



BeFriending Creation

Newsletter of Quaker Earthcare Witness
Affirming our essential unity with nature

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N.Y. Quakers hold non-violent direct action training on 'fracking'

Acting to end hydrofracturing in natural gas development

by Angela Manno

15th Street (N.Y.) Friends Meeting

THE ROOM FILLED UP SLOWLY on Saturday morning, November 12, 2011, at Brooklyn (N.Y.) Friends Meetinghouse. These were seasoned activists and newcomers to hydraulic fracturing, the newest form of extreme fossil fuel extraction, taking its place alongside deep-water oil drilling, mountaintop removal coal mining, and tar sands extraction.

I had been anticipating this day for many months, having realized that efforts over many months to maintain a ban on hydraulic fracturing—a serious threat to the groundwater in New York State—have fallen on legislators' deaf ears. Petitions, phone calls, and the clear majority of state residents against fracking had not made an impression. Recently New Yorkers learned that permitting is underway to bring fracked (and most likely radioactive) gas into New York City through a high-pressure gas pipeline for the purposes of converting New York to natural gas.

The time had come to explore new ideas and approaches. The Friends in Unity with Nature committee of the New York Quarter and the Peace Committees of 15th Street Friends Meeting agreed to co-sponsor a non-violent direct action training (NVDA) program.

There was a great diversity in the group of 22 participants—Quakers, Buddhists, psychologists, artists, and seasoned activists—people I had worshipped with, campaigned with, meditated with, and socialized with. Some of the most experienced activists in New York City were present.

Training for Change trainer Daniel Hunter, who has been facilitating trainings in NVDA campaigning and actions for Quakers in Pennsylvania on stopping mountaintop removal and hydraulic fracturing, opened the morning with introductions.

Photo: Eric Wenzel, The Leader, Cornwall, N.Y.



Recent nonviolent direct action in Cornwall, N.Y.—targeting those who are able to get you what you want .

With the first introductions, I knew this was going to be interesting:

"I have no one at home, my kids are grown. I don't have anybody around to embarrass anymore," exclaimed the first participant. The person next to her said, *"I've got a wife and children, and it's about time I embarrassed them!"*

As I heard Friends speak, I recalled Friend and activist George Lakey's words to me:

"No amount of consciousness-raising or discussion can ever take the place for Quakers of getting their bodies out of the chair and in motion, outside their comfort zone, taking a stand. One reason why a vigil is a waste of time for Quakers these days is that it is a ritual—the kind of ritual that early Friends scorned when they saw Anglicans doing it. Friends need to act, in situations of uncertainty, where they are slightly out of control, where nicely phrased locution is not the currency."

These Friends and non-Friends were more than ready to act!

One of the first exercises was to create a Fracking Timeline to see how far the movement has come in three years. People came up to the board in front of the room and wrote down the dozens of milestones

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>> **Fracking**, from page 1

that have given the movement its shape. We were amazed at the progress, which consisted mostly of generating awareness. These included: the release of the Academy Award-nominated documentary *Gasland* and later with the *New York Times*' ongoing investigative series, "Drilling Down," that exposed this issue to the world; the conference on fracking and its health impacts at Mount Sinai Hospital; various lawsuits; and the upcoming November 21st meeting of the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC).

Though there was a great depth of knowledge of people in the room, non-violent direct action was new to most all of us.

Concepts were introduced, including the need to designate a "target," someone who is able to give you what you want. Once you have determined your target, you can apply one of several of NVDA tactics (which one you use depends in part on where you are in your story line, since they escalate in pressure):

1. Symbolic acts (marches, rallies, street theater, mock elections)
2. Non-cooperation (student strike, consumers' boycott, tax withholding)
3. Alternative cooperation (citizens' document search, non-violent land seizure, citizens' arrest)

At times we broke into smaller groups, to dream up new tactics and designate immediate and long-term targets and goals. All agreed that the ultimate goal was to ban fracking, and at the very least to close the "Halliburton loophole," which allows fracking to go on unhampered by the Clean Water Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, Clean Air Act, Superfund Act, Resource Conservation & Recovery Act (hazardous waste act), and Environmental Policy Act. Without these exemptions, it was noted, fracking would come to an end because it would be too expensive.

It was also noted that beyond prohibition of fracking, the true goal was to get off fossil fuels and nuclear energy altogether and for the entire world to be powered by sustainable energy, aka "WWS"—Wind, Water & Solar. Mark Z. Jacobson and Mark A. Delucchi outlined and quantified this and showed it to be completely feasible in their 2009 study, "A Path to Renewable Energy by 2030," published in the November 2009 issue of *Scientific American*.

The immediate goal was to focus on the upcoming Delaware River Basic Commission meeting in Trenton on November 21.

The training participants were not a coherent group, however. We were unable to form one action/decision-making group to take up one of the actions, so I gathered the ideas from the brainstorming ses-

sions and sent them out to people so that they could form action groups around the issue(s) that most spoke to them. Only one person responded. Some others were happy just to have come to educate themselves, another felt they needed an action to be within a more coherent campaign strategy.

Others were planning to work with 350.org and United for Action on one action that was generated. We called it the "Obama Phone Bank Action": The plan was to go into Obama re-election offices as groups of volunteers, make calls *to his constituents, and do a survey. We would ask, "The Delaware River Basin is about to get fracked. Would you support Obama to put pressure on the DRBC to say no and on Congress to close the Halliburton loophole?"* We would ask them to call the White House, reminding them, "*You voted for him.*" We would record the answers in writing, record the calls on I-Phones, and put them up on YouTube.

As it turned out, the DRBC meeting was cancelled, due in part to the wavering of Governor Markell of Delaware (one of the five votes on the Commission), along with the first threat of mass civil disobedience that was to take place at that meeting. Too bad—the action plan was brilliant, but it can be used again in another form.

PEOPLE EXPRESSED THE SENSE that we were dealing simultaneously with a human rights issue, a nature's rights issue and, as Daniel pointed out, a *democracy* issue, since we the people were not able to gain access to information that we needed to make an informed decision, such as the chemicals contained in the fracking fluid and the Army Corps of Engineers' study on the effects of fracking.

Other features that are part of a successful campaign that we discussed include transparency, identifying "pillars of support"—those people who allow your opponents to do what they do—, escalating pressure, presenting ultimatums, putting your opponent into a position in which he/ she must choose, and a consideration of timing (whether to use surprise or threaten with an action over a long period to build tension). An example of the latter is Gandhi's Salt March in British-occupied India.

Feedback on the program was highly positive, from: "*One of the best training / organizing programs I've attended*" to "*Inspiring*" to "*I enjoyed the training immensely, the wisdom of the trainer, and the opportunity to meet the other people in attendance.*"

My sense is that this event enriched people's understanding of the new direction that the movement to end fracking will take. Everyone came away with a sense of new possibilities, from the veteran "fractivists" to newcomers. ❖

Seeking integrity in Quaker activism

Fred Doneit

Poughkeepsie (N.Y.) Friends Meeting

Reprinted from the November 2011 issue of *The Spark*, newsletter of New York Yearly Meeting

AS FRIENDS are led to become engaged in environmental action that calls for public witness, we should be careful to stay close to the truth, to remain nonviolent in our witness, and to always ground our witness in the leadings of the Spirit. It is easy to become influenced by those we ally ourselves with, so that our witness becomes politicized, antagonistic, or judgmental, and we lose sight of that of God in those we oppose.

Many environmental issues are only partly understood, and those groups that wage campaigns opposing a potentially destructive or dangerous project often resort to half-truth and opinion, just as the proponents do in proposing them. This “fighting fire with fire” may be a necessary tactic in the political arena to stop perceived environmental destruction, but Friends should always be mindful of the difference between proven or accepted fact and opinion or estimates. We are far safer to justify our witness on moral grounds or ethical values, than to resort to logical or scientific claims advanced by experts.

Friends and the science behind Earthcare

I WAS EXCITED to find the above article by Fred Doneit in a recent issue of *The Spark* dedicated to the theme of “Friends and Earthcare.” Fred gives one of the clearest explanations I have read on why we are part of a Quaker Earthcare movement instead of just supporting mainline secular groups.

I totally agree with Fred’s view that “Quakers bring moral authority to activism.” But I also believe that Quakers have a role to play in political and scientific debate as well. I see much of the science behind the major ecological, economic, and energy issues of our time as reasonably settled. The problem is that essential facts about nuclear fission, hydrofracking, the Alberta Tar Sands project, and many other critical issues are being suppressed and distorted by powerful vested interests, whose short-sighted “solutions” to climate change and Peak Oil are mostly about profits.

I believe that our moral authority also comes from being *Friends of Truth*. This means discerning and challenging the biases, deceptions, and conflicts of interest that are obscuring or blocking scientifically sound solutions. —Louis Cox

Maintaining an attitude of nonviolence is crucial, and must be extended to the language and statements made on banners, posters, and handbills, as well as in oral discussion with those who ask for information, justification, or “proof” for a position being taken. Although Quaker groups have much experience with demonstrations, vigils, and public meetings, such groups should always ensure that new Friends or attenders participating are aware of the manner of Quaker public witness. Friends who join non-Quaker groups to demonstrate must be clear that they will withdraw if violence erupts or tempers flare, or the discourse becomes inflammatory.

More important, our public witness should always be in accordance with leadings we have been given in worship. Convincement and rationalization are not enough; our hearts must be engaged as well as our minds. It is best if we can precede any public witness with a period of worship as a final validation of our intent. This leading of the Spirit serves as both our motivation to give witness and our reason for giving witness—that is, we justify our witness not solely on logical or scientific arguments but on doing the right thing, as revealed by the Spirit.

Discernment will help us to understand why we are emotionally involved. Is it because the issue threatens our home grounds? Would we hold the same concern if the treat was in another region or country? Understand, self-protection is a powerful motivation and justification for action, but it is a weak basis for Quaker activism or for giving testimony to advance truth—only doing the right thing for the larger community of life can do that.

Individual Friends who join with non-Quaker groups in public demonstrations would do well to bring their concern, leadings, and rationale to their monthly meeting for hearing and discernment. This discipline will help ensure that a proposed course of action has been sufficiently seasoned and is truly Spirit-led. The meeting may minute its support (or nonsupport) of an individual action, or it may minute its approval that the individual Friend may represent the meeting in its witness and public declaration. This time-tested practice among Quakers is often overlooked by activists and is often not discussed with activists who seek membership.

Quakers bring moral authority to activism. We should not diffuse our identity by joining the scientific debate. Our identity and our message will be better served by witnessing on the moral plane—a place that ultimately carries far more weight than political or scientific argument. ❖

People get involved in Transition for a range of reasons

***The Transition Companion—Making Your Community More Resilient in Uncertain Times.* Rob Hopkins, 2011, Chelsea Green Publishing, White River Junction, Vermont**

What if the best responses to peak oil and climate change don't come from government, but from you and me and the people around us? —Rob Hopkins

MAYBE YOU'VE already read Rob Hopkins's first book, *The Transition Handbook*. Maybe you're involved in a Transition initiative in your community. Or maybe you're just curious and just want to learn more about the fast-growing international Transition movement. In any case, you'll be in for a great treat reading his new book, *The Transition Companion*.

The original book was published about five years ago, when the movement was very new, as a beginner's guide to starting, encouraging, and participating in a Transition Initiative. Key elements of Transition work were described in terms of re-skilling for resilience (e.g., canning, tool care, home health care), nurturing local communities, and supporting local economies.

While the original handbook analyzed the successes of just a few pioneering Transition initiatives, the new book is able to share hundreds of examples out of the thousands of Transition initiatives worldwide, ranging from diverse towns and cities to islands, universities, and even neighborhoods.

Since Part Three (the final part) of *The Transition Companion* has a "starting out" section titled, "How the Transition movement does what it does—ingredients for success," you could just read the new book and learn most of what was included in the first book. The remaining sections in Part Three are "Deepening," "Connecting," "Building," and "Daring to Dream."

Part Two, "Why Transition Initiatives Do What They Do," begins with this important observation about diversity within the Transition movement:

"People get involved in their local Transition initiatives for a range of reasons. Although when Transition started it was framed very much as a response to peak oil and climate change, as time has passed and the idea has taken root in more and more places, it has been fascinating to see the wide range of reasons why people get involved."

It moves on to the varied, delightful reasons that people get involved in Transition, including, "because it feels way more fun than not doing it" and "because of wanting a fairer world." Along with all the descriptions of great tools and strategies used by various Transition initiatives are wonderful color photos of real people making a difference where they live.

Hopkins doesn't guarantee what the outcome will be. In fact the movement's publications always include this "cheerful disclaimer:"

"Transition is not a known quantity. We truly don't know whether Transition will work. It is a social experiment on a massive

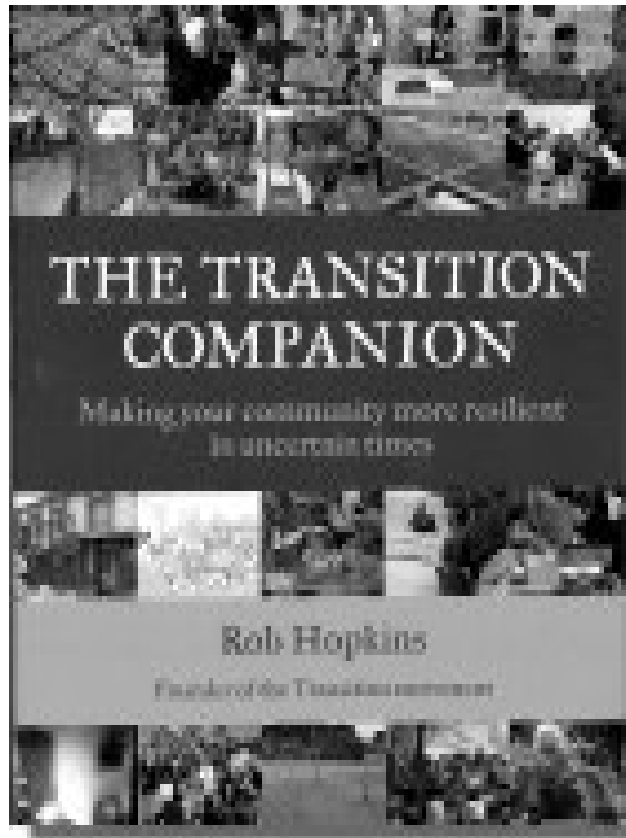
scale. What we are convinced of is this:

- ❖ *If we wait for the governments, it'll be too late.*
- ❖ *If we act as individuals, it'll be too little.*
- ❖ *But if we act as communities, it might just be enough, just in time."*

THIS BOOK IS FUN, informative, inspirational, and very helpful for our very necessary transition to a warmer, post-petroleum world. The book helped me better understand the next steps my local Transition initiative needs to take to make us truly relevant to our community. If you want to learn how Friends are involved in the Transition work, please check out www.quakersintransition.wordpress.com.

—Ruah Swennerfelt
Burlington (Vt.) Friends Meeting

[See Ruah's blog, transitionvision.wordpress.com.]



The Economics of Happiness

a film by Helena Norbert-Hodge,
Steven Gorelick, and John Page

THIS PAST HOLIDAY SEASON, millions again tuned into reruns of *It's a Wonderful Life*, a 1940s film that has long been a Christmas classic:

A small Midwestern town survives the Great Depression with the help of George Bailey, head of a small savings & loan, who keeps the local economy afloat with generosity and creative community organizing—while managing to foil a crafty slumlord bent on monopolizing the town's business sector. A sudden financial setback drives him to the brink of suicide, but he has a change of heart after his guardian angel appears to show how the town would have succumbed to poverty, suffering, ugliness, and moral corruption if he had never been part of it.

The film is a moving tribute to both the “power of one” and the “power of community.” It also overrates the effectiveness of individual efforts in our increasingly globalized world. It doesn't acknowledge the bigger economic players at work behind most local Grinches. It doesn't hint at the unseen manipulations of trusts and cartels, Wall Street speculators, and bought-off legislators and regulators. It is silent about national banking policies that encouraged the 1920's financial bubble and failed to soften the impact of mass bank failures on the general population.

In the early 21st century, global predatory economic forces continue to strengthen their grip, chewing up communities, cultures, local economies, and ecosystems. Local George Baileys are still resisting, but often they aren't able to turn back the onslaught.

So how did a handful of soulless, multinational corporations financial Goliaths acquire such power over the rights and well-being of the whole planet?

The Empire's power comes largely from us. Somehow we have been persuaded—in spite of abundant cultural wisdom and history lessons to the contrary—that our happiness depends on cheap manufactured goods, highly processed foods, easy mobility, and wasteful energy consumption far in excess of what is required to meet our basic material needs, in an atmosphere of competition for diminishing resources.

Recent studies have debunked this hollow notion of happiness. While material consumption has skyrocketed over the past half-century, affluent people on average don't seem to be any happier for it.

That is why a new video in the QEW lending library, *The Economics of Happiness*, may contribute to the healing of what really ails us. Using the Ladakhis, an indigenous community in the western Himalayas, as a case study, the filmmakers show how today's economic, energy, and ecological crises are really a single crisis of the human spirit. The Ladakhis once thrived on farming and regional trade, had a vibrant community and family life, and suffered no hunger or unemployment. Then they were invaded by the consumer culture in the mid-1970s. Commercial advertising, based on Western models and values, convinced Ladakhi young people that they were backward, primitive and poor and that their traditional culture wasn't worth following. Shifting attitudes and deteriorating relationships led to pollution, unemployment, divisiveness, depression, and a widening wealth gap.

This kind of general unraveling of happiness, sovereignty, and well-being has been happening everywhere—a *logical result of a system that values profits over people.*

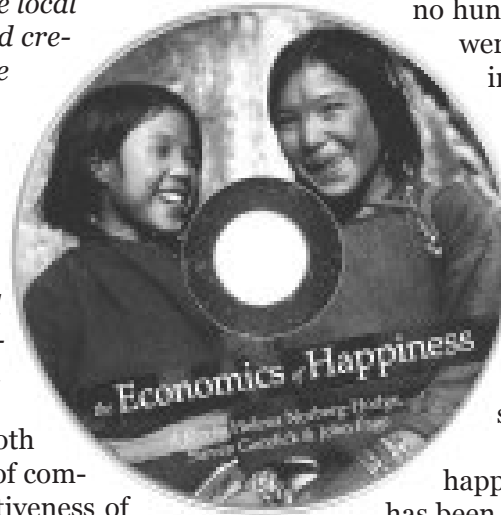
Emphasizing that the corporations wield only the economic and political power that has been yielded to them by citizens, the video urges us to withdraw that legitimacy by supporting alternative economic systems. This can begin by imagining an economy that isn't based on growth and by replacing Gross National Product with more accurate and comprehensive economic metrics, such as the Genuine Progress Index.

ANOTHER ESSENTIAL GOAL is to remove fiscal and other supports that grant unfair advantage to globalization and corporate capitalism. That wouldn't eliminate trade or make self-reliance absolute. It would simply favor economic activities that are sustainable and would put local needs first.

These are not pipe dreams. The video documents a growing global network of decentralized agricultural, financial, and manufacturing activities that operates very differently from globalization and bears very different fruits. It is providing more jobs, more food per acre, and better soil health than industrial operations. It is protecting local identity, local knowledge, self-respect, a sense of belonging to a nurturing community, and a deeper sense of interdependence with each other and the natural world.

This and other videos can be borrowed from the QEW Video Library at <www.quakerearthcare.org> for \$10 to cover postage and handling.

—Louis Cox



Two new videos look at growth and human population

Richard Grossman, M.D.
Durango (Colo.) Friends Meeting

MY CHILDHOOD was marred by not going to the movies. Yes, once or twice a year I was taken as a special treat. The lack of movies was part of being brought up as a Friend, I guess. Now I realize the importance of video as a means of education as well as entertainment.

Two new videos, *Growthbusters* and *Mother: Caring for 7 Billion*, treat the issues of growth and human population. Both were made in my home state, Colorado, and I feel somewhat responsible for each.

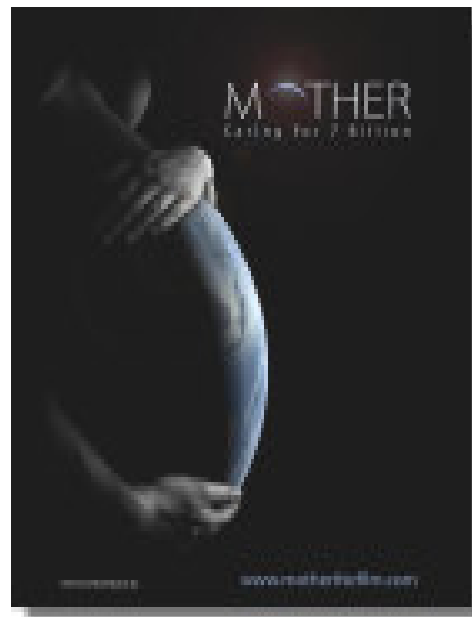
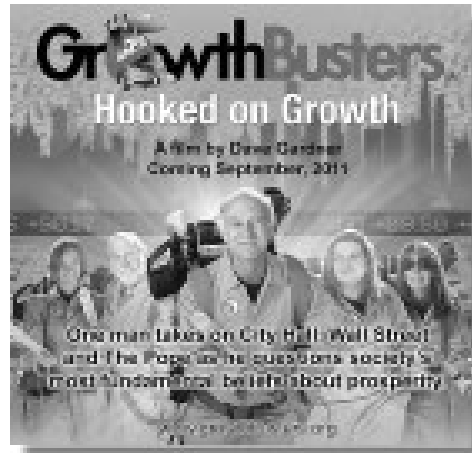
Growthbusters lets you know from its title that its producer, Dave Gardner, has a great sense of humor. If you need more proof, go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=FXSTrW_dARc. He also has a lot of experience as a filmmaker, having worked for PBS in Texas for years.

Then he moved back to Colorado Springs, the town where he grew up, and found that it had changed. Bigger and busier, it had lost many of its human values. Dave had an epiphany—growth is *not* always good. The video is about his campaign to get people to realize this. He is not only concerned about economic growth but also about human population growth. We had Dave come to Durango to speak, and you can catch a glimpse of him in *Growthbusters* in the footage shot at Fort Lewis College. To learn more, watch the trailer and to order your copy go to: www.growthbusters.com.

I feel like I am the father of *Mother: Caring for 7 Billion*. At least I gave its real parents, Chris Fauchere and his wife Joyce Johnson, the idea of making a film about human population.

After watching *The Great Squeeze*, another video by Chris and Joyce, we chatted. This earlier video is about the many problems that are ganging up on the world. (Perhaps some of you remember watching it in Chicago at a QEW steering committee meet-

ing.) They came down from Denver and stayed with us for a week, doing some filming. You might catch a glimpse of my back in *Mother*.



Mother is so good that it earned a full-page write up in *Science* magazine, the USA's preeminent scientific journal. In the concluding paragraph, the reviewer states, "The film compellingly argues that a fair and just solution is likely to only be found in a complete refocusing of our priorities and societies. Specifically, we must value diversity, human and biological, over the gross national product and human solidarity over competition." For more information, check out www.motherthefilm.com

OUR MANIA for economic growth gets no mention in the normal press. It is just assumed to be the norm and to be good. I know of only one organization, the **Center for the Advancement of the Steady State Economy**, that questions this belief. These two new films are major contributions to sanity! As the *Science* review ends up, these films "...will also convince (viewers) that... we must not be afraid to re-engage with the population issue and that the time for such renewed engagement is now." ❖

Some enlightening on-line resources for the UN's "Rio+20" Earth summit in 2012

From the Canadian Earth Summit Coalition—
http://http://earthsummit.ca/earth_summit_resources

From the African Biodiversity Network—
<http://vimeo.com/channels/gaia>

From the Third World Network—
<http://www.twinside.org.sg/title2/sdc2012/sdc2012.111002.htm>

From Payal Parekh, Climate and Energy Expert—
<http://www.climate-consulting.org/2011/12/07/no-to-dirty-cdm/>

From the ETC Action Group—
<http://www.etcgroup.org/en/node/5296>

QEW Mini-Grants offered again in 2012

TO ENCOURAGE environmental projects initiated by Quaker meetings, schools, and other groups, QEW offers matching Mini-Grants for environmental projects. Matching grants help to fund projects such as bicycle usage/promotion, educational projects, and gardens of all varieties: nibble gardens, butterfly gardens, native plant gardens, rain gardens, and roof gardens. In past years projects included Energy Star refrigerators, low-flush toilets, cost-efficient lighting, and Meeting House solar panels. We have also seen a school symposium on vision and energy conservation, a joint spring-reclamation project, an educational trip down the Mississippi, and a bike trip across Pennsylvania to the FGC Yearly Meeting.

2011 Mini-Grant projects included LED lighting in the West Virginia Quaker Wilderness Center, an educational garden joint project completed by Miami Monthly Meeting, a rain garden in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., and a tree-planting project in El Alto, Bolivia. We invite Friends groups anywhere to apply for matching funds. We encourage multi-generational involvement, as well as partnerships with local non-Quaker community groups.

For 2012 our maximum matching Mini-Grant amount will be **\$350**. However, we ask applicants to plan their projects carefully and apply only for the amount they need. Past projects have shown that much can be done with small sums. In 2011 the Victoria (British Columbia) Monthly Meeting completed a drip irrigation project for less than \$130. Successful Mini-Grant projects can accomplish much with many hands, ingenuity, and modest budgets.

We use both modern and traditional methods to do our work. Since we restrict our travel due to budget and carbon considerations, our Mini-Grants Working Group depends heavily on the Internet and electronic documentation to make funding decisions and track projects. We use technology and old-fashioned word of mouth to promote and document the work of projects ranging from local to global and the mundane to the creative and ground-breaking.

The deadline for 2012 Mini-Grant applications is May 2, 2012. These grants are available to Friends meetings, churches, and groups. The form can be accessed at www.quakerearthcare.org. Look for details on Mini-Grants under "Outreach." For more information, contact:

—Bill Holcombe, Clerk
QEW Mini-Grants Working Group
<bholc7@hotmail.com>
203/313-4438

Growth Dilemma Project seeks to impact FCNL Policy Statement

THE GROWTH DILEMMA PROJECT (GDP) of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting will ask Friends Committee on National Legislation to call for "*a paradigm shift in perspective and framing policy issues*" about the economic system when its Policy Statement is revised in 2013. To prepare for that, GDP is asking Friends to add an element to their participation in the upcoming process for setting Legislative Priorities.

In January 2012, FCNL's Policy Committee will send to all the meetings and churches in member yearly meetings a mailing asking for participation in developing its Legislative Priorities for the 113th Congress. It will ask Friends to respond as a body, a committee, a smaller group, or as individuals about the issues that most concern them.

The growth dilemma in a nutshell

The economies of virtually all nations require growth to function. Those with plenty are induced to acquire more, and those in debt are induced to borrow more to help the economy grow. Yet human economies are already larger than Earth's commonwealth of life can continue to support, while unemployment and poverty are widespread, and more growth mainly adds to the wealth of those who are already very wealthy.

We urge meetings and churches to participate in the Legislative Priorities Process. We also invite Friends to consider some of the ways our current economic system is in fundamental conflict with our testimonies and our society's well-being; and, if they are so led, to ask the Policy Committee that concerns about our economic system be on FCNL's agenda for 2013.

Please be sure your meeting or church receives the Policy Committee's invitation, and ask Friends to respond to it. Our January report will provide more details on communicating with the Policy Committee about putting economics on FCNL's agenda for 2013.

The success of much that we will do will depend on expanding our network of GDP contacts. If your meeting or church doesn't have a GDP contact and would like to, please e-mail me at eddreby@gmail.com. Also, if you know of Friends in other monthly meetings or churches who might be interested in the Growth Dilemma Project, please send me their e-mail addresses and their meeting or church affiliations. I'll only e-mail them once, unless they are willing to receive our monthly reports.

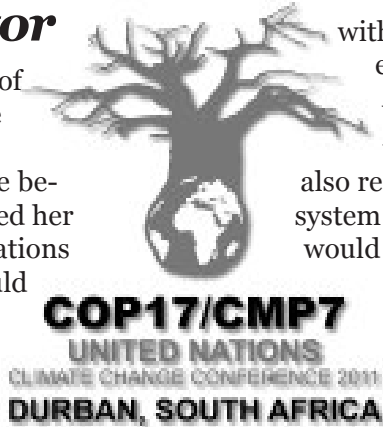
—Ed Dreby
Mount Holly (N.J.) Friends Meeting

UN climate agreement in Durban called a victory for polluters, financial sector

JUDY LUMB of Belize, and Moses Musonga of Kenya, both Quakers, represented QEW at the 2011 UN climate summit (COP-17) in Durban, South Africa, last December. Judy had to leave before the final session, but on her blog she posted her assessment of the direction she felt the negotiations were heading—toward weak language that would postpone meaningful international cooperation in reducing global carbon emissions and mitigating the worst effects of the climate changes to come.

By agreeing to further delays, the conference delegates may have condemned the planet to a 4-degree C rise in average global temperature—a terrifying prospect in light of the climate disruptions that are occurring after less than a 1-degree C rise.

The weak language of the final accord reflected great reluctance by the U.S. and some other developed countries to commit to renewal of the Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2012, preferring to delay that decision until the next climate summit. The U.S. has never ratified the Kyoto Protocol, and Canada



withdrew from it right after COP-17 ended..

WATERING-DOWN of key wording in the final agreement also resulted in deletion of a two-track system whereby developed countries would have the primary responsibility for climate change mitigation because of their historical contribution to current greenhouse gas emissions, while developing countries who have not been responsible for the problem would have a different set of responsibilities.

Judy included a link to a press release from a coalition called Climate Justice Now! <www.climate-justice-now.org/>, which condemned decisions resulting from the UN COP-17 summit as “a crime against humanity” because of developed nations’ failure to take responsibility for the great suffering that unmitigated climate change is causing.

Climate Justice Now! said the antidote to the current stalemate is the People’s Agreement from an alternative climate conference in Cochabamba, Bolivia in 2010, which, in contrast to the manifestly unfair UN climate summit in Copenhagen in 2009, addressed the interests of developing countries and acknowledged that real solutions to climate change can be found only in the context of the inherent rights of Mother Earth.

According to Pablo Solón, former lead climate negotiator for Bolivia, “*The world’s polluters have blocked real action and have once again chosen to bail out investors and banks by expanding the now-crashing carbon markets—which like all financial market activities these days, appear to mainly enrich a select few.*”

Janet Redman of the Washington-based Institute for Policy Studies said, “*What some see as inaction is in fact a demonstration of the palpable failure of our current economic system to address economic, social or environmental crises. Banks that caused the financial crisis are now making bonanza profits speculating on our planet’s future. The financial sector, driven into a corner, is seeking a way out by developing ever newer commodities to prop up a failing system.*”

COP-17 President Nkoana Mashabane of South Africa made a strong argument to approve the Durban package of decisions, Judy reported. “She said that *we have worked long and hard and shouldn’t let that*

Your gift can help QEW plan its 2012 Earthcare programs

LAST NOVEMBER we set ourselves a fundraising goal to raise **\$25,000** by the end of December. I am pleased to report to you that at the time this issue went to press we had raised about **\$23,000**. *Grateful thanks go to all of you who helped us near that goal.*

We have big plans for 2012: We will continue Earthcare education around our theme of Food and Biodiversity; we are planning a Young Adult Friends Gathering with Pendle Hill in June; we will host the Earthcare Center at the FGC Gathering in July; we are planning two face-to-face QEW gatherings, one in June and one in October.

We hope that many of you will see this as an opportunity to plan a special Earthcare event with your Monthly Meeting or your Yearly Meeting to join our celebration of 25 years of Friends’ witness for Earthcare as a spiritual concern.

We have enclosed a return envelope in this issue of *BeFriending Creation*. Please consider making a gift now now to help with our plans for 2012, particularly the Young Adult Friends Gathering and our 25th anniversary celebration.

—Anne Mitchell
QEW General Secretary

Durban, next page >>

Three ways the 2011 UN climate summit in Durban let us down...

CLIMATE ACTIVIST Roger Rashi of Quebec, Canada, explains how the deal that came out of Durban in December dealt a *triple defeat* to the Kyoto process, in terms of **emission targets, carbon markets, and the Green Climate Fund.**

First, the emissions targets were watered down from a binding treaty to 'voluntary' and aspirational ones. Not only that, the urgently needed second action phase has been postponed until 2020. While the scientists tell us that urgent action is necessary, the voluntary targets of Durban involve major delays. Deaths due to climate chaos are already occurring; and the rich nations hold the smoking gun.

Second, carbon markets remain unstable, unregulated, and without safeguards for peasants and indigenous populations. Under Kyoto, there were three types of offsets: those purchased from cap-and-trade, and those invested in clean tech, or mitigation projects in the poor countries. The latter two, as part of the Kyoto treaty, are now relegated to a sort of limbo, from which they may (or may not) be resuscitated. Carbon offsets remain as unregulated as the infamous subprime mortgages, and European experience shows that financiers swallow up any profits, not the poor countries. The result is a flood of cheap offsets that does little to finance renewables or climate action, and allows

major polluters to buy cheap licenses to continue their harmful activities. Protests of the global south against these schemes has been mounting steadily and loudly for the past two years.

Third, the World Bank retains its "temporary" control of the Green Climate Fund (and other climate funds). The Bank's environmental record has been abysmal; along with regional development banks, it continues to finance coal-burning electricity plants, mining and oil extraction, and infrastructure projects with major impacts on climate and biodiversity.

According to the UN's preparatory documents for Rio+20, financing is to come from carbon markets, and leveraging "private" funds—a point on which the US and Canada have been particularly insistent. We should not be surprised, since the \$100 billion "quick start" aid pledged to the Copenhagen Accord turned out to have a \$70 billion shortfall, and even then much of the aid was from existing envelopes (i.e. double counted) or in the form of loans (i.e. simply increasing Third World debt). Basically, this saddles the poor countries with the costs of climate action.

—David Millar
Montreal (Quebec) Friends Meeting

>> **Durban**, from page 8

work go to waste. The world is watching. Let's not disappoint them. ...But there was not agreement on the proposed decisions.

These excerpts from the statement by Switzerland summarize the general feeling. 'Switzerland came to Durban to fulfill Bali Action Plan set out at COP-13 and to operationalize the decisions made in Cancun last year. ... But this text is weak, thin, insufficient. ...The shared vision is blind. ... However, Switzerland will accept it because it is absolutely necessary. It would be terrible to lose these tiny steps. With regret, we accept.'

IN HER BLOG, <judylumb.wordpress.com/2011/12/>, Judy observed,

To three countries, Canada, Japan, and Russia, the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol seemed pointless without the major polluters involved, the U.S. and the emerging economies of China and India. The withdrawal of those three countries leaves only 16 percent of global emissions covered by the second commit-

ment period. But still the financing of adaptation to the adverse effects of climate change is connected to the Kyoto Protocol, so developing countries did not want to see it die.

There were many issues in regard to balance brought up by the developing countries because the developed countries and their corporations seemed to have too much control of the process. ...The more serious insidious issue is the extent to which market mechanisms crept into all of the proposed solutions. For example, if agriculture is a part of the carbon market as a means of offsetting carbon emissions, then agricultural policy will be determined to suit the financial community, "the 1%," not to feed people, "the 99%."

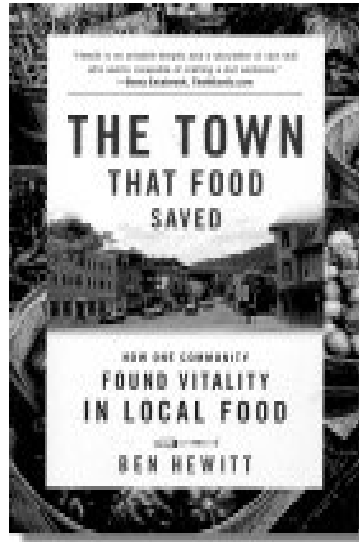
The press releases coming out of the U.N. are heralding a great achievement, but it seems to me a minor one which merely keeps the process alive, which doesn't really justify the tremendous effort that is put into it. But then, I guess it is major when one considers the alternative of no process at all. ❖

Farms and businesses in Vermont search for principles of sustainable food

GETTING the “real poop” on green enterprises that have been drawing media attention (and hype) to a small town in northeast Vermont was the motive behind this fascinating book, published in 2011 by the Rodale Press.

First, Ben Hewitt got to know the energetic, idealistic, and sometimes egotistic “agri-preneurs” behind a cluster of exciting new business ventures in and around the economically struggling rural community of Hardwick, dealing in organic seeds and vegetables and such value-added farm products as cheeses, wines, and beers. Later he talked to homesteaders, community leaders, and other locals, some of whom weren’t sure this experiment in alternative ways of feeding people and providing local jobs has been good for the area or for sustainable food production in general.

Before this, the news from Hardwick has been all about successful efforts to satisfy the growing (mostly affluent) consumer demand for locally grown, organic produce and high-quality byproducts, such as hand-crafted cheeses and yogurts. It is also somewhat of a David-and-Goliath tale of small players who fear and



resent the giant agribusiness corporations that now control the production, processing, and distribution of much of the world’s food, while sucking the life out of local economies and the health out of land and people.

Industrial farming and globalized food processing are running on borrowed time as non-renewable resources become depleted. But the looming food crisis, Hewitt says, isn’t just about the rapid shrinking of the number of farms, farmers, acres of arable land, and many food options. It’s about the resulting loss of much of our traditional knowledge about how

to raise fruits, vegetables, and livestock on a human, ecologically viable scale.

Alternative food systems are trying hard to fill that gap, but most have difficulty satisfying all four criteria that Hewitt says are at least “steps in the right direction”: They must: 1) be economically viable for small producers, 2) be able to feed the local population, 3) run on sunlight/renewable energy, and 4) form a circular flow, in which the outputs of one subsystem become inputs for another, minimizing waste.

The fact is, the great majority of working people in places like Hardwick can’t afford \$20-a-pound aged cheeses and other pricey offerings of “Earth-friendly” businesses that have sprouted up around them. And many locals don’t particularly like a lot of these exotic foods, even when touted as healthier and better for both the environment and the local economy.

But the agri-preneurs forge ahead with their high-volume operations while trying to win sympathy if not cooperation from the surrounding community. Where can we develop alternatives to our currently unsustainable food system if not in out-of-the-way pastoral places like this? they ask.

They also point out that more of the money brought in by their businesses continues to circulate in the local economy and create more decent-paying local jobs, compared to what is spent at the local chain supermarket. Although there are persistent distortions in the way true costs currently are allocated, this campaign to better conserve and utilize the region’s human and natural resources is still going to be decided by people’s perceptions of what things cost.

Even if the new businesses in Hardwick are organized around unique features of that region and population, there is a chance that the principles they are pioneering will find application in other places. ❖

New YM representative believes that Earthcare fulfills Quaker testimonies



AMY SAVAGE of Syracuse (N.Y.) Friends Meeting, a New York YM representative to the QEW Steering Committee, is serving on a subcommittee that awards scholarships to Young Adult Friends needing financial help to come to QEW meetings.

She currently lives in Albany, N.Y., where she teaches Spanish at the post-secondary level. She has co-led worship sharing on Earthcare in her yearly meeting.

Amy says that she has always felt spiritually connected to nature and finds that the Quaker testimonies reinforce her belief that peace *on* Earth and peace *with* Earth are the same thing. In other words, “*ecological health is public health is spiritual health.*”

A CORRECTION is in order. The Monteverde Institute has not asked that the title of Finca La Bella be passed to the *parceleros*, the association of Finca La Bella, or another non-profit, as Os Cresson reported in the September-October 2011 issue of *BeFriending Creation*. The Institute is considering these options as well as the option of continuing in a custodial role. They have made progress in developing a power of attorney that would give the *parceleros* and their association direct control over many of the decisions that most directly affect them and their families.

For more on the many interesting activities of the Monteverde Institute, see <www.monteverde-institute.org>.

—Bill Holcombe
—Os Cresson

Clerk and Recording Clerk
QEW Finca La Bella Committee

NICE PAMPHLET on *Food for a Healthy, Just, & Peaceable Planet!*

—Tom Goodridge
Morningside (N.Y.) Friends Mtg.

AS I PREPARED for our New England YM Earthcare retreat I read the latest *BeFriending Creation* newsletter in hard copy for the first time. We are all inundated by Earthcare writing as our topics of discussion come and go, but I am struck this morning by how little attention our main organ of communication seems to get.

Perhaps, it is because I live right between the Meetings where the first two articles [by Brian Drayton and Steve Chase] emanate (each less than 30 miles away), but I am struck by the gifts they bring and challenge us with.

The rest of the issue is full of helpful information and reminders that I need to take to heart as our Earthcare family struggles to bring and grow their callings and concerns to a wider audience.

It may be that most of us have already absorbed this issue, but I feel that a word of thanks and appreciation is due to those who helped to bring it forth.

—Rod Zwirner
West Falmouth (Mass.) Friends Mtg.

BeFriending Creation

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VISION AND WITNESS

WE ARE CALLED to live in right relationship with all Creation, recognizing that the entire world is interconnected and is a manifestation of God. WE WORK to integrate into the beliefs and practices of the Religious Society of Friends the Truth that God's Creation is to be respected, protected, and held in reverence in its own right, and the Truth that human aspirations for peace and justice depend upon restoring the earth's ecological integrity. WE PROMOTE these truths by being patterns and examples, by communicating our message, and by providing spiritual and material support to those engaged in the compelling task of transforming our relationship to the earth.

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Website: <www.QuakerEarthcare.org>

Earthcare Calendar

February 7, 2012. Deadline for article submissions for Mar.-Apr. 2012 *BeFriending Creation*.

May 2, 2012. Deadline for applications for 2012 QEW Mini-Grants.

Quaker Earthcare Witness Order Form

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Canadians may contribute through Canadian Yearly Meeting for a tax receipt, starting at \$45/Can. Please send check to Canadian Yearly Meeting, 91-A Fourth Ave., Ottawa, ON K1S 2L1. CYM needs to know that the money is for QEW support. Forward this form to QEW to let us know that you have chosen to contribute through CYM.

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New QEW pamphlet is roadmap for life after Monsanto

THE NEWEST QEW quad-fold, on the health and ecological threats inherent in the globalized food economy, was enclosed in the 2011 year-end QEW appeal letter.

The pamphlet's focus is the vertically integrated industrial food system that over the past half-century has filled the vacuum left by the declining number of farms and farmers and the expanding taste of consumers for cheap, convenient, and exotic food choices.

In the process, our corporation-dominated food system has woven a web of environmental, social, and economic woes, increasingly dictating what food is produced around the world, how it is produced, and what it costs.

The agribusinesses and food conglomerates greenwash themselves as the champions of consumers, as the only way to feed a rapidly growing population and provide healthy, varied diets. But in truth they are unsustainable for a host of reasons, including their dependence on fossil fuels and fossil water, their depletion of soils and biodiversity, their undermining of rural communities and economies, and their role in the spread of numerous food- and diet-related diseases.

Industrial farming's extensive use of inadequately tested pesticides and its reliance on synthetic inputs also represent a violent approach to agriculture that further isolates humans from the natural world.



GROWING CONCERNS about who controls the world's food supply are being confirmed by rapidly rising food prices, declining per-capita production of many food staples, alarming drops in global food reserves, monopolization of key seed stocks, and profit-driven genetic engineering.

These problems call for immediate action, but many megacorporations now rival governments in wealth and power and enjoy more legal rights than ordinary citizens. This enables them to wield even more influence over legislation, government regulation, and public opinion. That is why food activists are facing an uphill battle in their efforts to repeal the legal doctrine of "corporate personhood" and to provide a level playing field for smaller, individually owned farms by limiting public subsidies to corporations.

The pamphlet outlines a number of things we can do in the meantime to regain some control over our food supply—buying locally grown and processed foods, raising some of our own food organically, buying from community-supported farms (CSAs) and farmers markets, and choosing fairly traded products. It also provides a list of print and video resources on key food issues.

Consider starting a discussion group on this vital issue, using copies of the new food pamphlet that are available free from the QEW office. ❖