



BeFriending Creation

Newsletter of Quaker Earthcare Witness
Affirming our essential unity with nature

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YAFs prep for green activism at Pendle Hill

Louis Cox

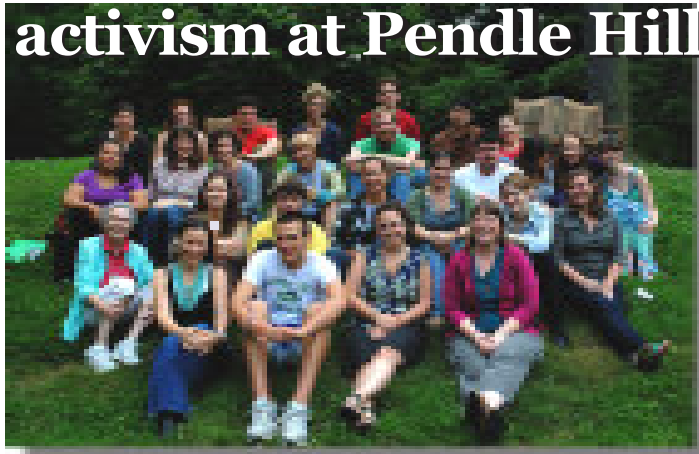
“A LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE...” “Very intense...” Phenomenal content...”—This was how 40 or so Young Adult Friends (YAFs) from the U.S. and Canada described the five days of action training at Pendle Hill Retreat & Study Center in Wallingford, Pa., in mid-June. They had responded eagerly to the organizers’ invitation to *“joyful fellowship, guided discernment of Spirit-led witness in the world, and transformative social-action training.”* Most came away feeling empowered and better informed and trained to carry out coordinated nonviolent direct action on key social and eco-justice issues.

Before getting specific, it’s important to know why the QEW Steering Committee advanced a couple of thousand dollars to this YAF gathering to help with scholarships and other costs:

QEW has long tried to attract more members between the ages of 18 to 35. A number have responded to special invitations and taken advantage of youth scholarships. But only a few have stayed very long. Yes, it’s hard for many younger Friends to find the time for meetings and committee work, with pressures of school, jobs, etc. But a larger truth is that many prefer to hang out with age peers, having not yet acquired their Quaker elders’ greater tolerance for the necessary but tedious process of seeking unity on carefully worded Minutes. Most don’t seem to be into informative presentations, publications, and support groups. *But many are hungry for meaningful action* to help mend the broken world they’ve inherited.

QEW accepting applications for Publications Coordinator

Louis Cox, QEW Publications Coordinator for the past 12 years, will be retiring in the near future. Inquiries may be sent to the search committee, c/o QEW, 173-b N. Prospect St., Burlington, VT 05401, or info@quakerearthcare.org; 802/658-0308.



YAFs were informed and empowered at a QEW-supported training at Pendle Hill in June 2012. Organizer Emily Higgs of QEW is in front row, third from left.

While QEW continues to play a steady role in discerning what eco-actions are true to Quaker values, we recognize that many socially and ecologically concerned younger Friends are going to find outlets for their leadings in other, hopefully kindred, groups, such as the Earth Quaker Action Team (EQAT). According to the QEW Vision & Witness statement, part of our mission is *“...providing spiritual and material support to those engaged in the compelling task of transforming our relationship to the earth.”* The YAF training at Pendle Hill seemed an ideal way to do that.

The green action training was planned and coordinated by **Emily Higgs**, a young adult member of the QEW Steering Committee and Coordinator of Religious and Spiritual Life at Haverford College. She and others worked through Pendle Hill’s Young Adult Leadership Development Program and the Clarence & Lilly Pickett Endowment for Quaker Leadership.

The importance of being “changed people before setting out to change others” was conveyed through an abbreviated version of the “Awakening the Dreamer, Changing the Dream” symposium, led by **Hollister Knowlton** of Chestnut Hill (Pa.) Friends Meeting and former QEW Steering Committee clerk.

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Steve Chase of Putney (Vt.) Friends Meeting and co-founder, with Ruah Swennerfelt, of the Quakers in Transition website and blog; and author of, *Letters to a Fellow Seeker: A Short Introduction to the Quaker Way*, shared about his experiences with activism.

Michael Gagne and **Viv Hawkins** of Central Philadelphia Friends Meeting shared about their religious call to action through lobbying, boycotts, and nonviolent direct action, connecting the spectrum of options to their Quaker beliefs.

Zachary Hershman, a community organizer from the Philadelphia area, explained the basics of nonviolent direct action and how to build an effective campaign, such as the one that EQAT has been waging against Quaker-founded PNC Bank, a major financier of mountaintop-removal coal mining.

The Philadelphia-based **Spiral Q Puppet Theatre** showed YAFs how to make eye-catching signs, banners, and other parade or demonstration items.

FCNL energy staffer **José Aguto** gave the group an “insider’s scoop” on how bills in Washington, D.C. are affected by lobbying and other activities. Aguto said different approaches are needed in today’s more partisan and corporate-influenced legislative climate; lobbyists need to talk more about the common good and protecting people and their rights, versus the typical “science-y, fact-based lobbying” of the past.

Greener Partners, which promotes educational gardens in inner-city Philadelphia, talked about their Cloud Nine project of creating working urban farms on the roofs on warehouses, using donated materials and labor.

A member of the **Pickett Endowment** led a workshop on discernment and explained how to submit funding proposals to the fund.

Follow-up activities included **small-group strategizing and role-playing**, based on a realistic scenario of action against a big land development project.

The group watched **two videos**: *I Am* is “an engaging and entertaining non-fiction film that poses two practical and provocative questions: *what’s wrong with our world, and what can we do to make it better?*” *A Force More Powerful* is about “using nonviolent conflict to achieve democracy and human rights.”

AS THE TRAINING DREW TO A CLOSE, the group labored together on the crucial question, “*Where do we go from here?*” Answers came out of small-group sharing and examples from personal experience.

“*In many ways it was a life-changing experience,*” said **Carl Stanton**, one of the YAFs. “*It was a great opportunity for learning about Quakerism and self, about young adult leadership in Quakerism and in the larger world.... We need to be prepared to step into positions of leadership as older members step out....*”

“*What I found particularly valuable was the way campaigns for nonviolent direct action are designed—how to figure out what wedge to use and chip away at a pillar of the establishment until the structure falls....I started to see why groups do the things they do. I got an idea of how to start....*”

Genesee Valley Quaker Meeting Minute on Hydrofracking

MEMBERS of Genesee Valley Quaker Meeting (Danville, N.Y.) have considered the potential consequences of High Volume Hydraulic Fracturing (also known as HVHF, horizontal hydrofracking, or fracking) in New York State. We strongly oppose initiating hydrofracking in New York State. As Quakers, we experience the divine through loving and truthful relationships with all people and all creation. From what we understand about fracking, it is inconsistent with our faith and practices. In other states where horizontal hydrofracking was performed, it resulted in forever losing vast amounts of fresh water, releasing toxins into the environment, damaging communities, and costing the tax payers.

We urge our political representatives to prohibit the practice of HVHF in New York State. We support legislation and incentives to do the following: promote research, development, and use of renewable and sustainable energy; support local organic farms and farmers; protect the air and water; institute accountability for industries that cause environmental damage; and create long-term economic policies that promote work for New York State residents that they can do in good conscience.

We urge all citizens to thoughtfully consider the long term effects of hydrofracking on the water, land, local economy, infrastructure, services, and the community as a whole.

We are encouraged by the many communities that are coming together to educate one another, to consider the complex interrelation of the many issues that surround hydrofracking, and to seek a way forward together based on truth and respect.

—approved June 3, 2012

Endangered-species parade puppets are up for adoption

Judi Campbell

Mount Toby (Mass.) Friends Meeting

I AM A RETIRED ARTIST who lives on land in the state forest of Northfield, Mass. I currently attend Mount Toby Meeting in Leverett, Mass., and previously attended Framingham Meeting and Friends Meeting at Cambridge. While living in Cambridge, I finished college and became a member of the Boston Area Guild of Puppetry (BAGOP). Here I was exposed to many different kinds of puppets, and I wrote and created a puppet show about a computer “bug.” At that time I was working at MIT’s Laboratory for Computer Science. I never got into performing this show very frequently.

One Quaker activity I participated in was an FGC Gathering event in Kalamazoo, Mich., where a Mayan elder from Guatemala, Don Alejandro, was a plenary speaker and interest group leader. There were many ways in which the customs of these indigenous visitors stood out from other Quaker participants. We needed to find new ways to communicate, but the overriding message these elders came with was: *“The ice caps are melting.”* The melting was a direct consequence of climate change and global warming.

Later in the ’90s, after seeing some Bread & Puppet Theatre performances in New England, I began to create parade-sized puppets of endangered animals. Seventeen years later, many of us are trying to solve this climate problem while others are still denying it. Seeing these puppets of endangered animals helps to remind us that there are fateful consequences for many life forms besides humankind.

I was a graduate of New York City’s High School of Music and Arts and had attended several years of Boston University’s School of Fine Arts. I had used all types of materials to create art, and when I created these parade-sized puppets I found myself using every sort of material possible in their creation—from feathers to aquarium tubing and poultry fencing. The puppets were made with the help of friends (BAGOP members and relatives).

New England Yearly Meeting was one of the first places the puppets were displayed. I still remember the site at Hampshire College where people lined up for meals, where the parade began and then moving into the dining hall and watching the parade go by from the windows in the back dining room. It seemed an overpowering event. Even today, when I find Friends who had attended Yearly Meeting those years they often recall wonderful memories of the processions.

Since their use in NEYM processions at Hampshire College the puppets have also participated in Earth Day parades in Massachusetts (Montague, Orange, Colrain).

They also joined a First Night procession on Boylston Street in Boston. The individual who is within Puffin experiences a unique-transformation—from human to animal. Looking through the scrim out at the world from the heart of Puffin can change the way you see things.

A few Earth Days ago I sought an arts grant to do puppet making (inter-generationally) and end with a performance presentation on the Bridge of Names in Montague, Mass. Each puppet would be announced, to the world, as it moved across the bridge. That dream never materialized. but I still can’t help but feel

that the puppets continue to have a life of their own.

The time has come, as I enter my senior years, to find a new home for the puppets, and someone with the energy to continue the puppets’ old exploits, as well as to find new adventures for them. This adoption we seek will enable the puppets mission to continue while my own human abilities follow the natural cycle of slowing down with age. There are five puppets in all, including “Eagle” and “Quetzal.”

Please share your thoughts and ideas for the next act of the endangered animal puppets by e-mailing me at roroyare@hotmail.com. ❖



“Puffin”



“Salamander”



“Sea Turtle”

ACHE Act links mountaintop removal and health problems in Appalachia

Sarah Moon

West Falmouth (Mass.) Friends Meeting

STARTING IN THE 1970s, one of America's most biodiverse regions has been systematically stripped of its sustainable wealth. Mountaintop removal, a form of coal mining that removes up to 1,000 feet from the tops of Appalachian mountains, has destroyed approximately 500 mountains and buried nearly 2,000 miles of headwater streams. Local activists have been fighting this destructive practice since it began, but in the last two years the movement has gained new momentum from the publication of peer-reviewed studies showing the correlation between mountaintop removal and human health problems. In 2010, research was published in the journal *Science* that linked water poisoning from mountaintop removal to heart, lung, and kidney disease and birth defects.

Two years later, this evidence, along with grassroots campaigning, has produced new legislation in Congress. On June 19th, 2012, Representative Louise Slaughter (D-N.Y.) and Representative Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio), joined by 11 co-sponsors, introduced a bill that aggressively targets corporations that practice mountaintop removal, on the grounds of its human health impact. This bill, called the **Appalachian Communities Health Emergency Act (ACHE)**, would place a moratorium on mountaintop removal until the Department of Health & Human Services had completed studies showing its effects on human health. Specifically, the act would halt new permits and permit renewals for mountaintop removal operations. Ongoing operations would be subject to monthly evaluations and a one-time fee.

The expectation of the bill's co-sponsors is that results of the Department's research would corroborate existing studies, leading to a permanent moratorium on mountaintop removal.

IN MARCH OF 2011, Sarah Moon received a \$1,000 grant from the Clarence & Lilly Pickett Endowment for Quaker Leadership to support her work with New York Loves Mountains <www.newyorklovesmountains.org>, a volunteer witness against mountaintop removal. Since it began, New York Loves Mountains has organized several events, raising funds for Pennies of Promise, United Mountain Defense, Appalachia Rising, and most recently the March on Blair Mountain. For more about her work see the July-August 2011 *BeFriending Creation*.



Stefanie Winzeler, aide to Rep. Slaughter, called the bill a “grassroots effort,” driven by members of the Appalachian community who have been talking to Reps. Kucinich and Slaughter about the need to halt mountaintop removal to prevent further serious impacts on human health. Though a *New Yorker*, this issue strikes close to home for Rep. Slaughter, who grew up in a coal camp in Harlan County, Kentucky. Her motivation to co-sponsor the bill is also connected to her career as a microbiologist with a strong interest in human health.

Winzeler said a bill like this is not unprecedented, citing the FDA's testing of new food and pharmaceutical products before they go on the market and the moratorium on oil drilling on the outer Continental Shelf.

When asked about the connection of ACHE to the other mountaintop removal-related bill in Congress, the Clean Water Protection Act, Winzeler said that ACHE “adds to the conversation that the *Clean Water Protection Act* has started.” Such a conversation, regardless of whether either bill passes, she said, “does help influence future regulatory actions,” and can also influence the industry to take action of its own accord. Winzeler said that people should continue reaching out to members of Congress to support both pieces of legislation.

ACHE is an apt acronym for a bill that aims to bring relief to a hurting region. When the body develops an ache, it is often the first sign that something is wrong. By recognizing an ache and changing the behavior that's causing it, we prevent permanent injury and regain mental clarity. Under mountaintop removal, Appalachian communities are aching. The ACHE Act has the power to reveal the source of that pain and end it, freeing minds and bodies for the work of regenerating one of America's most beautiful and culturally rich regions. ❖

EQAT's 'Green Walk for Jobs & Justice' targets PNC Bank

NONVIOLENT DIRECT ACTION by Quakers against mountaintop removal was recapped at the Earthcare Center at the recent FGC Gathering in Kingston, R.I., by members of the Philadelphia-based Earth Quaker Action Team (EQAT), Walter Hjelt Sullivan, Ingrid Lakey, and Amy Ward Brimmer (EQAT's new executive director).

The focus of their afternoon interest group presentation was the 16-day, 200-mile "Green Walk for Jobs & Justice" that EQAT members and supporters took from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh between April 30 and May 16. In Pittsburgh George Lakey, founder of EQAT, and others took part in nonviolent direct ac-



EQAT's recent 200-mile Green Walk for Jobs & Justice, from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh, is recounted by one of the walkers, Walter Hjelt Sullivan, at the QEW Earthcare Center at the 2012 FGC Gathering.

tion at the headquarters of PNC Bank, which has been identified as one of the major financial backers of socially and environmentally destructive mountaintop-removal coal mining. About 60 people joined the march in Philadelphia, and 35 went as far as Swarthmore College. Details about the walk and other EQAT actions are found in Lakey's blog <greenpnc.org/blog>.

For several years, EQAT has been conducting a publicity campaign called Banking Like Appalachia Matters (BLAM), a strategic effort to shine the light on PNC Bank as one of two primary financiers funding this devastating surface mining practice and to persuade PNC Bank account holders who are opposed to mountaintop removal to close their accounts.

A flyer passed out by EQAT states that mountaintop removal has caused the destruction of 500 mountains, and the mining waste being dumped into 2,000

miles of streams is linked to increased birth defects, higher cancer rates, and fewer jobs. The Green Walk for Jobs & Justice was part of a newer "Green Your Money" initiative to carry these concerns to a state-wide and regional level.

Last year, in response to increasing public pressure, PNC Bank announced that it had decided to stop financing mountaintop-removal coal mining. But this is seen by EQAT as a hollow public-relations ploy. As a spokesperson for EQAT put it, "*PNC Bank has repeatedly refused to provide public details as to how their new policy has impacted actual investments. (For example it is not clear that there is a single coal company in the country whose primary extraction method is MTR, so that clause seems utterly meaningless.) The Earth Quaker Action Team continues to pressure PNC to make a clear break by issuing a sector exclusion to all coal companies practicing MTR. The Rainforest Action Network still lists PNC as the number one financier of MTR in their most recent report <<http://ran.org/reportcard>>. The story is not over about PNC and MTR. This is a good first step because it acknowledges how devastating MTR is, but quite possibly more show than substance because it may do absolutely nothing in helping to end the practice.*"

During the Gathering, EQAT also showed the video, *The Last Mountain*, "a compelling full-length documentary about mountaintop removal and the struggle to save Appalachia from the grips of the coal industry." Quakers have a special capacity to do something about mountaintop removal, they said.

For more about EQAT and mountaintop-removal coal mining, go to: <www.eqat.org>.



Lancaster (Pa.) Friends join the campaign to cut mountaintop removal companies' purse strings.

The future we *don't* want

Mary Gilbert

QEW Representative to the UN

THE FIRST EARTH SUMMIT in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 was full of hopeful promises. In today's political and financial climate, those promises could not have been made. This year another Summit, called Rio+20, was held in June 2012, focused on a proposed "Green Economy" in the context of poverty eradication. The Summit's "outcome document" was pre-titled *The Future We Want*.

At the end of the Summit Wael Hmaidan, director of the Climate Action Network, speaking in the name of all the NGOs at Rio+20, said:

"You cannot have a document entitled *The Future We Want* without any mention of planetary boundaries, tipping points, or the earth's carrying capacity. The text as it stands is completely out of touch with reality. Just to be clear, NGOs here in Rio in no way endorse this document."

This eloquent paragraph, written by the Indigenous Peoples assembled for the Summit, lays it out squarely, in the box below:

We the Indigenous Peoples of Mother Earth...see the goals of UNCSO Rio+20, the "Green Economy" and its premise that the world can only "save" nature by commodifying its life-giving and life-sustaining capacities, as a continuation of the colonialism that Indigenous Peoples and our Mother Earth have faced and resisted for 520 years. The "Green Economy" promises to eradicate poverty but in fact will only favor and respond to multinational enterprises and capitalism. It is a continuation of a global economy based on fossil fuels, the destruction of the environment by exploiting nature through extractive industries such as mining, oil exploration and production, intensive mono-culture agriculture, and other capitalist investments. All of these efforts are directed toward profit and the accumulation of capital by the few.

—From the Kari-Oca 2 Declaration, June 2012



The Road to Rio

Although I didn't go to Rio, I attended preparatory meetings for this Summit in January, March, and April. I witnessed the great pressures brought to bear as powerful interests shaped the outcome document into a gift for the corporate world. The result removes decision-making power further from those directly affected and creates international rules empowering the corporate elite and their political associates. One example: during preparations the U.S. tried to remove all references to "rights" from the text. A public letter from the NGOs present reached the UN's High Commissioner on Human Rights, who reprimanded the nations and saved the "rights" language.

The preparatory meetings (prep-coms) were exciting for civil society. As Lisinka Ulatowska, from the Global Commons Trust, wrote:

NGOs and Major Groups took on one another's points of view. Rio and its preparatory process were a giant mutual educational situation where we all learned from one another.

This was true. Many well-thought, weighty exchanges led to a sense of unity. I found myself allied with a group of NGOs calling themselves R4S (Rights For Sustainability). They understand the inseparable nature of human rights and a healthy environment. When they speak of *the Rights of Nature*, they link them with human rights that are already agreed.

My personal highlight at the prep-coms was having several opportunities to speak to gathered groups about the importance of using "health" as the primary metaphor when discussing the state of the planet. I was allowed to write and present on this to the Bureau of Rio+20. Here is the beginning of my statement:

"The specific components of the world we want

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are in reality not separable. We pretend they are separable in order to discuss them fruitfully. In the human body we may talk separately about the bloodstream, the nervous system, or other components that maintain our health, but we never imagine them in isolation from each other. When we speak of resources we're really talking about a planetary system best understood as a living organism, on whose health we depend."

The Peoples' Summit

Because expectations for a good outcome at Rio+20 were low, there was a concurrent meeting for civil society. Tens of thousands attended the *Peoples' Summit for Social and Environmental Justice, Defense of Common Goods, Against the Commoditization of Life*. During the past year hundreds of organizations worked to produce 14 Peoples' Sustainability Treaties. The Peoples' Summit launched a Manifesto on the final day of Rio+20, declaring that *another world is possible*, and pledging their commitment to a transition toward increasingly sustainable futures on earth. The Manifesto is based on principles of equity, localizing, and a global Citizens' Movement. Go to: <http://sustainabilitytreaties.org>.

Monday morning

Rio+20 is over; now the work begins. The UN will create Sustainable Development Goals, adding yardsticks for well-being to the GDP to measure progress. This will be a big struggle, since what gets measured is a statement of values, and some powerful countries, including the U.S. and Canada, do not practice values based on the *equity, localizing, and real democracy* called for by the people of the world. It is hard to move forward for the earth within a UN that is dominated by multinational corporations, and currently there is no other recognized institution within which to work. And there are incremental gains.

The word "radical" derives from the Latin "*radix*," which means "root." Many voices are calling for an end to capitalism as we know it, a going down to the root of society's organization and regrowing our system on better principles.

I will end this essay by quoting Uchita de Zoysa, a globally eminent thinker from Sri Lanka.

The 2+ years of work was all worth it because of us coming together in Rio to find our own collective outcome—a plan to work together and follow up on the Peoples Sustainability Treaties in the run-up to the 2015 Millennium Summit. ❖

The Kabarak Call for Peace and Ecojustice

THE KABARAK CALL FOR PEACE AND ECOJUSTICE was approved 24 April 2012 at the 6th Friends World Conference, Kabarak University, Nakuru, Kenya.

From the FWCC World Consultation on Global Change 2010-2011 and participants' witness in the GC thread at the Friends World Conference 2012

In past times God's Creation restored itself. Now humanity dominates, our growing population consuming more resources than nature can replace. We must change, we must become careful stewards of all life. Earthcare unites traditional Quaker testimonies: peace, equality, simplicity, love, integrity, and justice. Jesus said, "*As you have done unto the least... you have done unto me.*" We are called to work for the Peaceable Kingdom of God on the whole earth, in right sharing with all peoples. However few our numbers, we are called to be the salt that flavors and preserves, to be a light in the darkness of greed and destruction.

We have heard of the disappearing snows of Mount Kilimanjaro and the glaciers of Bolivia, from which come life-giving waters. We have heard appeals from peoples of the Arctic, Asia, and Pacific. We have heard of forests cut down, seasons disrupted, wildlife dying, of land hunger in Africa, of new diseases, droughts, floods, fires, famine and desperate migrations—this climatic chaos is now worsening. There are wars and rumors of war, job loss, inequality,

and violence. We fear our neighbors. We waste our children's heritage.

All of these are driven by our dominant economic systems—by greed not need, by worship of the market, by Mammon and Caesar.

Is this how Jesus showed us to live?

We are called to see what love can do: to love our neighbor as ourselves, to aid the widow and orphan, to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable, to appeal to consciences and bind the wounds.

We are called to teach our children right relationship, to live in harmony with each other and all living beings in the earth, waters, and sky of our Creator, who asks, "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the world?" (Job 38:4)

We are called to do justice to all and walk humbly with our God, to cooperate lovingly with all who share our hopes for the future of the earth.

We are called to be patterns and examples, in a 21st-century campaign for peace and ecojustice, as difficult and decisive as the 19th century abolition of slavery.

We dedicate ourselves to let the living waters flow through us—where we live, regionally, and in wider world fellowship. We dedicate ourselves to building the peace that passeth all understanding, to the repair of the world, opening our lives to the Light to guide us in each small step.

Quaker Meetings in Britain begin the work of living up to their Yearly Meeting's commitment to sustainability

(Two items from the *earthQuaker*, newsletter of the Living Witness Project of Britain Yearly Meeting)

SUSTAINABILITY AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE were again core themes at the 2012 Britain Yearly Meeting at Friends House in London, May 25–28, taking up most of Saturday.

There was an extended session with a series of speakers on the economy and economics. There were also several special-interest meetings and workshops with a sustainability focus during the Yearly Meeting, including one organized by the Minute 36 Group and the Living Witness Project.

This session was a follow-up to the commitment that Britain Yearly Meeting made in 2011 to become a “low carbon sustainable community.” The Meeting for Sufferings had set up a “Minute 36 Commitment Group” to oversee Friends’ progress toward meeting that goal. The group was composed of representatives from the Living Witness Project, Woodbrooke Quaker Study Center, Quaker Peace & Social Witness, Quaker Life, and Meeting for Sufferings.

Meeting for Sufferings asked local Quaker meetings to use the Meeting Check-Up in the *Sustainability Toolkit* and also the Quaker Peace & Social Witness/Living Witness climate-impact calculators. About 200 (two out of five) local Meetings have sent in assessments of their greenhouse-gas emissions. One fifth of Meetings have completed the Meeting check-up.

The Minute 36 Group, which first met at the beginning of May, hasn’t yet had a chance to look at the check-up returns in any detail, but Sunniva Taylor at Quaker Peace & Social Witness has read all of them. Most of the calculators and check-ups seem to have been completed as part of a group exercise rather than just by one or two Friends, she said.

“There was quite a mix of messages coming back from Friends and Meetings in the various special interest sessions,” said Laurie Michaelis of the Living Witness Project. *“Many meetings do seem to have been energised by Britain Yearly Meeting’s commitment. In the past, sustainability has been addressed mostly by small groups in meetings. Now it is being taken up by meetings as a whole.”*

“However we at Living Witness have heard quite a lot about disinterest, resistance, and conflict in some local meetings. Much of the new activity has been focused on measuring greenhouse gas emissions and improving Meeting Houses. More attention is clearly needed on the community and spiritual dimensions of being a low-carbon, sustainable community.” ❖

Footprints and population growth

(letter to the editor of *earthQuaker*)

A YEAR OR TWO AGO, a national paper ran a story on an eco-house, which had been self-built by the enterprising owners. It was a beautiful house, and a great deal of thought had been put into its design. As well as being remarkably elegant, it featured rigorous insulation, solar and geothermal power and heating, and rainwater storage. I think they had reed-bed filters for the purification of waste water. The owners had also taken care that the construction process should be as nearly carbon neutral as possible. They claimed that its day-to-day running was practically carbon-neutral.

The article concluded by saying that the house had more than sufficient space for the couple and their *six children*. Notice the inconsistency. They had made earnest efforts to reduce their footprint as far as the house was concerned, but were unconscious of the fact that in parenting six children, and perhaps starting six lines of descent, they were potentially doing substantially more damage than if they had had two children living in a standard leaky semi, with two gas-guzzlers and holidays in the Costa Rica twice a year, because the effect would continue down the generations.

Where is this leading? I want to make the point that our efforts to reduce our footprints, commendable though they are, are as nothing compared to the pressure that our sheer numbers put on the planet. I have read that of the total mammalian mass on the planet, 30 percent is humanity, about 67 percent is domesticated animals, and about 3 percent is wildlife. Are there not enough of us? Yet population continues to grow at about 200,000 per day, a billion in twelve years.

Norman Borlaug, who instigated the Green Revolution three decades ago, said in his speech of acceptance of the Nobel Prize, *“The Green Revolution has won a temporary success in man’s war against want and deprivation: it has given man a breathing space. If fully implemented, the revolution can provide sufficient food for sustenance during the next three decades.... But the frightening power of human reproduction must also be curbed; otherwise the success of the Green Revolution will be ephemeral only.”* We took advantage of his revolution but ignored his suggestion, and now we are back where we were.

—Roger Plenty
Stroud, Gloucestershire

How I was grabbed by FCUN/QEW, what kept me coming...

Louis Cox
QEW Publications Coordinator

I WAS ATTENDING Missouri Valley Friends Conference in the fall of 1989 when a friend, Bob Wixom, who knew of my past as a sort of burned-out environmentalist, told me excitedly about a new Earthcare organization, based on Quaker values, that he had joined. That seemed to answer my condition, and as soon as I got home I signed up for *BeFriending Creation*. Its articles gave me new hope and energy.

The following summer I attended the FGC Gathering, where I met Bill and Alice Howenstine, whose Gathering workshop three years earlier had led to the founding of Friends Committee on Unity with Nature. I found myself spending almost all of my spare time at the FCUN Earthcare Center, reading and engaged in deep discussion with other Friends about the radical idea of effective environmental action based on a *spiritual* relationship to Earth.

Returning home, I read with interest some responses to a question that *BeFriending Creation* editor Chris Laning had posed: Did Friends think there was a need for a *Quaker Earthcare* organization—there are, after all, numerous other organizations working on environmental issues. I reacted strongly to one reader's comment that she hadn't renewed because there were *already too many periodicals coming in the mail for her to keep up with*.

I immediately took pen in hand (*we didn't use e-mail in those days*) and composed the following letter to the editor:

"...Much of the burgeoning environmental movement is motivated mainly by self-interest—fear of personal harm, fear of economic loss. This alone is too limited a basis from which to counter the growing, multifaceted threat to the health of the planet. Degradation of the underlying support system (e.g., the present plight of the oceans) tends to remain invisible to the average person until it is too late to reverse the damage.

"Doesn't the Quaker belief in 'that of God in everyone' extend to all living beings? And even to the living planet God created? Would there be nearly so much destruction if we all believed deeply that the earth is sacred, not just a resource to be plundered to its limits? That view, expressed so convincingly by Quakers, is the only basis from which people can consistently care for the environment beyond threats to their immediate, personal welfare.

"We who care about the future need to reach out to two groups: the uninformed and the uncaring. Many environmental organizations are directed mainly toward the uninformed. They provide practical information to deal effectively with the problems we are becoming conscious of... But there are countless people who, having heard the message that our planet is dying, still don't care enough to sig-

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"ANSWERING GOD'S CALL TO CARE FOR THE EARTH," a chapter title in my scrapbooked autobiography, began in early 2000 with a request from the South Carolina Christian Action Council for a Friends' representative to their new Climate Change initiative. Subsequently, I was at an Environmental Justice Ministries conference in Washington, D.C., where I was thrilled to meet other Friends with similar concerns, specifically Ed Dreby, who was very active in Friends Committee on Unity with Nature. Later I met Kim and Susan Carlyle, who were active in my Yearly Meeting (SAYMA), and Kim invited me to attend the May 2003 FCUN Steering Committee meeting in Greensboro, N.C., just up the road from Columbia, S.C. I will never forget being asked to introduce myself by naming the watershed where I lived! It was a Spirit-filled meeting, at which a new Vision & Witness statement was approved. That same year SAYMA approved a second representative to the Steering Committee, which I was asked to fill.

Sierra Friends Center at Nevada City, Calif., was the location of the October 2003 Annual Meeting and Gathering, at which FCUN became Quaker Earthcare Witness after months of work and discernment. I was blessed to have been a part of these milestones which the stars of the wonderful Sierra night sky heralded.

Following the example of the Carlyles, I took the bus from Columbia to North Park University in Chicago for the May 2004 meeting, which was a first for me. Actually QEW brought lots of firsts for me: seeing John Woolman's home base on the Delaware River, bogs at the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, and walking my first labyrinth at Ghost Ranch in New Mexico. Additionally, I represented QEW for four years at North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative) and North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Friends United Meeting).

Prior to the Annual Meeting at Ghost Ranch in New Mexico in October 2006, I sent out a letter to QEW Discussions expressing my concern about my 42-hour bus trip and that I could no longer justify such long-distance travel for myself. I also spoke of the urgent need for QEW Friends to provide more leadership for the Religious Society of Friends and to lay aside the zillion issues crying out for attention in order to listen for what Spirit was calling the organization to do. Since that time, I read my *BeFriending Creation* the day it comes, write letters to the editor when moved, and enjoy the discussions.

—Alice M. Wald
Walhalla, S.C.

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nificantly alter their behavior. The wasteful practices of individuals are seen, for the most part, as insignificant and unimportant because our culture tends to foster in us a local, short-term perspective.

“Quakers historically have been noted for seeing their lives in the larger Divine perspective and consistently applying their spiritual beliefs and values to every facet of their everyday lives. ... They tend to be more sensitive than other groups to the effect of even the simplest of personal acts on others in distant places and times. Thus we ‘live simply that others may simply live.’

“At some level we all recognize that we are in mutual competition for Earth’s limited resources—space, air, water, privacy, etc. To the extent that our lives are oriented around physical possessions and consumption, we exacerbate social tensions and add fuel to conflict... (over jobs in the timber and fishing industries, for example).

“What has the Quaker Peace/Earth testimony to offer in those situations? As Quakers, we receive spiritual sustenance from the Light of God within us. In the Peaceable Kingdom there is enough for everyone, because we realize there is already plenty of what we really need, physically and spiritually. Our main role shifts from being consumers to channels of this inexhaustible abundance.

“The supporters of BeFriending Creation, especially, need to be givers, not just receivers—not passive consumers of interesting facts. We need to form the core of a centered group who see the Religious Society of Friends as being in a crucial position to influence the outcome of the struggle to save the planet.

“We have a job to do. We need to be the missionaries, the organizers, the spreaders of the good news that Creation is worth befriending and that our beliefs and actions can affect the future.

“We can each pledge to start an Earthcare committee in our home Meeting. We can participate in local environmental conferences, where we can add our own witness to the spiritual side of these issues. We can learn how to apply Quaker beliefs to environmental questions and practice, articulating them with force and clarity. We can use Quaker inner silence to learn where we are coming from and how to better resolve our own conflicts and hesitations regarding an environmentally supportive lifestyle.”

A FEW MONTHS LATER I went to the 1990 FCUN Annual Meeting in Richmond, Ind. Some said they had liked my letter to the editor, and I was invited to join the Steering Committee. With my journalism background, I was asked to work on publications. I started editing the newsletter in 1995, and in 2000 I became Publications Coordinator, overseeing all publications, and developing and managing the website. After 23 years I am about to retire. I will take with me many fond memories of working with Earthcare Friends. ❖

QUAKER CONDOMS? What a ridiculous idea! Yet I had blurted it out before I knew at my first meeting of the FCUN Population Committee, clerked by Bill Howenstine.

To my surprise, the idea of Quaker condoms was not immediately discarded, although it did get a good laugh. And, a few years later, the idea came to fruition. With the help of Louis Cox’s graphic art, little labels were attached to condoms and distributed at the FGC Gathering. The message was about the importance of preventing overpopulation in caring for Creation.

Quaker Condoms
 We care about your health
 and the health of the planet.
 Sponsored by
Quaker Earthcare Witness
 <www.quakerearthcare.org>
 Sustainability: Faith & Action Group
 Donations accepted. 802/658-0308 See other side >>

2008
6.7 billion
 1964
3.2 billion
 Human Population Explosion

There are other people in our organization who see the connection between human population and the environment, which is one of the many reasons that I feel so attached to Quaker Earthcare Witness.

People in QEW have many other interests, too. At first it was frustrating that there was not a single unifying “cause” that we could all feel strongly about. We could not agree to fight mountaintop removal, or “fracking,” or even increasing human population.

What does unify us, however, is that we are all Friends who are concerned about the Earth. Quaker Earthcare Witness is the support organization for Friends who are not content to sit by as our world crumbles around us.

—Dick Grossman, M.D.
 Durango, Colo., Friends Mtg

The back of the card read,

Whatever your cause...
—it’s a lost cause without population stabilization.

- ❖ Earth must support 200,000 additional people each day!
- ❖ 49 percent of pregnancies in the U.S.A. are unplanned!

Note that when QEW distributed Quaker Condoms in 2008, world population was 6.7 billion. Four years later it has topped 7 billion. Most of the growth is happening in countries where people lack access to family planning services.

SEYM nuclear Minute grounded in Quaker testimonies

Mary Jo Klingel

Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) Friends Meeting

OUR SEYM EARTH CARE COMMITTEE first brought a minute concerning nuclear energy to the SEYM plenary in our Spring 2011 Gathering, but there was not unity to approve it. We gave ourselves some time, then set to work again. It became clear that we wanted a very simple Minute, grounded in the Testimonies. We presented the new Minute at Winter Interim Business Meeting and asked each meeting to season it and send us questions or concerns. One meeting approved it almost immediately. One voiced regret that it was not stronger but united with it. One year later, in 2012, Barbara Letsch, as clerk of the Earthcare Committee, read the Minute again at SEYM, and it was approved.

Introduction to SEYM Earthcare Committee's Proposed Nuclear Minute

We express our gratitude to those Friends who have diligently researched nuclear energy and shared their wisdom in various formats including Quaker Earthcare Witness and Friends Journal. Their willingness to do the hard work of research and their quest for truth helps us all in our discernment. Nevertheless research is based on present moment knowledge. Especially with nuclear energy, it is an unreliable predictor of future safety. If that is the case, what resources do we have?

As Friends, we have our Testimonies. In this Minute we seek the Light concerning nuclear energy within the framework of our Friends Testimonies.

Earthcare Committee's Proposed Minute on Nuclear Energy

WE BRING this Minute of Concern from the SEYM Earthcare Committee to Southeastern Yearly Meeting, seeking unity in opposition to further development of nuclear energy or building of nuclear power plants. In considering the Testimonies in opposition to nuclear power, we recognize that these Testimonies interweave, affect, and support one another.

The testimony of **Integrity** calls us to respect and protect all of God's creation, to seek balance as participants in the miracle of life. Integrity also leads us to consideration of the Testimony of Equality in that all people have a need for affordable and clean energy that supports their health and wellbeing.

The testimony of **Simplicity** challenges our belief that we can live in a world of increasing growth and consumption and offers instead the simple necessity and pleasures of air, land, and water that are clean and protected.

We now consider the testimony of **Community**. We acknowledge that nuclear power has demonstrated that accidents can decimate communities and keep the land uninhabitable for human and nonhuman life for long periods of time.

The **Peace** testimony asks us to be clear that nuclear energy has been used for nonpeaceful purposes, for building weapons, and for creating waste that must be stored many thousands of years. We call ourselves a people of peace. We ask how we can call ourselves a people of peace while supporting, even with our silence, an industry of destruction and death. In the words of Bishop Desmond Tutu, "To visit death upon current and future generations from radiation is unforgivable." (Physicians for Social Responsibility website, January 2012.)

We face, as Friends, the capacity of nuclear energy for mass destruction of human and nonhuman life. Our commitment to that of God in all life leads us to oppose further development and use of nuclear energy. ❖

MANY ASPECTS of our care for Earth were well represented at SEYM's Gathering this past April. Barb Letsch offered a workshop on Transition Towns, including neurological research that shows that we learn through behavior that changes our thinking and beliefs rather than the opposite. This research supports how the Transition Towns movement creates change in the participants as they do the work of creating resilient communities. We also discussed the growing number of Transition Town initiatives in Florida.

During one of our plenary sessions, our faithful QEW committee representative Rod Zwirner gave an update on what QEW is doing.

Mary Jo Klingel offered a workshop on food, inspired by the fall QEW meeting. We began with a Power Point presentation that led to lively sharing and willingness to look at the ways that the standard American diet has influenced our lives.

To our joy, SEYM approved the Earthcare Committee's minute on nuclear energy.

Our Walton Lecturer, Tom Neilsen, terrified many of us by dividing us into small groups and telling us to write a song. Earthcare themes burst forth in the performances the next day. In addition to the planned events, many important conversations took place, and friendships based on a care for Earth grew. All of us who were there from QEW, Jack Bradin, Barb Letsch, Mary Jo Klingel, and Rod Zwirner, feel grateful for the growing interest and commitment to Earthcare at SEYM.

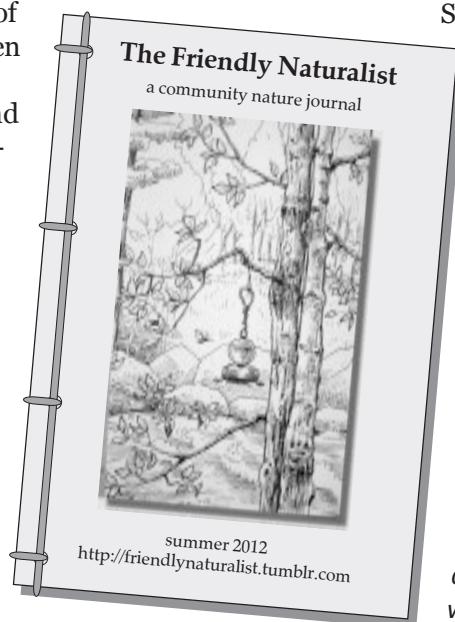
New Garden Meeting's Earth Care Committee starts nature journal

THE FRIENDLY NATURALIST, a community nature journal, is an outreach project of the Earth Care Committee of New Garden Friends Meeting in Greensboro, N.C.

This attractive, lovingly hand-bound booklet features such topics as nature-inspired poetry, drawings, photographs, nature lore, recipes, meditations, observations, reflections, etc. It even has several blank pages to encourage nature journaling.

Friends with a respect for the wonders and beauty of Creation are invited to submit contributions to future issues. Articles and artwork can be submitted by mail in care of New Garden Friends Meeting, 801 New Garden Rd., Greensboro, NC 27410, or posted on the blog <<http://friendlynaturalist.tumblr.com>>.

Distribution is at no cost, but donations to help defray costs can be made to "The Friendly Naturalist" in care of New Garden Friends Meeting.



THE FIRST ISSUE of the quarterly publication, Summer 2012, opens with "A Dream of Summer," a poem written by John Greenleaf Whittier in 1847:

*...The Night is mother of the Day
The Winter of the Spring,
And ever upon old Decay
The greenest mosses cling.
Behind the cloud the starlight lurks,
Through showers the sunbeams fall;
For God, who loveth all his works,
Has left his Hope with us all!*

"Invitation No. 4," by Ellen Kepchar, asks us to Listen to the Trees:

"...Wendell Berry wrote: 'I go among trees and sit still. /All my stirrings become quiet /around me like circles on water.'

"I wonder if there is a place deep inside you where you are naturally as still as the trunk of a tree," she asked.❖

QEW FRIENDS may be interested in the website <WilliardWorks.com>, run by Gerri Williams of Friends Meeting in Washington, D.C., and her husband, Ray Allard, a graphic artist. It includes Gerri's blog and audio interviews, which are mainly on environmental and Transition topics (more lately on Occupy). They send out an update three to four times a year to let subscribers know about their new activities, writings, artwork, and more. Here's their latest update:

Audio Interviews

- ❖ *Cousteau's Blue Legacy*—Alexandra Cousteau continues the family commitment to preserving the world's waterways. She discusses her new film and her journeys on the Potomac River.
- ❖ Local filmmaker Robert Cole on *Potomac Reflections*, and Harry Lynch's survey of energy choices, *Switch*, which premiered at the D.C. Environmental Film Festival.
- ❖ *Still Scary After All These Years*—Anti-nuclear campaigner Helen Caldicott delivers a fiery speech at the Occupy EPA rally in Washington, D.C., on the nuclear threats we all still face. Afterwards, Gerri interviews Helen about what

has to be done now to avoid catastrophe. Occupiers from around the region explain what brought them to the rally.

Articles

- ❖ "*Black and the Occupy Movement: What does race have to do with it?*"
- ❖ "*Parade and the Leo Frank Case*"—The true story of anti-Semitism and lynch law in the South receives a new production at Ford's Theater in D.C. Read Gerri's essay on why this tale haunts us still.

Movie reviews

- ❖ *Soylent Green*—Apocalypse Bites in this 1970s thriller that foreshadows today's environmental dilemmas.
- ❖ *The Grey*—Man versus beast in the frozen North. Gerri also confesses why she loves "Ice Road Truckers," in this film review.
- ❖ ...and Coming Attractions: Peak Oil Flicks review for Earth Day, April 22.

Contact Gerri at <Williard2738@gmail.com> for personal e-mail delivery.



OUR LOCAL MEETING, Mount Toby, just announced in their monthly newsletter an interesting way to raise money for QEW: a “**Dime-a-Gallon tax.**” They plan to set out a box and ask all meeting attendees to place ten cents in the box for every gallon of gas that they consume in driving to and from meeting. They predict that this might raise as much as \$250 per year, which they plan to donate to QEW.

I could see this raising even more money if it were a dime per mile rather than per gallon, for those able to afford it.

Just imagine!
InterMountain YM
GHOST RANCH

& ECO— JUSTICE



PUT ON YOUR BRAIN-STORMING CAPS for interest groups, topics, films and demonstrations that you can submit and find partners to work with for next year’s **InterMountain Yearly Meeting**, which will be on the **theme of Eco-Justice!**

Apologies if this has already been posted here before. If not, though, it seems like a very sensible and easy method of fundraising, not necessarily for QEW but for any charity or cause related to the harm caused by automobiles or fossil fuels.

Joshua Rose, Ph.D.
 Amherst, Mass.

<opihi@mindspring.com>
 <<http://www.facebook.com/opihi>>

[Thank you, Mount Toby Friends! By the way, the “Dime-a-Gallon” tax seems to have been started by the EcoBerries group of Strawberry Creek (Calif.) Friends Meeting. Their program has been going strong since it was featured in the May-June 2004 issue of BeFriending Creation. For more information, go to <www.dimeagallon.org>. —ed.]

Family- and child-centered activities and interest groups are very desirable. —Quakers in co-housing? —InterGenerational Green Team? —Permaculture in Africa, Central and South America? —A film room? —Bioneers speakers or activities?

Ghost Ranch staff are also interested and enthusiastic to learn more about sustainability/permaculture/ eco-justice and put it in to practice.

Please be aware that the Friends General Conference Gathering is also being held in our region next year—Greeley, Colorado, June 30– July 6—and may affect attendance at IMYM. Talk it up with your Friends far and near!

IMYM was really great and very nourishing this year! The gathered Light is very bright!

—In Friendship,
 Jennifer Floresta
 Santa Fe (N.M.) Friends Meeting

BeFriending Creation

BeFriending Creation, Vol. 25, No. 4, July–August 2012. Newsletter of **Quaker Earthcare Witness**. ISSN 1050-0332. Published bi-monthly.

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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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, <sbeltan@pacbell.net>.

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

Website: <www.QuakerEarthcare.org>

Earthcare Calendar

August 7, 2012. Deadline for article submissions for September–October 2012 *BeFriending Creation*.

October 4–7, 2012. QEW Annual Meeting (and 25th anniversary celebration) in Chicago.

BeFriending Creation July–August 2012

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New QIF pamphlet explains how the economy drives the ecological crisis

From the pamphlet's back cover:

“IN TIMES OF CRISIS, profound questions sometimes emerge in straightforward and clarifying ways. With the world's dominant economic system now struggling to recover from near collapse, it is important to ask, ‘What is the economy for?’ It is no longer coherent to say, ‘for increasing material wealth through unlimited economic growth.’

“In 2009 Quaker Institute for the Future <www.quakerinstitute.org> published the book *Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy*, which concluded that ‘the purpose of the economy is to preserve and enhance the integrity, resilience, and beauty of the whole commonwealth of life.’

“This fifth QIF pamphlet, *It's the Economy, Friends*, is in collaboration with the Growth Dilemma Project of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. The Growth Dilemma Project website states that ‘humanity faces a profound dilemma. The economies of virtually all nations require growth to function. Yet more growth makes the wealthiest even wealthier, while unemployment, hunger, and violence are widespread, and human economies, in aggregate, are already larger than Earth's ecosystems can continue to support.’

“*It's the Economy, Friends* is aimed at understanding the dilemma that the remitting drive for



growth creates within the limited ecosystems of Earth. While it has been prepared for use within the Religious Society of Friends, it will also be of interest and use to anyone who is seeking to understand both orthodox and ecological economics and how this growth dilemma can be resolved to better serve people and planet.”

From the pamphlet's preface:

“*It's the Economy, Friends* (QIF pamphlet #5) contains a series of essays by different authors, organized into three chapters designed to provide: 1) a context for examining these issues based upon a history of Quaker witness, 2) a description of basic economic concepts from both orthodox and ecological perspectives, and 3) reflections on ethics, ecology, and economics....

“The forthcoming companion volume, *Confronting the Growth Dilemma* (QIF Pamphlet #6), will focus on two contrasting views about our current economic system with respect to the social and ecological problems it is failing to address. It will also describe a number of recommendations for altering the current system to help create an economy that works well for humanity and the whole of life.” ❖

—Copies available both in paperback and e-book through Amazon.Com and paperback at Quaker-books of FGC <www.quakerbooks.org>.