.**

QEW should prepare a meaningful statement by the 2009 Friends General Conference Gathering in July or at the latest at the 2009 October Annual Meeting, and a possible action involving Friends and young Friends in North America.

### **Finance Committee – Steve McConnell (Attachment A)**

Expenses are in line with budget projections; although a new printer was an unexpected expense, we may save \$1000 on website expenses. As for income, contributions are running behind what we expected by this time of year. Since we depend very little on grants, we do not anticipate major cuts in income although interest in savings is lower than expected. We request that individuals increase their contributions if possible with monthly contributions automatically deducted being very useful. Ruah Swennerfelt, David Ciscel, Dick Grossman, and Roy Treadway will work on a grant from the New Visions Foundation for the next fiscal year. New supporters who join QEW or increase their contribution at the FGC Gathering will receive a Chico bag. We were asked to consider increasing the minimum suggested contribution to QEW.

For next year's budget, the Finance Committee suggested leaving salaries for next year at the same level as this year. Committees and working groups were requested to let the Finance Committee know of their requested budget for next year

**SC Minute 2009.04.02. Steering Committee approved removing the restriction on using "member" as a term and instead using "member" and "supporter" interchangeably.**

Since we have no dues, all supporters receive *BeFriending Creation* and will be invited to the Annual SC meetings.

Steve will continue as Clerk of Finance Committee until the Fall 2009 Annual Meetings..

**SC Minute 2009.04.03. Steering Committee approved thanking for Steve for his work on the Finance Committee during the last four years.**

### **Personnel Committee – Jack Bradin**

Ruah plans to step down as General Secretary in 2010 October, but would like to work one day a week as a bookkeeper. Louis Cox would remain as Publications Coordinator for two and one-half days a week. Thus, the Personnel Committee is looking for an interim General Secretary for three days a week starting in 2010 October. For the transition period, QEW would prefer applicants to be current or former SC members. Anyone interested should contact Jack Bradin. One SC member has already expressed interest.

## **Spiritual Nurturance Committee – Mary Jo Klingel (Attachment B)**

Phone calls have been used to conduct business between Steering Committee Meetings.

The Spiritual Nurturance Committee offered two minutes for Steering Committee consideration.

1. Quaker Earthcare Witness recognizes the Light Within all Creation.
2. Quaker Earthcare Witness recognizes Eric May Joy's leading and ministry regarding "spiritual unification," which includes Friends' process as a unique and significant gift.

In addition, the Spiritual Nurturance Committee requested that a new working group be formed: "The Spiritual Nurturance Committee has come to unity for space within QEW's organization where Friends can explore together topics such as the New Story, indigenous spiritual concepts, and other kinds of thought that are less traditional among Friends. We are asking for the creation of a new working group where this exploration can happen."

We agreed to reflect on and consider these minutes and request at our next business session on Sunday.

Spiritual Nurturance has a new theme song: "A Little Bit of Light."

## **Outreach Committee – Susan Swanstrom (Attachment C)**

Traveling Ministers (formerly Ambassadors) will be a group of persons led to serve QEW by visiting yearly meetings. In addition, two projects will be the focus of yearly meeting representatives and traveling ministers: *Mini-grants programs* (applications due July 1) and *Climate Change* (action preparing for Copenhagen). The Outreach Committee also wants to develop and expand QEW's NING network to all in QEW; Ruah and David Millar will demonstrate the use of NING and other social networks Saturday evening. Maggie Knight, an adult young Friend from Canada, will be trained as a QEW Traveling Minister to reach young adult Friends across North America on earthcare. Joe Morris has agreed to organize training in Bellingham to increase outreach to yearly meetings.

**SC Minute 2009.04.04. Steering Committee approved QEW's participation in the National Council of Churches and Church World Service postcard campaign, Countdown to Copenhagen, to press the U.S. delegation to act meaningfully in Copenhagen, thus committing QEW to ask its members to send these postcards.**

### **QEW Purpose: Report from Small Groups**

Each of the small groups which considered a QEW purpose Friday evening reported to SC, giving a short review of the process used in their group. The groups shared a wide variety of statements, including "right relationship with the earth and all creatures," "love," and "sustainable world." One group did not offer a statement. We considered our need for a statement, the nature of "continuing revelation," and our Quaker process of waiting on Christ or God's spirit.

**SC Minute 2009.04.05. Steering Committee approved forming an *Ad Hoc* Committee on Purpose, consisting of Mary Gilbert, Hollister Knowlton, Ruah Swennerfelt, and Mary Jo Klingel to develop a QEW purpose statement from those statements suggested by the small groups.**

## **Publications Committee – Roy Taylor (Attachment D)**

The committee is not morphing into a communications committee, but rather will keep its focus on written materials, both printed and electronic, working with the Outreach Committee on QEW blogs and personal networks. For the next ten months, the committee suggests that topics for *BeFriending Creation* be planned in

advance to recruit more timely articles, particularly before the Climate Summit in Copenhagen in December, as follows:

2009 July-August: Political Activism versus Contemplation – Quaker experience.

2009 September-October: Countdown to Copenhagen – background and preparations.

2009 November-December: Copenhagen is Here – expectations and implications

2010 January-February: Transition Towns – our personal and collective experience.

2010 March-April: Urban Agriculture and Local Foods – our own experience and global implications.

The committee would work with *Quaker Eco-Bulletin* and the Outreach Committee on developing these topics in the life of QEW.

The Committee urges other committees to review the publications of QEW for relevance and timeliness of our publications. As part of this policy, the Population Sub Group of Sustainability Faith and Action Working Group is reviewing the population-related publications and is writing a new tri-fold on childbearing choices.

The Publications Committee reviewed the proposed revamping of the QEW website by VBgraphics, made many suggestions in the proposed design and layout, and looks forward to testing a prototype of the new website during 2009 May and June. Louis Cox and Roy Taylor will demonstrate the main features of the revised QEW website Saturday evening.

A moment of worship ended our session.

#### **Fourth Meeting for Worship for Business, Sunday, 2009 April 26, 9:15 a.m.**

During our opening worship, we settled with meditative readings.

Mary Gilbert read “The peace of wild things” by Wendell Berry

When despair grows in me  
and I wake in the middle of the night at the least sound  
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,  
I go and lie down where the wood drake  
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.  
I come into the peace of wild things  
who do not tax their lives with forethought  
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.  
And I feel above me the day-blind stars  
waiting for their light. For a time  
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

I go among trees and sit still.  
All my stirring becomes quiet  
around me like circles on water.  
My tasks lie in their places  
where I left them, asleep like cattle.

Then what is afraid of me comes  
and lives a while in my sight.  
What it fears in me leaves me,  
and the fear of me leaves it.  
It sings, and I hear its song.

Then what I am afraid of comes.  
I live for a while in its sight.  
What I fear in it leaves it,  
and the fear of it leaves me.  
It sings, and I hear its song.

After days of labor,  
mute in my consternations,  
I hear my song at last,  
and I sing it. As we sing,  
the day turns, the trees move.

Nancy Halliday read a poem by Carl Sandburg in *Honey and Salt*, "God is No Gentleman."

God gets up in the morning  
and says, "Another day?"  
God goes to work every day  
at regular hours.  
God is no gentleman for god

puts on overalls and gets  
dirty running the universe we know  
about and several other universes  
nobody knows about but Him.

Dick Grossman reminded us to be mindful in our conduct doing business in our meeting for worship.

### **QEW Purpose Statement**

Mary Jo Klingel, Mary Gilbert, Ruah Swennerfelt, and Hollister Knowlton (*Ad Hoc* Committee on Purpose) presented the first reading of a draft purpose statement. In our sharing, we noted that we need to be sensitive to all who seek a sense of God's involvement in earthcare and that our statement should be inclusive all Friends and still be faithful to the essence of QEW.

**SC Minute 2009.04.06. Steering Committee approved further consideration of the proposed purpose statement: "Grounded in Friends process and our love for the Earth, QEW supports and connects Friends carrying a concern for living in right relationship with all Creation and helping bring forth a peaceful, just, and sustainable world." This proposed purpose statement and all four statements from the small groups should be sent to the Quaker Earthcare list serve for further consideration and reflection. We should consider expressing this as a query and also ask ourselves whether we have unity on "supporting and connecting Friends?" Mary Jo Klingel, Mary Gilbert, Hollister Knowlton, Ruah Swennerfelt, and Nancy Halliday (*Ad Hoc* Committee on Purpose) agreed to discern the suggestions of QEW Friends.**

### **Spiritual Nurturance Committee – Mary Jo Klingel**

We returned to the two minutes and one request of The Spiritual Nurturance Committee introduced on Saturday afternoon.

We reflected first on the request for a new working group to explore kinds of thought that are less traditional among Friends. No name of the working group has been given nor are persons who might be interested listed. Also, we need to be mindful of getting too many working groups, given limited time at meetings. Others beyond the working group might also want to be involved in the discussions of the group.

**SC Minute 2009.04.07. Steering Committee approved moving forward on forming this working group with a formal proposal to be brought forth by the Spiritual Nurturance Committee to the 2009 Fall Annual Meetings.**

We next considered the proposed minute: "Quaker Earthcare Witness recognizes eric may joy's leading and ministry regarding 'spiritual unification,' which includes Friends' process as a unique and significant gift." Since this is the first time QEW has received such a request, we suggest that this be considered as the first reading to be seasoned over the summer. We asked how do we as SC discern an approval of this recognition. We wondered what is the role of QEW is for this. Is the role of QEW to record such ministry?

**SC Minute 2009.04.08. Steering Committee approved returning this proposal to the Spiritual Nurturance Committee for further seasoning and clarification. Specifically, we asked the Spiritual Nurturance Committee to discern whether they saw recognition and support of such minutes as part of their role, and if so, to bring back a proposed set of criteria for such recognition and guidelines for how support and care would be provided.**

Finally, we considered the proposed minute: "QEW recognizes the Light within all Creation." In our reflection, we had concern about what the language of this minute would communicate to all Friends. We wondered if we could we express this as a query, as something to be considered? QEW needs more expression of the center of God in our work, but the concept of "God" brings its own, sometimes negative meaning. We wondered if it was QEW's job to make theological pronouncements. We were concerned about whether making such a statement will serve to divide instead of unite Friends with whom we are trying to connect.

**SC Minute 2009.04.09. Steering Committee approved sending this minute back to the Spiritual Nurturance Committee for further reflection and discernment.**

**FCNL Support Working Group – Ed Dreby (Attachment E)**

The FCNL Support Working Group made the following proposal to QEW: QEW's joint sponsorship of Friends Testimonies and Economics (FTE) should be through the FCNL Support WG and the existing oversight structure should continue with one addition. Thus:

- FTE would function within the Guidance Statement that was approved in October, 2004,
  - there would be two overseers named by the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Earthcare Working Group and two by QEW,
  - FTE's overseers would consult with QEW's Nominating Committee if a change in QEW's overseers is needed, and
  - FTE's four named overseers would be able to name up to four additional members of the "FTE team."
- The FTE team would not conduct business during QEW's meetings except at unscheduled times.

In our consideration, we asked what the FTE oversight would do. It would not affect QEW's nomination of FCNL representatives or of FTE representatives. The issue of whether FTE's publications should be reviewed by the Publications Committee was raised. We wondered what impact does adding FTE under FCNL Support WG have on FCNL Support WG's oversight of our FCNL representatives.

**SC Minute 2009.04.10. Steering Committee approved sending this proposal back to the FCNL Support WG for further consideration and discernment.**

**UN Support Working Group – Mary Gilbert (Attachment F)**

Mary's participation with the UN continues. There were no action items.

**Sustainability: Faith and Action Working Group – Dick Grossman (Attachment G)**

In a general meeting, the working group discussed the use of funds to offset carbon emissions. In the past this was estimated to be about \$300 for each of the two annual meetings, and this money had been donated to Native Energy. Sustainability: Faith and Action Working Group decided that adding the funds to the QEW Mini Grant program, and specifically to a grant that would reduce carbon emissions, would be a wise idea.

**SC Minute 2009.04.11. Steering Committee approved that, starting with this meeting, the carbon offset money, currently at \$300 per meeting going to Native Energy, be kept within QEW, put into the mini-grant fund, and set aside for specific carbon reduction projects.**

Sustainability: Faith and Action Working Group recommended that QEW express our thanks to The Cenacle of Chicago and support reducing their carbon footprint by using low-flow shower heads.

**SC Minute 2009.04.12. Steering Committee authorizes QEW to send \$100 to the Cenacle from this meeting's allocation, to accompany a letter to them that thanks them for their work toward energy efficiency to date, noting that some individuals commented on the absence of adjustable, low-flow shower heads and asking them to use this check as seed money toward installing such shower heads.**

**The Population Sub Group (Attachment H)** brought forth a new tri-fold on "Being Called to Childbearing in a Crowded World," written initially by Stan Becker. Sustainability: F&A WG felt that it would be an important addition to QEW publications, and approved it with minor revisions. The pamphlet will next go to the Publications Committee for consideration. The Population Sub-Group is also revising the tri-folds on Abortion and Adoption, combining the publications on Population, Sexuality, and Migration, supporting the Quaker Condom Project, reviewing the Men-for-Men Program, and considering a review of the book: *This Common Secret*.

The Sustainability: Faith and Action Working Group did not receive reports from the Carbon Footprint Sub Group or Greening Meeting House Sub Group.

**Nominating Committee – Rod Zwirner (Attachment H)**

**SC Minute 2009.04.13. Steering Committee approved the following nominations:**

**Overseers for Friends Testimonies and Economics (FTE): David Ciscel (2009-2012) and Donn Kesselheim (2009-2012),**

**Representative to FCNL: John Payton (2009-2012),**

**Steering Committee member at large: Phil Emmi (2009 - 2012)**

**Clerk of the United Nations Support Working Group: Phil Emmi (2009-2011)**

#### **Announcements**

Ruah announced that evaluations of these meetings and reimbursement forms to identify costs of coming to the QEW meetings will be sent out by email. The theme for the 2009 Annual Meeting in Bellingham, WA, will be "Wisdom Stories for a Resilient Future: Bible Stories, Native Stories, Quaker Stories." We will consider other dates in October than Columbus weekend for the annual meetings.

#### **Thanks**

**SC Minute 2009.04.14. We thanked Hollister and Ruah for their diligent and careful work as Clerk and General Secretary.**

We closed with silence before moving into the closing Meeting for Worship.

Roy C. Treadway,  
Recording Clerk