



BeFriending Creation

Newsletter of Quaker Earthcare Witness
Affirming our essential unity with nature

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A Palm Beach winter in Charleston, and other primary lessons

Louis Cox

I HAVE VIVID MEMORIES of February 7th in my high school freshman year in Charleston, South Carolina, in the late 1950s. On that day my attention was arrested by the swelling bud of the year's first camellia bloom outside my front door. It was a cheering harbinger of spring after a typical long, cold, and dreary winter. I also saw it as the answer to my lingering problem of what to give as a Valentine to a certain fair damsel at school. . . .

Each day the camellia bud pushed open a little more—right on schedule, I thought, for me to snip the sensual lipstick-pink blossom on February 14th and carry it triumphantly to school, nestled in pink tissue paper inside a white box with a red bow. But on that morning my plan fell apart totally when I discovered that an overnight hard frost had given the petals of this lone blossom a bad case of freezer burn.

Enough about the meteorological mishap that chilled my love life. Let's move ahead 50+ years to the winter of 2011–12, during two visits totaling about



eight weeks that I made to Charleston to care for my father. Buds on the same *Camellia sasanqua* shrub started swelling in November, *then continued to bloom lavishly through a mild December, January, and February.*

That wouldn't have been unusual for this botanical native of Asia, *if I had been visiting my brother near Palm Beach, Florida* (latitude 28°N). But winter floral displays like this were unknown in the Low Country of South Carolina (latitude 34°N) when my family moved there 57 years ago.

During January and February, I witnessed a succession of other very early blossomings in the neighborhood: *vinca, pink sorrel, narcissus, tulip, daffodil, crab apple, and tulip magnolia.* I was even more astonished by the awakening of the rhododendrons (*R. catawbiensis*), which at this pace could be well past their peak when the city's economically important annual Azalea Festival began in April.

In early February, flocks of *robins, grackles, and red-winged blackbirds* descended to feed on insects taking up residence in the fast greening lawn.

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Earthcare begins at home —A call for Mini-Grant applications

WE ARE NOW SEEKING grant applications for Friends projects that

- ❖ Improve your immediate natural environment.
- ❖ Involve members young, old, and in between.
- ❖ Reduce carbon footprints.
- ❖ Create opportunities to learn about local ecosystems.
- ❖ Enrich your local community.
- ❖ Provide meaningful work, and have *fun*.

We can match funding up to \$350. The application form and descriptions of past Mini-Grant projects can be found at <www.quakerearthcare.org>. We want to

encourage your good works and best impulses toward your environment, your community, and yourselves, all as integrated parts of our One Grand and Divine Planet.

For the past four years, QEW Mini-Grants have helped dozens of Friends Meetings and groups put their Earthcare ideas and energies into concrete action. If you have the urge and need to talk with us about developing and funding a project for your Meeting or Friends organization, call me at 203/313-4438, or e-mail me at <bholc7@hotmail.com>.

—Bill Holcombe, clerk
QEW Mini-Grants Subcommittee

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MOSQUITOES WERE HOVERING. Deciduous trees were budding. People were walking around in shorts and sandals. Beachwear shops opened early.

After worship with Charleston Friends in mid-January, I asked the meeting clerk, John Rashford, an ethnobotanist at the College of Charleston, what he thought about spring's arrival some two months ahead of schedule. "*We simply didn't have a winter this year,*" he said. "*There were only two nights when the temperature dropped below freezing.*"

For weeks leading up to the January 21st South Carolina presidential primary, Republican candidates were stumping around the state in 70-degree weather while dismissing mounting evidence of human-induced global climate change as a "hoax" or "patently absurd." Polls showed their supporters were inclined to agree, since acknowledging this elephant in the living room might cast doubt on many basic values and assumptions about freedom, economic growth, etc.

Without this sojourn in a politically more conservative state and daily exposure to campaign ads and reporting on CNN and Fox News, I might not have plumbed the full depth of the public's denial of what modern civilization is doing to its life-support system, or the determination of many political, business, and religious leaders to keep them thinking that way.

In his 2012 State of the Union address, President Obama did not make an explicit connection between a healthy human economy and a healthy Earth economy. But the basic stewardship rationale for many of his environmental policies later drew fire from candidate Rick Santorum, who criticized Obama for a "phony theology" that "elevates the earth above man."

It wasn't until early February that the CBS Morning Show aired a brief segment on the topsy-turvy winter weather, reporting mean temperatures along the eastern seaboard as much as 20°F above normal, while eastern Europe was paralyzed by a deadly deep freeze.

Caution about this non-winter and bugs

"I WOULD LIKE TO ADVISE other gardeners, as well as animal best friends, that the bugs that would normally be in hibernation, or in larva stage, at this time, are alive—and rampant.

"Gardeners, if you have lilies in your gardens, the dark red lily beetle is showing itself. Catch 'em while you can. The plants will appreciate it. Also the dreaded deer tick—think Lyme Disease—is running rampant. Please be diligent about checking your dogs, cats, and other critters that go outside."

—February 23, 2012 posting by Luanne Rotax on the East Charlotte, Vt., Internet-based Front Porch Forum

Many ski resorts in the Northeast were put on hold by extremely thin snow packs, while Colorado was buried in a record-breaking snowfall.

Another newscast reported that residents of a town in drought-parched southern Texas might have to evacuate because their only source of water had nearly dried up. Back home in Vermont, which had suffered disastrous flooding during last year's Hurricane Irene, the state's Agency on Natural Resources predicted an increase in the number and severity of extreme weather events because of climate change.

Another Vermonter, climate activist and author Bill McKibben, exposed our innocence about the facts of Earth in his 1993 book *The Age of Missing Information*. By monitoring thousands of cable television broadcasts, he was able to document the nearly total absence from the mainstream media of information about how the natural world works and about how human actions are upsetting its balance.

Since then, McKibben has been very busy setting up his own media network of books, magazine articles, speeches, radio and television appearances, and Step It Up/350.org events to help fill that information gap. In addition to publishing scientific truth, he is trying to get people *to see themselves and their world in a different way*—a paradigm shift of the mind and heart, leading to deep structural changes in the ways they relate to the planet.

QEW supporters and other ecologically aware Friends have been very active on many fronts—lobbying legislators, joining FWCC's Global Change Consultation, starting Transition Town movements in their communities, weatherizing their meeting houses, working to reduce their personal ecological and carbon footprints, even committing civil disobedience.

SUCH OUTWARD ACTIONS ARE IMPORTANT, of course, but we also need to join McKibben in linking today's energy, ecological, and economic crises to a larger *spiritual* crisis. We need a quantum inward shift from advocating limited reforms aimed at protecting "our" environment to honoring and preserving the integrity of Creation, of which we are a part.

We need to get out of our comfort zones and pray for spiritual strength and clarity to speak this truth to others. As the Rev. Peter Sawtel says [see page 6], it's about "*finding the moral passion to see the devastation of Earth as sin and blasphemy.*"

Envisioning such a change is, frankly, asking for a miracle, since we regularly encounter not only push-back from religious and political conservatives but incomprehension from many mainstream environmentalists. But as Elizabeth G. Watson said in her booklet *Healing Ourselves and the Earth*, our children and grandchildren *have to know we tried*. ❖

QEW representative says to her Yearly Meeting: *'Treat Earth as you would a loved one'*

Amy Savage

Syracuse (N.Y.) Friends Meeting

New York YM Representative to QEW

I FOUND IT VERY HEARTENING to meet and share ideas and worship with other Friends who are involved with Earthcare at the Quaker Earthcare Witness Annual Meeting in Chicago, October 21–23, 2011. It is in community that we will be able to live together in faith and love as the world changes, and hopefully do our best to stall some of the negative changes.

Sometimes I feel pessimistic about the future because of the “gloom and doom” of biodiversity loss, rising global temperatures, flooding, and the unethical food systems that we see in the U.S. among other things. But I know that Friends, acting together, have faced great challenges before, and we will do so again.

One speaker explained the many problems with today's industrial agriculture, including food waste in the midst of global hunger, monocultures, concentrated animal feeding operations, etc. Friends can respond to these problems by buying food that is produced ethically and ecologically, encouraging composting, and by not eating foods that contribute to obesity. Another speaker shared with us the positive changes in the Chicago Wilderness Program, which is protecting lands, restoring habitat, and bringing children into the parks. I know that, for me, the love of nature from my hands-on contact with nature in childhood is the reason I care so deeply about Mother Earth today.

During the weekend, we visited one of the Chicago Farmers' Markets, which filled our spirits with visions of colorful gourds and our bellies with homemade pastries.

Friends also reminded each other of the abolitionists who came before us. We still have vestiges of slavery in the U.S., but we have come a long way since the mid-nineteenth century. There were Friends who had slaves, and there were Friends who ran stations on the Underground Railroad. Friends were sometimes divided, and many did not live to see the end of slavery. But those who knew in their hearts (against the ethical code of the day) that it was wrong to own

slaves did their best to end slavery even if they could see no end to it in the near future. Many were willing to boycott products like sugar that were critical facets of the economic system based on slavery. As slavery was the engine of the economy, now it seems to be cheap labor in other countries and resource extraction—primarily fossil fuels.

If you know that eventually a family member will pass away, you will still love and care for him/her every day. It is important not to give up hope and to treat Earth as you would a loved one. Even though Earth is suffering, we should not assume all is lost and ruined. Every day we must be mindful and work the good work to protect our natural world.

We must also have faith, like the abolitionists, and make changes in our lives and share those changes with others. John Woolman shared his experiences and life changes with Friends one-on-one and with Meetings. So, don't hide your Light under a bushel, Friends! If you have a garden, invite some Friends to come see it and have them taste a tempting carrot! If you have stopped eating meat, share your joy with a vegetarian meal. If you have started riding your bike, ride it to Meeting and encourage others who can to join you. It is important that we be joyful and welcoming (and sometimes charming or even sexy!) in this process. We are not making sacrifices; rather we are loving Mother Earth and liberating ourselves from unethical and evil practices.

HAVE OUR MEETINGS organized carpooling? Do our Meetings try to have vegetarian and/or local food potlucks? Do our Meetings compost food wastes? Have we made efforts to green our Meeting Houses? Have we started Meeting vegetable gardens? It sometimes takes a change of heart, a lot of volunteer time (and sometimes some fundraising!) to get things going. But if we have a vision, we can move forward!

Different Friends in QEW are organizing a youth activist environmental training, working with Costa Ricans to sustain small-farm agriculture, offering Mini-Grants to Meetings for sustainability projects, and working on a statement repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery before the UN.

I was reminded again at the QEW gathering that many Friends “wear many hats” and can be overwhelmed by responsibilities. When the Meeting has few members and is growing tired, perhaps you don't need to start a new project there, but can join up with GreenPeace or 350.org or Tarsands Action or another established project. ❖



Amy Savage

Many Kenyans want access to family planning; we can help

Geeta Jyothi McGahey, M.D., MHP
Celo (N.C) Friends Meeting

AS A DELEGATE from Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting & Association to the World Conference of Friends in Kenya April 16–25, I was concerned to make the best use of the carbon costs, so I spent 2½ months as a medical volunteer, half with the mobile clinics and half at Kaimosi Quaker Hospital.

Over a third of women in the large region designated as the Rift Valley Province, Kenya, desire contraception but have no access to it. The Community Health Africa Trust (CHAT) is closing this gap for families with an even higher unmet need in poor, underserved communities in the northern and central highlands. In rural Thome, we did eight five-year implants and 20 three-month Depo-Provera shots in a day, along with numerous immunizations and sick calls.

The week before, in the slums of Nanyuki, the largest town in Laikipia County (at the base of Mount Kenya), 29 women came to the local school yard to have implants inserted, while they sat under the shade of a tree. I walked with Violet, the mobilizer, talking to about 40 women. Neighbors informed her of recent births. Others invited friends in so they could hear their family-planning choices. Many were ready; however, we were brought to the shack of a Somali woman with a newborn, her fifth. Needing permission from her husband, she said “no.”

Out camping for nine days, accessing remote areas of bush, we had 10 to 15 family planning visits a day; many women had already chosen methods lasting up to five years. When quoting the costs of health care services, it is said that it takes a certain amount of money to provide contraceptive pills, give Depo-Provera, or immunize a child. My first lesson is that access to family planning services in isolated areas is often limited by the cost to get products to the consumers. Our days are spent driving over bumpy roads and fields, which become a muddy glue

in the wet seasons. As the truck gets to an area, Peter, the driver, honks the horn. Clients can walk kilometers, sometimes trickling in, sometimes waiting.

Another major hurdle is the administrative time required to apply for grants, keep the particular records that donors want, provide services as directed by donors (rather than local needs), and figure out how to do the needful while still meeting the requirements of the grant. The program director faces one deadline after another. The financial officer has to deal with providing different data to each agency. As the contraceptive mix changes, the cost per person to deliver family planning may increase. When more women use five-year implants or Depo-Provera shots, fewer family planning visits are required; the cost per person required to mobilize clients to use contraception following childbirth or at onset of sexual activity increases.

Since CHAT serves areas with small populations, to be viable it must

offer other supported services such as immunization and tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS counseling, testing, and services. By including curative care-giving opportunities to have contact with more people, less stigma is attached to a clinic visit; a general positive attitude to the providers comes with such community service. Unfortunately, even basic curative care necessitates significant outlays for medications. The clinic also places condoms in strategic locations, important both

for contraception and to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS, extending service when the truck returns to base.

It was heartening to see how closely CHAT worked with the district health office, which supplies some of the condoms and other contraceptives. Using the district's vaccines, CHAT can do the immunization in the field. They trade medications to best serve the people.

Administrative costs could decrease substantially if public health and family planning were provided with steady, sustainable funding. True change will come only

Family planning next page>>



Traditional Kenyan woman choosing family planning

2009 Facts: Rift Valley Prov., Kenya

Birth rate	4.7 children/woman
Urban:	2.9/woman
Rural:	5.2/woman
Desired number of children	
Pastoralists	5–7 (down from 10–12)
Women under 29	3–4 in 1999)
Men	4–5
Percentage of women using contraception	
Any method	42%
Modern	35%
No education (12% of women) Illiterate	16%
Any method	14%
Modern	12%
Primary incomplete (29% of women)	
Any method	40%
Modern	35%
Percentage of non-contraceptive-using women	
— who have been visited by a FP Mobilizer	<5%
— who visited a health facility & discussed FP	<7%
— did neither of above	>90%

‘Earth’s Lawyer’ speaks on proposed international Law of Ecocide

POLLY HIGGINS, an activist and lawyer from Great Britain, spoke at Friends House in Toronto, Ontario, on 18 February about her plan to submit to the United Nations, for the second time, a proposal to create an international Law of Ecocide.

The proposed Law of Ecocide, to be presented at the Rio + 20 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012, would be classed as a “Fifth Crime against Peace,” along with Genocide, Crimes against Humanity, Crimes of Aggression, and War Crimes. Higgins defines ecocide as mass “damage, destruction to, or loss of ecosystems of a given territory...to such an extent that peaceful enjoyment by the inhabitants of that territory has been severely diminished.”

She recommended using, and adding to, existing international criminal law to bring environmental

polluters to justice, as a deterrent to future destructive corporate policy, and to provide guidelines for moving toward industry that functions in concert with the environment, rather than to its detriment.

Higgins said that Quakers can use their tradition of moral leadership to show that moral imperative



Polly Higgins

trumps economic interest. She also suggested looking for unlikely allies amongst those we admire or respect in industry, business, and politics. She called upon us as Canadians to stand up for our environment at a time when our government appears to keep such issues very low on the agenda, and especially upon young Canadians to help

save the future of Earth in a rational, powerful, and peaceful way.

Higgins is a barrister, author, and international environmental lawyer advocating a different approach to preventing the destruction of our planet. She was voted by the *Ecologist* as one of the “Worlds Top 10 Visionary Thinkers” for her earlier work advancing the Universal Declaration of Planetary Rights.

“Instead of our laws protecting the property rights of the few, we can shift to laws that impose responsibilities, duties and obligations for the benefit of the many,” says her website <<http://pollyhiggins.com>>

To find out how you can get involved in supporting adoption of the Law of Ecocide, go to the website <www.eradicatingecocide.com>.

—Philippa Davies
Toronto (Ont.) Friends Meeting

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when these integrated services are covered by block grants, decreasing administrative and fundraising overhead. In some sense, successful programs are penalized; contraceptive encounters decline when clients choose longer-lasting choices, which are better for them, better for families, and do a better job of reducing population growth. Population stabilization will best preserve the meager water and arable land resources and allow families to educate their children.

Literacy and opportunity for women are very important. Differences in fertility are based on cultural norms and lifestyles. Urban and more educated women, even those living in the slums or working as “street girls” (prostitutes) prefer two to three children. The highest fertility and lowest use of family planning we saw was in Sukuroi, where the area is so sparsely populated that it has no school or access to media. Here Samburu women don’t use contraception until after a sixth to tenth child—many more than the scrubby bush can handle.

CHAT community-based mobilizers will continue to educate until the mobile unit returns.

TO SUPPORT THESE SERVICES that get to the families in need, you can donate to the Africa Fund of Celo Friends Meeting, 70 Meeting House Ln., Burnsville, NC 28714; or to Community Health Africa—Poverty Solution <www.seattlefoundation.org/npos/Pages/CommunityHealthAfrica-APovertySolution.aspx> CHAPS is a 501 (c) organization registered out of Seattle that directs most U.S. funds to projects or CHAT’s Global Giving funding platform. ❖

Geeta Jyothi McGahey is seeing wildlife and getting to know the Samburu and Turkana people and Kenyan health providers as she works. Her blog is <changeinsights.wordpress.com>.

QEW’s 25th Anniversary Year

There will be more about our 25th anniversary year in future issues of *BeFriending Creation*. We would love to hear your stories about QEW—and under its original name, Friends Committee on Unity with Nature. Please make these stories short—200 words or so—and we will try to publish as many as we can in future issues of *BeFriending Creation* and on our website. As well, perhaps you might want to hold an event at your Monthly Meeting or Yearly Meeting to celebrate 25 years of bringing Earthcare concerns to Friends. We can help with ideas and resources. Just get in touch with the QEW office <info@quakerearthcare.org>

‘Continuing Rev_l_tion’

Announcing a Young Adult Friends conference on *ministry, Earthcare & social action*

Date: June 15–20, 2012

Location: Pendle Hill Retreat & Study Center, Wallingford, Pa.

Witness and action

JOYFUL FELLOWSHIP, guided discernment of Spirit-led witness in the world, and transformative social action training are the goals of an intensive six-day conference at Pendle Hill in the summer of 2012 for Young Adult Friends (ages 18-35) in the U.S. and Canada. This powerful spiritual and educational program, centered on ministry, Earthcare, and social action, is being co-hosted by the Pendle Hill Young Adult Leadership Development Program (YALD), Quaker Earthcare Witness, and the Clarence & Lilly Pickett Endowment for Quaker Leadership.

Young adults are particularly well poised to become the inspired and effective change agents that are needed in the world, and we have heard their request for opportunities to deepen and strengthen gifts, skills, and leadings around social change. Pendle Hill, Quaker Earthcare Witness and the Pickett Endowment are responding to that need by providing leadership training, skill-building opportunities and support for the ministry of those who are called to live into the intersection of their gifts and the needs of the world. At its core, this conference is about providing the foundational skills and training to inspire **revelation—or revolution**—as we strive to live in Spirit-led relationship with ourselves, our communities, and the earth.

Program description

The program will include inspirational speakers, workshops and trainings, worship and worship-sharing, fellowship, discernment of gifts and ministry, service, and direct action. The program, still in development, will include workshops and components such as: *Quaker Earthcare Witness activities; the Pachamama Alliance’s “Awakening the Dreamer, Changing the Dream” workshop; the Called to Action trainings; Earth Quaker Action Team direct-action opportunities; and engagement with several local non-profits working for systemic change.*

The conference will culminate in a series of workshops on discernment of ministry and leadings and will include a special gathering of Pickett Endowment alumni. All Pickett Endowment alums are welcome to

attend the entire conference, but will be especially encouraged to attend the Pickett workshops on Tuesday June 19 and Wednesday June 20 to share stories of their own journeys with discerning the call to Spirit-led witness.

Program cost

Program cost is **\$270 per participant**. Please note: there will be scholarships available for participants who need support, and interested individuals should consider asking their monthly/yearly meetings or communities for financial assistance.

Revelation or Revolution?

More details about this conference and an application will be available in February at <http://pendlehill.org/yald/overview>. In the meantime, *please save the date* and contact Emily Higgs ehiggs@pendlehill.org with any questions.

*If you consider yourself an ally to young adults and wish to support this important gathering, please consider giving a financial gift that would enable the participation of more young adults in this program. Donations can be made to **Pendle Hill, 338 Plush Mill Rd., Wallingford, PA 19086** with “YALD Financial Assistance” in the memo line. ❖*

A public Earth witness based in moral passion

“Water is a sacred, common, public trust.” “God’s Earth is sacred.”

These statements do not flow easily from either modern Western thought or from many traditional Christian theologies. “Sacredness” is foreign, and even foolish, to ways of thinking which see the world as a collection of things.

If our theology and ethics can’t handle the notion of sacred water, and indeed a whole sacred Earth, then we will never find the moral passion to see the devastation of Earth as sin and blasphemy. The desperate and deteriorating state of our planet calls out for bold public witness that is grounded in that sort of ecological moral passion.

—The Rev. Peter Sawtel
Eco-Justice Notes, February 2012

QEW Mini-Grants supported global eco-projects in 2011

SIX ENVIRONMENTAL projects by Quaker meetings and their partners were supported with small matching grants from QEW in 2011.

Grants were awarded for a native plant garden in **Miami, Florida**; a tree-planting project in **El Alto, Bolivia**; a rain garden in **Saratoga Springs, New York**; a drip-irrigation system in **Vancouver, B.C.**; an LED-lighting project in eastern **West Virginia**; and a silkworm/bee-keeping project in western **Kenya**.

Miami Friends Meeting's native plant garden

Goals were to beautify the grounds with native plants; to create native landscape to attract butterflies, bees and birds; and to lower energy use—no watering would be required. The garden also would foster sustainability education for local children.

The Buildings & Grounds Committee enlisted the support of First Day School children. Community partners in the project include: TREEmendous Miami; the Native Plant Society of South Dade County; the Tropical Audubon Society; and children and parents of the neighboring Bilingual Coop Pre-school.

El Alto Church's forestation project in Bolivia

The forestation project's goals were to initiate tree planting in a treeless high-altitude environment in the Andes; and to beautify the grounds around the El Alto Quaker Church. Starting with over 100 trees, the project will demonstrate the possibility of trees' survival in one of America's highest populated places.

Local community involvement included: participation by a local group of Young Friends and donation of the trees by the El Alto mayor's office.

Saratoga Springs, N.Y., Meeting's rain garden

The rain garden project's goals were to address drainage problems on Meeting House grounds; reduce splashing on the clapboard Meeting House walls; beautify the grounds with native plants; create native landscape to attract butterflies, wild bees, and birds; lower water use; limit runoff into the Meeting's septic system; and provide a sustainable garden for education of local children.

Other benefits included a use for compost generated on the Meeting House property and educational opportunities for the First Day School children. Many members of the Saratoga Springs Meeting were involved or made contributions.



Protective covers are key to El Alto Church's strategy for high-altitude forestation.

Vancouver, B.C., Meeting's drip irrigation system

The drip irrigation project's goals were to demonstrate viability of drip irrigation; reduce Vancouver Friends Meeting's water use by 50 percent; irrigate 100 feet of perennial bed; and save time and money.

The Meeting's resident Friend purchased the materials and installed system, with the help of locally donated advice and expertise, which kept the project cost under the projected \$150.

Rolling Ridge Friends Wilderness Center's LED lighting

Goals of this eastern West Virginia project were to increase lighting levels; lower costs; and lower energy usage. Follow-up plans include a series of energy-usage measurements to gauge the environmental benefits.

Kenyan youth group's agriculture development & education project

Goals included involving the Munyu Youth Group of Lurale Monthly Meeting in western Kenya in agriculture development and education; developing an existing tree nursery, using indigenous trees; initiating sericulture (silkworm) and apiary (honeybee) projects; planting indigenous trees and strawberry plants; and developing businesses to redress poverty among locals.

Other benefits include education for the local group of Young Friends; involvement of local Friends; and advancement for non-members. The group will submit photos and progress reports over the two-year life of the project. ❖

QEW Mini-Grants available for 2012

Mini-Grant plans for 2012 include acceptance of more applications from outside the U.S.; increasing the number of partnership projects; a new matching-grant limit of \$350; and increasing the variety and scope of projects.

We're still accepting applications! But don't delay. The application deadline is **May 2, 2012**.

You can help by contributing directly to the Mini-Grant fund; sponsoring a fund-raising event; or planning an environmental project for your Quaker Meeting, church, or group. Carbon offsets for trips may be donated to QEW for the Mini-Grant Fund.

The 2012 Mini-Grant application is available at <www.quakerearthcare.org>. Contact Bill Holcombe, Mini-Grants clerk, at <bholc7@hotmail.com>

What I gathered from the 2011 UN climate talks

Moses Musonga, Kenyan Quaker and past African Executive Secretary for Friends World Committee for Consultation

I WOULD LIKE TO START BY quoting a verse from Genesis 2:15, which says, *“The Lord God put the man into the Garden of Eden to take care of it and to look after it.”* Since we are called by God to till the earth and keep it, we therefore have an obligation to care for and look after the earth and all living things.

“Climate change” is the term used for changes experienced in weather patterns on a global scale, including changes in temperatures, the timing of seasons, and rainfall. Greenhouse gases are one of the major causes of global warming, which is a slow but measurable increase in the earth’s temperature. Greenhouse gases that occur naturally in the atmosphere trap heat from the sun and keep the earth warm. Today the level of some of these gases, including carbon dioxide (CO₂), is rising drastically above natural levels because of human activities, particularly the burning of non-renewable fossil fuels like coal, oil, and gas. These are used mainly for electricity generation and transportation. Clearing of trees for agriculture or human development also immensely contributes to an increase in the CO₂ levels.

As a result of global warming, oceans are warming, ice caps in the North and South poles are melting, sea levels are rising, fresh water resources are dwindling, and extreme weather events like droughts, floods, cold spells, and heat waves are occurring more often, with disastrous consequences for human beings and the environment. Hardest hit will be the developing countries like my homeland, Kenya.

We must reduce our greenhouse gas emissions significantly. In addition, we must support measures aimed at adapting to the impacts of climate change. After all, the greenhouse gases are already existing in the atmosphere and will be felt for decades to come.

New technologies that enable environmentally and climate-friendly economic activities must be developed and disseminated in order to support the transition to a “green economy,” a sustainable economy that accommodates both humans and the environment. Bilateral cooperation plays an important role in the transition.



Moses Musonga

Delegates from all governments, accredited and non-accredited civil society organization representatives (including QEW), and other stakeholders met for two weeks in Durban, South Africa, in late 2011 to discuss, negotiate, and agree on the way forward on the issue of climate change. The details of the negotiations are covered in the report written by Judy Lumb in the January-February 2012 issue of *BeFriending Creation*.

In my report I would like to highlight my faith-based reflections and interpretation of climate change in the context of the COP17 held in Durban:

How does climate change affect us?

Health: Malaria, schistosomiasis, tick-borne diseases, and other parasitic diseases spread farther and faster in the hotter world.

Water: Safe and reliable sources of water for the growing human populations is threatened by floods, droughts, and expanding deserts. Future conflicts and wars over water rights are inevitable.

Agriculture: Reduced and unpredictable rainfall threatens production of maize, which is the staple food for many countries, and other produce. Some parts of the world that are facing famine are increasing as the demand for food outstrips production.

Biodiversity: Many plants and animals are threatened with extinction as they fail to adapt fast enough to rapidly changing climates. *We human beings are destroying God’s bounteous creation, which is the lifeblood that sustains us.*

Rising sea levels: It is threatening low-lying cities and islands, coastal developments, and farmlands.

Whose issue is climate change?

No one will escape the effects of climate change. The most affected are the poor. *God provides for our needs but not for our greed.* Unless we start meaningful reductions in greenhouse gas emissions by 2015, global warming will become unstoppable. *As God’s “stewards” and “Earth keepers,”* we must all strive to limit our non-renewable energy, resource consumption and cut down on our waste.

What can we do about climate change as persons of faith?

We must become the change we wish to see in the world and live simply for others to follow. We should buy things for their usefulness, develop a habit of sharing and giving away, learn to enjoy things without owning them, develop a healthy skepticism for advertising, and think about the life cycle of what we buy—where it comes from and where it will end up. ❖

Reality check

Mary Gilbert

QEW Representative to the UN



IN JUNE 2012 the UN will hold a Summit meeting in Rio de Janeiro, nicknamed “Rio+20” because it has been 20 years since the original UN “Earth Summit” in 1992.

The 1992 summit was an occasion of excitement and hope. It produced commissions on sustainable development, biodiversity, and desertification, to guide long-term work toward how we can best live on our planet. It produced the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) toward human well-being <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Millennium_Development_Goals> and the beautiful, inspirational Earth Charter. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth_Charter>.

Since then, various independent organizations and the UN itself have taken stock of progress toward the MDGs and found that—aside from a small gain in women’s literacy—*there has been no progress*. Many measured areas are worse off. In addition, crises like climate disruption have become increasingly serious.

The Green Economy

A major focus at Rio+20 will be a proposed global Green Economy, based on the UNEP report of 2011. (See the June–July 2011 *Quaker Eco-Bulletin* critique by Mary Gilbert and David Millar at <www.quakerearthcare.org/Publications/QuakerEcoBulletin/QEBArchive/QEB-PDF/QEB-11-4-UNEP-final.pdf>.)

The Zero Draft

Plans are well underway for Rio+20. In January a “Zero Draft,” a skeleton for the eventual Outcome Document, to be fleshed out in negotiations, was released. The draft was formulated by collecting input from sources inside and outside of the UN itself, adding up to 6,500 pages. An independent group analyzed the whole pile, using a word-use frequency instrument. The Zero Draft was then composed. It’s only 18 pages long! Obviously, a huge amount was dropped.

I attended a Civil Society discussion on January 24, the day before negotiations began on the Zero Draft. Civil society was, to put it mildly, greatly disappointed. Many are saying the Green Economy repeats prescriptions that have failed, and is more or less a sell-out to the multinationals. Everything suggested by business groups made it into the draft, while many, many things brought up by civil society are not even mentioned. (I have data showing which categories of putters-in used what words how many times, and will share if asked.) The intent, of course, is to try to lure corporate malefactors into better behavior. To the extent that that happens, it’s good, but paths to loopholes are currently being widened and paved.

The Zero Draft:

- Lacks urgency, ambition, and details. It does not respond to the gravity and urgency of the crises gripping the world today. Some problems are barely identified and addressed. Implementation of the Green Economy would have to wait until 2015.
- Leaves the term “Green Economy” undefined. At what point can one say an economy is green? Who gets to decide? Each country is to develop its own measures and strategies. This would be chaos.
- Calls for all commitments to be voluntary rather than binding.
- Has no mention of technology assessment.
- Specifically recognizes the private sector (i.e. corporate multinationals) as the key driver of the Green Economy.
- Doesn’t clarify how new agreements would affect agreements already in place.
- Has no critique of the roles that existing institutions and actors have played in creating and exacerbating the problems.
- Gives no recognition to widening inequalities, skewed distribution of resources, ownership or control of land, seeds, forests, etc.

There is growing contention in civil society over doing what is possible within the UN system; some are turning their backs on it. Right now many NGOs are drafting “rights-based” language (including “Rights of Nature”) and encouraging countries to add it to the Zero Draft. Others are planning a parallel meeting in Rio de Janeiro. There is a sense that the imminent collapse of the world economy, environmental calamities, and the social unrest already seen around the world will bring enormous changes.

Signs of progress

At the UN, even at sustainability meetings, the talk has been in mechanistic terms: carrying capacity, resource distribution, planetary limits. Then last year I heard a national delegate use the phrase “*the health of the Earth*” on the floor. Now there is discussion of *Sumak Kawsay* (“living well together,” in Quechua) and the rights of Pachamama (Mother World, or the cosmos), both concepts from South America. These are terms that combine the sense of biological aliveness with spirituality.

At the meeting on January 24 I had the chance to suggest to Farooq Ullah of Stakeholder Forum that bringing the phrase “*the health of the Earth*” into more common usage at the UN could be important. The next day an article came out in which he used that phrase four times, as in “the health of our one, precious planet.” I felt I had spoken directly to his whole reading audience, and I deeply hope it will help people think more clearly. ❖

'Awe, Gratitude, and Reverence'

Shelley Tanenbaum

Strawberry Creek (Calif.) Friends Meeting

IN EARLY DECEMBER 2011, a stone was placed on a northern California hillside with the words "Awe, Gratitude, and Reverence" to mark the final home of Sandra Lewis of Berkeley, Calif. She died as she lived, as a creative and energetic "Earth caregiver," opting for a "green" burial—with just a simple stone to mark the gravesite on native chaparral.

Sandra's love for Earth and all creatures living on the planet came through in her work with many different circles. Indicative of her spirit and leadership, each of these circles of friends and colleagues saw Sandra as a creative force within the circle. Indicative of Sandra's love, she chose to work in groups rather than on her own, to bring projects to fruition.

Quaker Earthcare Witness supporters are most familiar with Sandra's work as co-editor and sometimes author of the *Quaker Eco-Bulletin*, which has appeared as an insert to *BeFriending Creation* for the past eleven years. Her most recent article, "Social Fairness and Ecological Integrity: Strategy and Action for a Moral Economy," a report on the Quaker Institute For the Future Conference at the Quaker Center in Ben Lomond, Calif., in March 2011, was published in the May-June 2011 issue of the *Quaker Eco-Bulletin*.

In 2009, in her role as co-editor, Sandra initiated a dialogue with QEW Finance Committee Clerk and former Treasurer David Ciscel in response to an article he had written for the March-April 2009 *Quaker Eco-Bulletin* on economics and environmental sustainability. Sandra's "deep ecology" spiritual connection to the natural world was in conflict with David's more conventional economic solutions for environmental degradation. With love, Sandra, David and the rest of the *Quaker Eco-Bulletin* editorial team (Keith Helmuth, Barb Day, and Judy Lumb), formed a Circle of Discernment to prayerfully and mindfully consider their range of world views. Their work, initially published in the May-June 2010 *Quaker Eco-Bulletin*, became the Quaker Institute for the Future's pamphlet, *How on Earth Do We Live Now?* published in 2011 <www.quakerinstitute.org>. In this pamphlet, care and sustenance for the commons is described as a way to bring together the "deep ecology" approach with environmental economics.

In 2003, Sandra co-founded, with Cindy Spring, a program called Close to Home, which offers monthly lectures and daylong hikes throughout the Eastbay

region of the San Francisco area. Sandra and Cindy saw this program as a way to build a deep connection between the people living in this region and their natural habitat. The program continues under Cindy's leadership. As a tribute to Sandra, many of us walked the Huckleberry Trail in Sibley Regional Park, one of her favorites, and meditated midpoint along the way.

Yet another of Sandra's circles was the 8 Shields Institute, founded by Jon Young, which provides programs in deep nature connection, mentoring, and peacemaking traditions. Sandra served as an elder in



Sandra Lewis

the peace, justice, and environmental community, and will be greatly missed.

Sandra also will be missed at Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting in Berkeley, Calif., where she was a treasured member. She was serving as clerk of her Meeting's Care of Meeting Committee this year, and had served as clerk or member of many other committees. Sandra participated in drafting

her Meeting's Earthcare Testimony and presented an interest group on it at the 2011 Pacific Yearly Meeting. In years past, Sandra also served on the board of *Earthlight* magazine, published by Pacific Yearly Meeting from 1988 to 2003.

I first met Sandra when I became one of the original Ecoberries, an affinity group within Strawberry Creek Friends Meeting that she co-founded more than 12 years ago. Ecoberries serves as an informal clearness committee for each of us, providing mutual support, inspiration, and accountability for our work on environmental sustainability and economic equity.

SANDRA WAS a lifetime learner, taking courses in a variety of subjects as she discovered new topics to explore. Her formal academic training included a Ph.D. in psychology, which allowed her to sustain a therapy practice with offices in San Francisco and Oakland for over thirty years.

A memorial meeting for Sandra will be held on March 31, 2012 at 2 p.m. (the location was not available at press time).

Sandra attended QEW's Annual Meeting in October of 2009 and brought me with her as a companion. — And somehow I ended up as QEW clerk! Sandra and I had a very deep connection, sharing our concerns for Earthcare, our organizing skills, and our writing.

—I have learned so much from her. ❖

Some exciting QEW projects need your support!

I AM PLEASED TO REPORT that QEW did indeed make its goal of raising \$25,000 in November and December 2011. Thank you, everyone. We are now well placed to begin our work in 2012.

QEW has four exciting projects I want to tell you about. We are working with Pendle Hill on a Young Adult Friends Gathering to take place at Pendle Hill in June [see page 4]. QEW wants to raise at least \$4,000 to help with the costs of this initiative, and I hope that some QEW young adult Friends will be able to attend. We also want to raise funds for our Mini-Grant project [see page 7].

QEW would like to help a young Friend attend the Commission on Sustainable Development—RIO + 20—meetings in Rio de Janeiro this June, when the world is supposed to be coming together to map out a future that is sustainable. Some of us may remember the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992; and some of us were at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in

Johannesburg in 2002. We need to be part of the civil society discussions to ensure that this future is also just. Our voices need to be heard.

Other plans in 2012 include my attending a meeting in London, England, along with other Quaker organization heads working at the international level, so we can learn from each other and support each other; two face-to-face meetings of the QEW Steering Committee; and, of course, celebrating 25 years of bringing Earthcare concerns to Friends. To learn more about these and other QEW activities in 2012, check out the QEW website at <www.quakerearthcare.org>.

Please respond as generously as you can to our requests for financial support during the year so that we can implement our plans. You can use the envelope inserted in this newsletter if you wish to make a gift to us at this time.

Thank you.

—Anne Mitchell

QEW General Secretary

<anne@quakerearthcare.org>

BeFriending Creation

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We publish BeFriending Creation to promote the work of Quaker Earthcare Witness, stimulate discussion and action, share insights, practical ideas, and news of our actions, and encourage among Friends a sense of community and spiritual connection with all Creation. Opinions expressed are the authors' own and do not necessarily reflect those of Quaker Earthcare Witness, or of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). The editor is responsible for unsigned items. Submission deadlines are February 7, April 7, June 7, August 7, October 7, and December 7.

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Membership is open to all who demonstrate commitment to support the work of Quaker Earthcare Witness and who support its work at the Monthly or Yearly Meeting levels, or through other Friends organizations. Quaker Earthcare Witness is a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation; contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

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.

Steering Committee Clerk Shelley Tanenbaum, <sheltan@pacbell.net>.

Gen. Secretary Anne Mitchell, 173-b N. Prospect St., Burlington, VT 05401. 802/658-0308; e-mail: <Anne@QuakerEarthcare.org>.

BFC Editor Louis Cox, 360 Toad Rd., Charlotte, VT 05445. 802/425-3377; e-mail: <Louis@QuakerEarthcare.org>.

Website: <www.QuakerEarthcare.org>

Earthcare Calendar

April 7, 2012. Deadline for article submissions for May-June BFC

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

June 15-20, 2012. Young Adult Friends gathering at Pendle Hill

Quaker Earthcare Witness Order Form

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Make checks payable to **Quaker Earthcare Witness**. Send with this form to **Quaker Earthcare Witness, 173-B N. Prospect St., Burlington, VT 05401-1607.**

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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 Canadian Yearly Meeting.

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New growth dilemma brochure asks, ‘What’s our economy for?’

We call on FCNL to include ecology and economics in its Policy Statement for 2013

THE GROWTH DILEMMA Project (GDP) of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting has a new trifold brochure to facilitate discernment and discussion among Friends about the relationship between ecology and economics in pursuit of a just and secure future.

The brochure draws connections between economics and Quaker testimonies on equality, integrity, simplicity, community, and peace. It calls attention to growth-based economic theories and practices that are promoting disparities in wealth, diminishing quality of life, increasing unemployment, and the denial of resources and opportunities to future generations. It includes queries for discussion and discernment.

The Growth Dilemma Project’s first major effort is to convince Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) to make its Policy Statement more explicit about the economy’s systemic flaws. GDP urges all monthly meetings and churches to participate in FCNL’s 2012 Priorities Process, and to ask the Policy Committee to put the flaws of the growth economy on its agenda for revising the Policy Statement in 2013.



The Growth Dilemma Project has already written to the Policy Committee about Philadelphia Yearly Meeting’s call for a Quaker witness on ecology and the economy. Therefore, *the significance of your monthly meeting’s request will be to convey broad support for this call.*

GDP’s request has been sent to all 110 monthly meetings in Philadelphia YM. We trust that many will participate in the Priorities Process and ask that the agenda for revising FCNL’s Policy Statement in 2013 include the economy’s failures to deal with social and ecological realities.

We hope that a number of monthly meetings and churches in other yearly meetings will make a similar request of the Policy Committee. Please don’t let the material from FCNL, and GDP’s request about the Policy Committee’s agenda for 2013, disappear into a circular file or black hole!

FCNL asks for a response by *mid-April.*

—Ed Dreby
Mount Holly, N.J., Friends Mtg.
for GDP of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

To learn more about the Growth Dilemma Project, see <www.pym.org/committee/growth-dilemma-project-gdp-pym> or telephone Pam Anderson at 215/241-7230. Download the new trifold at <www.pym.org/sites/pym.org/files/GDP%20brochureNEWv%202_9_PA.pdf>.