



BeFriending Creation

Newsletter of Quaker Earthcare Witness
Affirming our essential unity with nature

Volume 25, Number 6 • November-December 2012

Learnings, re-learnings, and reflections at the Brad Stocker, Miami (Fla.) Friends Meeting QEW Annual Meeting

My essential self opened

AS A FIRST-TIMER at the 2012 QEW Annual Meeting in Chicago, lacking history and context with the group, I went with few expectations. My main concern was whether my presence would contribute to the occasion. That could be best answered by others. What I offer here are impressions and responses to the question I have been frequently asked: *how was it?*

I had some initial trepidation, some alleviated by e-mails from QEW General Secretary Anne Mitchell and Mary Jo Klingel, clerk of the Spiritual Nurturance Committee, but it was attendance that finally washed it away. I was welcomed and hugged, “caught up and folded in.” I was embraced with smiles and asked how I was by many.

I was invited to join, participate, and offer input. I slept in a room that was given up by another to aid my night and my bladder. I felt cared for and nurtured and like other species when given the right combinations of air, water, earth, energy, and love, my essential self opened.

Outside, I tried to capture images that were representative of the work going on inside Cenacle Retreat Center. In a nearby city park, I was fascinated by a metal sculpture entitled *Imagine Peace*,



Brad Stocker

Imagine Peace

“**IT IS THE DREAM**, the hope, the prayer that people the world over will raise their hands together and seek a lasting peace,” wrote Ohio sculptor **Tess Little** about her work *Imagine Peace*, which she created for the “Imagine Garden” at the 2008 Cincinnati Flower Show. It was displayed at the Lincoln Park Conservancy, Chicago, Ill., as part of the juried nature-related art exhibition “Form in Fauna III,” from September 9 through November 3, 2012.

The sculpture has an 18-inch stainless steel globe in the middle which represents Earth. It is also reflective so that it includes the viewer and surroundings. It is surrounded with 48 different sized hands, lifting up and joining together, seeking a lasting peace.

by Tess Little. When I contacted her later for permission to use my photograph of the sculpture in this article, she agreed that her message of working together for a healthy, peaceful planet is very much in accord with QEW’s goals.

What I learned and relearned

STORIES ARE VERY important and our narratives are the way we gather and learn and share and weave the web of our lives. And too, sometimes, some histories do not warrant retelling, and healing is called forth.

I heard the stories of what brought each of us to the gathering and other overwhelmingly impres-

sive stories of the important work of Friends.

I heard that we need to bring the story of global warming back to the front page of media, politics, communities, and Meetings.

I heard a Friend who intended to restore 80 acres to forest and impressed us with having to be content with replanting “only” 50 acres.

I heard another Friend who had made a personally transformative decision to restore 30 acres to prairie and discovered it healing himself, his wife, and others in the process.

I heard that a particular thistle,

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>> **Annual Meeting**, *from previous page*

once disdained and ripped out, needed to be nurtured for a species of butterfly to thrive and how humbling that learning became when discovered just in the nick.

I learned new phrases of deep spiritual meaning and import:

“Ecological reconciliation” that embodies restoration with spirit and healing of person and land;

“Novel ecosystem,” which our ecologist Friend tells is what restoration creates and how it too needs to be embraced.

I learned that species—those that can—are moving toward colder climes because of global warming and those that cannot are diminishing.

I saw a hothouse that was insulated with bubbles, the same kind of bubbles we have all made with soapy water and blown with pursed lips. These bubbles were blown by a machine powered by the sun.

I saw a *Walk in Deep History* at Schumacher College which recalled the Cosmic Walk at Genesis Farm.

I was in a group that suggests an outreach piece that could be multifunctional, semi-permanent, semi-permeable, quickly degradable and perhaps plantable, with seeds embedded and that will carry to others the essential information relevant to QEW.

I was in a group that is sincerely struggling with its laying down of oversight of a project in Costa Rica, while maintaining nurturance, friendship, cultural sensitivity, and caring interest in all constituencies.

I walked in another bioregion, clearly not the Greater Everglades Bioregion where I'm from, and looked for nature within urban Chicago.

I heard songs and music in voices and silence. I sensed discernments blossoming into thoughtful ideas leading to meaningful actions. I learned much about Quaker process as it worked through the group conscience and consciousness.

I was deeply overwhelmed with the melding of huge intellects with profound spirit and deep concern for Earth and all of life. Mary Jo was right... I was being led to be there. ❖

Born and raised in the Greater Everglades (Fla.) Bioregion, Biscayne Bay Watershed, Brad Stocker is a professor at Miami Dade College, where he teaches English as a Second Language and Earth Literacy. He is a member of the Earth Ethics Institute at Miami Dade College.

QEW has new Earthcare trifold!

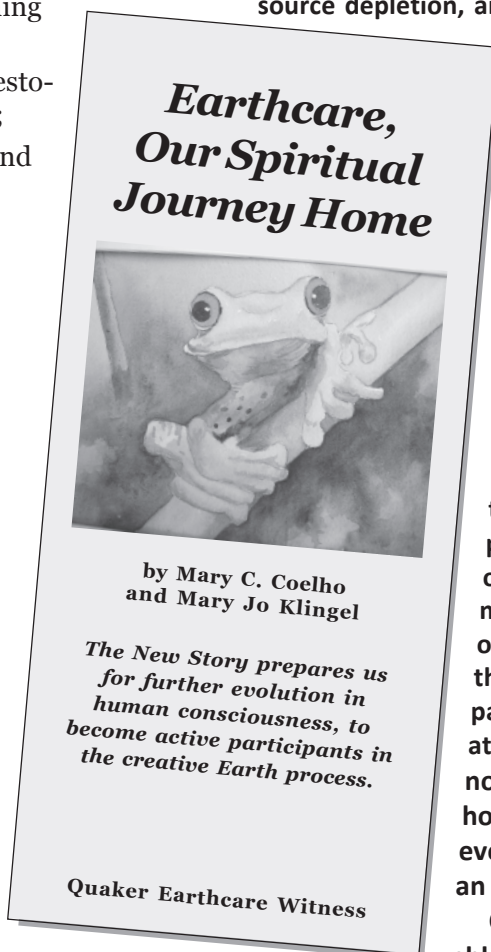
DIRECT ACTION is a worthy and vital calling when it supports ecological education, renewable energy, green technologies, regulations to prevent pollution and resource depletion, and so forth.

But QEW's newest trifold reminds us that our current psychological and spiritual *disconnection* from the natural world is at the *root* of the global ecological crisis. This inward alienation must be healed before significant outward changes can be effective.

We urgently need to internalize—in terms of the New Story of our planet's evolutionary origins and our species' membership in the family of life—the larger truth that we are an integral part of the web of creation. In this role we are no longer spiritually homeless. We see that everything is integral to an emerging sacred whole.

Copies of the new pamphlet will be included in

this year's QEW annual appeal letter. Additional copies can be ordered from the QEW office. ❖

**Australia YM: A flourishing life must fit Earth's ecological limits**

...WE HAVE ALSO APPOINTED a Peace & Earthcare Worker, Robert Howell from Aotearoa/New Zealand Yearly Meeting, to deepen our work in peace and social justice and our care for the Earth. Robert will explore the various drivers that underlie threats to global well-being, violent conflict, and environmental degradation.

We see clearly the need for us to define a flourishing life, one of joy and meaning that lives within the finite boundaries of the Earth...

—Excerpt from Australia Yearly Meeting epistle
January 7–14, 2012, Perth, Western Australia

Following a leading

Mary Gilbert

QEW Representative to the UN

THIS IS A STORY ABOUT how a sense of discomfort that I could have ignored grew into the chance to make a strong statement to a large, international community.

In the first week of September I attended a World Assembly in Montreal, held by an international organization called CIVICUS. Headquartered in Johannesburg, South Africa, CIVICUS is an association of individuals and NGOs (non-governmental organizations), with the purposes of strengthening space for civil society engagement (that's us) and promoting the growth of a connected global citizens' movement. Most attendees at the Assembly were from organizations with a primary focus on human rights rather than on environmental concerns.

I understand Earth as a living entity, in whose patterns we, like other creatures, participate. Earth's dynamic systems maintain its health, exactly as our bodies maintain ours, and our life processes are part of the planet's own exchange of liquids, gases, nutrients, and so on. We humans are not in charge, just blessed to participate in the sacred whole.

I quickly became aware that for the majority of the wonderful, dedicated folks at the assembly the environment is not more than a *backdrop* for human lives. Many of these people are heroes, but they see sustainable development just as a practical necessity for future human generations. Earth is merely a source of materials for human use, other life forms are hardly noticed if an immediate human purpose cannot be identified, and most everything can be treated as a saleable commodity, as long as human justice prevails. Their environmental goal is to find a way for this paradigm to continue indefinitely without running out of resources.

Now this is way, way better than the exploitative mentality behind the outcome document of the UN's Rio+20 summit in June, which had not a single reference to planetary limits or tipping points, and nothing to suggest that economic growth cannot continue indefinitely. But to the human rights crowd, the planet

Earth's health is not really on their radar. I started to wonder whether I belonged at the World Assembly, whether I should leave.

Into my distress floated a quiet question: Is there some way I can *put* the planet on their radar? Can I make Earth visible to these good people during this week? Before I went to bed that night I had made a flowerly garland with trailing vines from tissue paper and green masking tape, to wear on my head, and a sign reading *Planet Earth says "My health is the basis of yours"* to pin on my back. I had also set an intention to wear these two items for the rest of the week.

It turned out that wearing them every day was not so easy. I felt conspicuous and silly. I wished I could explain my props to everyone. But I realized that wearing these things was more than just a quirky impulse because I felt responsible to keep them on despite the discomfort. I was following a *leading* to speak the truth as best I could. It might not have been a great idea, but

it was the idea I had and I was not clear to stop.

WHAT EFFECT did my witness have? Some didn't notice, some thanked me, and although I was careful to write "*Planet Earth says,*" some thought I was trying to be *Mother Earth*. I did get videotaped and have a chance to explain what I was doing, but the assurance that I would have a chance to say something at the final plenary didn't work out. At that point I sat down and wrote a statement about the importance of understanding our place as participants in our living planet, and the importance of the two groups, the environmental and human rights communities, becoming one united movement.

CIVICUS has posted my essay on-line and provided a link to my videotaped interview: [<http://www.livestream.com/CivicusWA/>](http://www.livestream.com/CivicusWA/).

So I followed what felt like a little leading, was faithful when it became hard, and had the chance to make an important statement to a large international group. Gloria Steinem once said, "*The whole idea is not to figure out what is the most important thing to do, but to make sure that whatever you do is true to your values.*" Then she paused to think, and finished her thought with, "...because you never know what will be important in the future." Good words to live by. ❖



Into my distress floated a quiet question: Is there some way I can *put* the planet on their radar? Can I make Earth visible to these good people during this week?....

QEW's work is needed more than ever!

Shelley Tanenbaum
QEW Steering Committee Clerk

OUR SPIRITUAL CONNECTION to the natural world and our faith in each other to support our witness to the world were renewed this fall when we gathered in Chicago. Forty-seven Friends, some going back to QEW/FCUN's founding and some brand new to QEW, worshipped together, learned from each other, celebrated 25-years together, and struggled together as we face a world of environmental crises.

I left the meetings feeling joy to have such fine partners in our Earthcare witness. The problems we face are too much for any one of us; we can only do the work that we want to do if we do it together.

My primary job as clerk is to ensure that our decisions are made in good order, according to Quaker process. This means that we center together in worship, we take time to listen to each other, we take the time we need to make decisions, all who want to offer ministry are given the opportunity to express themselves, and we do not take more time than needed to carry out our business. As clerk, I read the "sense of the Meeting"—when I feel that the group is ready to make a decision, I articulate the decision and test it with the group to see if we are ready to move forward.

Secondarily, I am a member of every committee and working group, so I try to keep up with all of them—not easy! Most of our committees were equally rejuvenated during the October meetings, with fresh ideas and new members coming forward.

Some highlights:

- ❖ The FCNL Support Working Group is continuing to support the "Earth restored" priority within FCNL and will be working closely with FCNL staffer José Aguto, who met with the committee.
- ❖ Publications committee is setting up an editorial advisory group to help the new publications coordinator and is looking at ways to increase distribution of *BeFriending Creation* and a possible newsletter between bi-monthly publications
- ❖ QEW has been given ECOSOC status with the UN; QEW's UN Support Working Group will continue attending UN and related meetings.
- ❖ QEW has entered into a collaborative relationship with five other Quaker organizations for our international work (Quaker United Nations Office-Geneva, Quaker United Nations Office-New York, American Friends Service Committee, Friends



Clerk's Table at 2012 Annual Meeting, from left: Mary Jo Klingel, Shelley Tanenbaum, David Millar, Dick Grossman

World Committee for Consultation, and Friends Committee on National Legislation).

- ❖ The QEW Mini-Grants program remains popular, with six grants approved this year.
- ❖ Ad-hoc FCUN committee will sponsor a morning workshop at the FGC Gathering this year on exploring our spiritual connections with the natural world.
- ❖ The No-Name group will continue and delights in its open agenda.
- ❖ Finance Committee and the ad-hoc Development Committee launched a three-year Resilience Fund to support QEW's work.
- ❖ An ad-hoc database and website committee is moving forward with a secure and useful database system and a revised website.
- ❖ An ad-hoc search committee is in the process of interviewing candidates for the Publication Coordinator position.
- ❖ The Sustainability Faith & Action Working Group has offered to develop a theme and organize speakers and presentations for QEW's October 2013 gathering.

WE WERE ALL INSPIRED by talks given by FCNL's José Aguto on legislative prospects, Jim Kessler on native prairie ecosystems, Noel Pavlovic on biodiversity at the Indiana Dunes, and Tom Small on native plant gardening.

Many thanks to those who are taking on new positions of responsibility within QEW: Tom Small is our new Publications Committee clerk, Roy Taylor is our new rising clerk, and Rod Zwirner will be co-clerking the UN Working Group. Many thanks to continuing clerks: Mary Jo Klingel (Spiritual Nurturance), Barbara Letsch (Nominating), David Ciscel (Treasurer), eric joy (Personnel), Dick Grossman (Sustainability

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Ithaca (N.Y.) Monthly Mtg. unites against hydrofracking

AT MEETING for Business on September 9, 2012, Ithaca (N.Y.) Monthly Meeting joined with the June 2012 Genesee Valley Monthly Meeting Minute on hydrofracking as a method of natural gas development.

Margaret McCasland brought the text of the Genesee Valley Quaker Meeting Minute on Hydrofracking for Ithaca Monthly Meeting's consideration [the full text of which appeared in the July–August 2012 *BeFriending Creation*].

Friends expressed their sense of the Minute's qualities and limitations, and found that it resonated with us. The Earthcare Committee will distribute our Minute of Approval in a timely way to the appropriate government agencies and wider Quaker bodies. “

Margaret reminded us of the Minute on Energy Resources and Right Relationship with Earth, which our Meeting approved in December 2009.

The December 2009 Minute [right] started as a “fracking” minute, but ended up broader in scope:

>> **Clerk's message**, from page 4

Faith & Action), John Payton and Dick Grossman (co-Recording clerks), Carol Barta (Outreach), Bill Holcombe and Maia Wolf (Mini-Grants), Jack Bradin (ad-hoc development), Roy Taylor and Barb Letsch (ad-hoc FCUN), Patricia Chernoff (non-clerk of No-Name), Phil Emmi (UN), and John Payton (FCNL). Many thanks to our staff, Anne Mitchell, Louis Cox, and Christopher McCandless for their care and devotion to QEW.

Ten years ago the Steering Committee discussed laying down QEW on its 25th anniversary in 2012. It was hoped that our work would be done—that monthly and yearly meetings would have adopted Earthcare as part of our witness in the world. Sadly, we aren't there yet, and QEW's work is needed more than ever. With joy, we have made serious progress in the past 25 years: FCNL has adopted Earthcare as one of its priorities, we have a network of Earthcare Friends, we continue to nurture each other as we go forward with our work, we have a presence in the UN, and we work collaboratively with other Quaker organizations on international concerns. There have been many other accomplishments. As we gathered this October, our sense of the meeting was clear—we will continue as long as needed to provide spiritual nurturance and outward witness on Earthcare. ❖

Ithaca Minute on Energy Sources and Right Relationship with Earth

ALL SOURCES OF ENERGY should be produced in ways that maintain Right Relationship with Earth and with all people and all other living things. Whenever we extract energy sources from the earth to use for human activities, we do so in ways that harm Earth's living systems and disrupt balance for living things.

We affirm the primacy of creating truly safe and renewable energy sources as quickly as possible. We are concerned that favoring natural gas as “cleaner” than coal both slows the necessary development of truly ecological energy sources, and obscures the full costs of extracting and using that fuel. Natural gas (methane) traps over 20 times* as much heat as carbon dioxide. The many ways in which it is released into the atmosphere (i.e., leaks which regularly occur during exploration, drilling, storing, processing, transmission and then combustion) negate much—if not all—of its advantages over coal. Long-term costs include: the pollution of water and soil, the destruction of roads and other infrastructure, the costs of treating health problems resulting from the release of toxins, and the loss of productivity of those whose health is adversely affected.

While there is much gas tightly embedded in shale formations throughout the US, the largest formation begins in New York and continues as far south as Tennessee. The gas industry has estimated that enough gas can be extracted from this Marcellus shale to provide about two years' supply for the entire United States. This is an amount that can easily be saved through conservation and efficiency measures, using technology that can be implemented quickly and that will continue to reduce our needs for energy until we can fully switch to renewable sources using proven technologies such as geothermal, passive and active solar, non-food biofuels, and appropriate-scale wind and hydropower.

We call upon Friends to educate themselves and to examine their own lives and patterns of consumption. In unity with the Minute on the Care of God's Creation, approved by Friends' United Meeting in Triennial Session on July 15, 1999, “We call upon the nations of the world, and in particular our own governments, to enact laws and reach agreements which will protect the creation from the effects of human exploitation, greed and carelessness.”

—Approved on December, 2009, by Ithaca Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

Some of the ways QEW worked *with* and *for* you in 2012

THE PAST YEAR has been a time of transition for Quaker Earthcare Witness. We were founded in 1987 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,” with regard for the needs of future generations or the rights of other species.

During this special 25th anniversary year, we have looked back thoughtfully on the influence that we have had on the ecological awareness of the Religious Society of Friends and beyond. We also have been discerning together what shape and direction our witness for an Earth restored will take in the years to come, as we seek to be faithful stewards of God’s creation.

QEW Annual Meeting

At our recent Annual Meeting in Chicago, we acknowledged that our past success have relied greatly on dedicated staff and countless unpaid hours of service by the Steering Committee and other volunteer committee members, as well as the wider fellowship of QEW supporters whose financial and moral support have sustained us.

At the October Meeting, we explored our theme “Biodiversity and Food.” José Aguto, Legislative Secretary on Sustainable Energy and Environment for Friends Committee on National Legislation, spoke on “Transforming Beliefs into Advocacy.” Jim Kessler, a farmer and environmental educator from Iowa Yearly Meeting (FUM), explained “Why Native Plants Matter.” Noel Pavlovic from Illinois Yearly Meeting talked about “Tending the Garden: A Quaker Ecologist’s Reflection on Biodiversity and Food,” speaking from his experience as a Quaker and naturalist at the Indiana Dunes. We were pleased that several Friends from the Chicago area joined us for these presentations.

Earthcare publications

With the pending retirement of Louis Cox, *BeFriending Creation* editor for the past 17 years and website administrator/webmaster for the past 12 years, QEW is deliberating about a number of possible changes in its publication program. Having interviewed several candidates, we hope to have a new Publications Coordinator under contract by the end

of 2012. As part of the transition, the QEW website <www.quakerearthcare.org> will gradually become more interactive for QEW supporters and for committee work. But the change will take some time and will not be without challenges for all.

Through the distribution of books, booklets, pamphlets, and a media lending library, QEW continues to provide vital Earthcare resources to individual Friends, to Friends meetings, and to the wider world.

BeFriending Creation continues to provide information and perspectives about current ecological issues, from hydrofracturing to mountaintop removal, from the Transition Town movement to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting’s Growth Dilemma Project. The newsletter also serves as an energetic forum for views and information about complex issues such as nuclear fission and economic globalization.



QEW-supported YAF training at Pendle Hill

QEW-supported initiatives

This year QEW was a joint sponsor of “Continuing Revolution: a Young Adult Conference on Ministry, Earthcare, and Social Action,” at Pendle Hill, attended by 30 young adults from the United States, Canada, and Korea. The event was organized by QEW Steering Committee member Emily Higgs, and QEW provided \$2,000 for scholarships and other expenses. The Young Friends have committed to organizing, with QEW’s support, a second training session in 2013, with a focus on simplicity and Quaker testimonies.

In 2012 QEW awarded six matching Mini-Grants of up to \$350 each to Monthly Meetings throughout the United States for a variety of environmental projects, many of them reducing Meetings’ carbon footprints. Recent donations to this special project will enable QEW to provide matching funds for up to seven projects in 2013.

Representation at the United Nations

QEW recently received special consultative status with the UN Economic & Social Council (ECOSOC) and will be working closely with other Quaker organizations to bring Friends’ perspectives to bear on environmental policy decisions.

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... for a peaceable, just, and ecologically healthy world.

>> **Year-end report**, from page 6

Collaboration with other Quaker groups

We continue to work with Friends Committee on National Legislation on environmental and economic policy and action. Our current focus is to get the reality of climate change back into political discourse.

QEW also signed on to a request by FCUN to each presidential candidate to acknowledge the climate change emergency and commit to doing something within the first 100 days of his Presidency.

Last spring QEW General Secretary Anne Mitchell attended a Heads of Agencies Meeting in London, England, where she was able to spend time with agency heads of QUNO Geneva and New York, Friends Committee on National Legislation, American Friends Service Committee, and other Quakers in Europe, the UK, and Australia. These were useful meetings in that FCNL and the QUNOs in particular are interested in working with QEW on environmental issues.

QEW has put a high priority on expanding its outreach to Yearly and Monthly meetings. Like other Quaker organizations, we need more financial support for carrying out this work. We are seeking grants for specific projects and are undertaking an intensified finance and development program.

QEW has offered encouragement, resources, and assistance to other Quaker groups, such as the Earth-Quaker Action Team (EQAT), who are taking spirited action to halt environmental degradation, while making Friends aware that they must reduce their own ecological impacts through informed lifestyle choices.

QEW presence at Quaker gatherings

For the past 25 years QEW has been raising awareness among Friends of the spiritual dimension that integrates peace, justice, and Earthcare concerns. At the 2012 FGC Gathering at Kingston, R.I., we again provided a resource-rich Earthcare Center where Friends gathered to read, talk, and network with others who share their interests and passions. QEW sponsored several Earthcare-related workshops and interest groups and again had care of early morning outdoor worship. We continued to work with FGC staff in their ongoing efforts to make the Gatherings “greener” and more sustainable.

QEW Committee work

QEW’s next face-to-face meeting of its Steering Committee will be at the Boulder Friends Meeting, Boulder, Colo., at the end of June 2013, just before the Friends General Conference Gathering in Greeley, Colo. Our 2013 Annual Gathering will again be in Chicago at the Cenacle, October 24–27, 2013. All Friends are welcome to join these meetings, participate in our general discussion list serv, and volunteer for other Earthcare-related projects.



QEW-supported programs at the FGC Gathering

Communications and planning are two areas where we need to continue discernment. What are our key messages to Quakers and the broader community at this time? How do we implement the Kabarak Call from Friends in Kenya? We need to continue setting priorities and defining the focus for QEW.

Fundraising

QEW has a committed core of supporters who believe in the organization and are generously supporting us through these transitions. But we need to broaden our base of support and seek new sources of funds. We have submitted a proposal to the Shoemaker Fund for a traveling ministry project to work with Monthly Meetings and Yearly Meetings on the spiritual basis of the ecological and social crises we face. We are seeking \$25,000 to support more visitation among Friends. Some of you have organized fundraising initiatives in your Meetings. All of these efforts help, but more is needed. ❖

Your contributions are needed

IF YOU SHARE our understanding that Friends’ aspirations for peace, justice, and equality cannot be realized while Earth’s ecological integrity is being destroyed, let us support each other in the vital work of seeking an Earth restored....

Enclosed is a self-addressed envelope that we hope you will consider using to make a special contribution to QEW. Donations of any amount are much appreciated. Contact the QEW office if you’re able to donate monthly, which greatly helps our cash-flow and financial planning.

QUNO, QEW working to resolve UN climate talk barriers

THANKS TO the help of Quaker Earthcare Witness, the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) in Geneva, Switzerland, for the past year has been monitoring and attending International climate negotiations of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which are of huge concern to Friends worldwide.

Together we have been working to identifying a possible role for Quaker methods of “quiet diplomacy” in helping resolve the current barriers in the climate talks. QUNO aims to represent Friends’ interests in UN forums, and for some time now has been hearing calls, on both sides of the Atlantic, for Quakers to take a more active role in this element of the international system.

Two decades ago, QUNO played an important role in the first UN Earth Summit at Rio de Janeiro, holding a number of “Quaker colloquiums” in New York, Geneva, and Nairobi in the years before the conference to bring together diplomats in an informal, off-the-record space to discuss outstanding issues. Our current work is still very much in the exploratory phase. But without necessarily following the same exact blueprint, rather than advocating for particular outcomes we are hoping to support the process itself, allowing greater levels of trust and confidence to be built among States.

The main challenges in working on the UNFCCC negotiations are their complexity and their diffuseness. They cover such a wide range of issues that even the people who have been following them closely since 1992 would find it impossible to know about everything. The Conferences of the Parties (COPs) are huge, with hundreds of negotiators and multiple sessions happening simultaneously, making it difficult to grab even a few minutes with the state representatives as they hurry between rooms.

Even though QUNO is based in both Geneva and New York, it remains difficult for our small organization to build personal contacts and understanding with negotiators as they fly in from capital cities around the world, or to even talk face to face with them between COPs.

QUNO’s work so far, then, has largely centered around monitoring the climate talks and increasing our knowledge of the procedures and substantive issues that are being discussed. We are trying to understand the positions of all the nations and regional blocs, to better identify points where trust needs to be

built. We followed COP17 in Durban from afar, preparing a short paper summarizing the discussions (available at <quno1@quno.ch>), and attended the preparatory sessions in Bonn, Germany, to see the negotiations in action and try to talk to many negotiators and NGOs about a potential role for Quakers. We will also be attending this year’s COP 18 in Qatar.

MOST RECENTLY, we have attended the first meeting of the board of the Green Climate Fund, a new UN body set up to distribute climate finance, which

should reach as much as \$100 billion a year by 2020. Now that the headquarters of the Fund have just been assigned to Songdo, South Korea, far away from QUNO offices, we

will analyze whether and how we can have a role in supporting this fledgling institution which could have such a big effect on how the world addresses climate change.

QUNO is grateful for the help of QEW in enabling us to observe the climate talks, and we are grateful for the insight that individual members of QEW have given to us as we embark on the discernment of our possible role in this vital area.

—Steven Heywood

Programme Assistant, Human Impacts of Climate Change
Quaker United Nations Office
Avenue du Mervelet 13, 1209 Geneva, Switzerland
<www.quno.org> <<http://www.quno.org>>

QEW gets NGO status at UN’s ECOSOC

QEW recently received consultative status at UN’s Economic & Social Council (ECOSOC), joining more than 3,500 other non-governmental organizations worldwide. A founding UN Charter body established in 1946, the Council discusses and issues policy recommendations on the world’s economic, social, and environmental challenges.

QEW’s UN Support Working Group will be reporting regularly on ECOSOC deliberations, seeking the Steering Committee’s support and encouragement as we explore this opportunity, working closely with the Quaker United Nations Office.

Through QEW, QUNO was able to be part of the first meeting on the UN Green Climate Fund under the auspices of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. After the meeting QUNO participated in a sign-on letter to the Fund’s organizers about the need to enable Civil Society to participate. QUNO asked QEW to sign on behalf of Quakers. After discerning this request at the UNSWG and again at the Continuing Counsel, QEW decided to sign this letter.



Miami Friends use Mini-Grant for native landscaping & gardening

MIAMI (FLA.) FRIENDS MEETING proposed, as a QEW Mini-Grant project, to convert their grounds to a sustainable, native landscape requiring no water except for rain and very low maintenance, using locally grown plants and trees. Their project had three goals:

- 1) To create a more sustainable pattern of resource usage by reducing their need to water during the dry winter months, eliminating grass and the use of energy to mow it.
- 2) To set an example for the community of how to create a simple, native landscape of great beauty, attracting birds, bees, and butterflies and educating others on the benefits and blessings of native landscapes.
- 3) To beautify their meetinghouse's rather drab exterior, facing a main thoroughfare to the South Miami business district, in hopes of raising their profile and enticing visitors to both the garden and the meeting.

They accomplished their goals by involving the Miami-Dade County community in the project. They took advantage of commitments from members of The Native Plant Society of South Dade, TREEmendous Miami, and the Tropical Audubon Society, headquartered nearby, giving advise on the best plant materials to use and the best placement and pairing for symbiosis. Members of those organizations participated alongside the meeting community in the design, planting, and publicity.



Native plants conserve resources, aid biodiversity, educate, and beautify.



Miami Meeting's children discover a beautiful fungus in their native garden.

The Buildings & Grounds Committee took charge of organization of the project, assisted by Miami Monthly Meeting First Day Schoolers. Miami Monthly Meeting also enlisted the participation of the parents

and children of the Bilingual Cooperative Preschool, housed in Bartram House, an adjacent property owned by the meeting. Documentation for the project at different stages has been used as a teaching tool. First Day School children, ranging in age from 4 to 13, wrote and illustrated a guidebook about the project, for use by the elementary school and the preschool and put it up on their meeting's website.

"THIS PROJECT STANDS AS a model of what can be accomplished when a little money and a lot of vision, creativity, enthusiasm, collaboration, community involvement, and hard joyous physical work come together in a harmonious mix. We look for opportunities to publicize and replicate this project in coming years," Miami Friends said in their report.

Mini-Grants will fund up to seven projects this year ranging from inner city landscape enhancements to a rural meeting house organic garden to a five-year permaculture

/orchard project.

While our projects typically involve carbon footprint shrinking, soil and/or water conservation, insulation, bicycling, etc. , we will consider any project which engages spirit, love of God's creation and energy to improve local sustainability practices and/or enhances environmental education and awareness.

Our maximum grant total for this year is \$350. We have had successful projects which came in at as little as \$57. Typically we accept applications from December through May of the following year. However, given differences in planting zones and hemispheres, we will consider applications at any time in order to accommodate growing season/planting considerations.

—Bill Holcombe, clerk
QEW Mini-Grants Committee
<bholc7@hotmail.com>

How you can support Mini-Grants

- **Contribute to the QEW Mini-Grant fund with a fund-raiser or by direct contributions.**
- **Donate your contributions of travel carbon offsets to QEW for the Mini-Grant Fund.**
- **Plan an environmental project for your Quaker meeting, church, or group.**
- **Application resides: <www.quakerearthcare.org>.**
- **Application deadline: May 2, 2013.**

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO we were present at the birth of a new Quaker organization in the midst of The Gathering of Friends General Conference, held at Oberlin College in Ohio. It was the first Gathering we had ever attended, and we arrived with eager anticipation for several reasons. One was the fact that we had grown up in Ohio, not far from Oberlin. Another was that we were going to lead a week-long workshop on environmental issues. A third was our knowledge that Marshall Massey would be giving a plenary lecture on global environmental problems.

After Marshall's talk, held in a sweltering auditorium, there was the usual question/discussion session in a smaller room, and it was there that the birth of Friends Committee on Unity with Nature took place. In unity on the need for a continuing Quaker effort to address environmental issues, a group of those present, many of them known to us because they were in our workshop, volunteered to serve as a steering committee for this new organization. Its central purpose was to speak to the Society of Friends as a whole, to awaken among Friends a realization that we and our natural environment are all part of God's creation, and that we bear a responsibility for its care.

Since then we have seen Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW), as it is now called, working creatively with monthly and yearly meetings, and many Quaker organizations, to enjoy, but also repair, our relationships with Earth. We hope you will join us in this endeavor.

—Bill and Alice Howenstine 5-14-12
Upper Fox Valley (Ill.) Friends Meeting

SEVERAL MONTHS AGO you asked me to write something about my time on the FCUN/QEW Steering Committee. I wasn't inspired until recently; so here it is:

The 5 or 6 years that I was part of the FCUN/QEW Steering Committee were joyful ones for me. To be part of a group of Friends who were preaching and trying to practice their testimony of sustainability was tremendously heartening to one who had always found the sacred in the natural world. Trying to contribute to a revolution of the spirit seemed a positive and hopeful enterprise among a group whose integrity was bound up in living their lives in harmony with the needs of the Earth and her creatures.

I remember Mary Coelho's lovely art work, along with her understanding of quantum physics, which I confess remains largely a mystery to me, even after reading her book. I remember Lisa Gould's sensitivity to "that of God" in every living thing. I remember the inspiration I felt from the way Kim and Susan Carlyle were simplifying their lives to tread more lightly on this wonderful Earth. There were so many others whom I learned to love in those rich years.

And always there was Ruah, guiding us and following where we led. And Louis, who has continued to report on everything, providing news and inspiration in ever-improving articles of *BeFriending Creation*.

I send my gratitude to Marshall Massey, who started it all, and to so many others I could name who have kept it going for 25 years. I am old now, but still trying to bring Friends of Bellingham Friends Meeting and North Pacific Yearly Meeting to celebrate and honor this sacred Earth that is our only home.

Blessings on QEW as we all negotiate the new realities of climate change, with love for our fellow humans, the other lives who support ours, and Gaia herself, our living Earth.

—Doris Ferm
Bellingham (Wash.) Friends Meeting

THANK YOU for blessing me with the opportunity to meet so many of you at your annual gathering in October. Your welcome and hospitality was of such warmth and sublime understanding. It is hard to describe the depth of the soul's resonance when among kindred spirits in a sanctuary of contemplation and grace, having arrived from long exposure to spirits and places with intentions of different yet hopefully temporary kinds. *Namaste*.

I look forward to collaborating with you in our shared aspirations for an Earth restored. There is, of course, follow up from the gathering to be attended to, but for now, I simply wanted to share with you my gratitude and prayer for God's enduring and gentle grace upon your precious souls. *Shanti*.

—José Aguto
Legislative Secretary, Sustainable Energy & Environment
Friends Committee on National Legislation
<Jose@fncnl.org>

QEW Resilience Fund launched

A THREE-YEAR RESILIENCE FUND was launched at the QEW Annual Meeting in October to help stabilize the organization's funding.

The initiative was approved in response to an appeal by our treasurer and by those in attendance who realized that after 25 years of bringing Earthcare concerns to Quakers, we need a more stable funding base to move ahead with our work to engage a broader audience of Friends and others.

You will hear more about this initiative later, but several people signed up at our Annual Meeting, recognizing the things that QEW wants to do require a resilience fund.

—Anne Mitchell, QEW General Secretary

ON NOVEMBER 7, 2012 Bill McKibben and other climate activists with 350.org hit the road to jump-start the next phase of the climate-change movement—a bold challenge to the fossil fuel industry itself. See <<http://350.org>>.

Their continent-wide, 21-city **Do the Math** tour is aiming to show people who are in despair about the planet's future that they can seize initiative by acting to cut off political and financial support to the oil, coal, and gas giants who are interested only in short-term financial gain and who are misusing their huge profits to fund disinformation about the reality of human-induced climate change.

Financial leverage therefore is the only way to force the fossil-fuel industry to leave 80 percent of their fossil fuel reserves in the ground to keep the earth in livable shape.

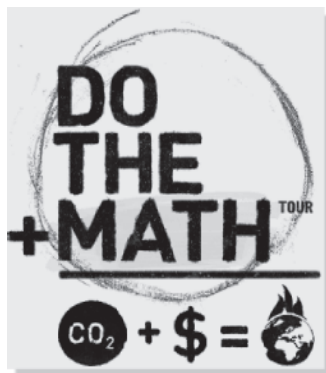
The strategy of the **Do the Math** road trip is to teach ordinary citizen-activists how to distill the basic truth about the climate crisis down to a few simple facts. Credible climate scientists like NASA's James Hansen say the truth comes down to three numbers:

2°C Carbon dioxide released by human activities has raised the average global temperature by about 0.8°C (1°F). Meanwhile, conditions have been set that are likely to push the average up at least to 2°C (3.6°F). If that happens, today's accelerating climate calamities will pale by comparison. Above 2°C, there is a high probability that enough positive feedback mechanisms (such as the disappearance of Arctic sea ice) will be activated to tip the climate system into a runaway mode, leading to a calamitous 6- to 11-°C rise by the end of the century.

565 To stay below 2°C, the world can release no more than 565 more gigatons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. But greenhouse-gas releases continue to increase by about 3 percent a year. At that rate the 565-gigaton limit would be topped within *the next 16 years*.

2,795 Fossil fuel corporations now have 2,795 gigatons of carbon in their reserves, *five times* the safe amount. And they're committed, as profit-driven businesses, to burning it *all*—unless we rise up to stop them.

Do the Math events won't be your typical lectures. Each event will be a unique, engaging, and interactive experience, unlike any talk you've been to before. It will pick up where Bill McKibben's landmark June 2012 *Rolling Stone* article left off—and everyone who



comes will be asked to join a growing movement that is strong enough to stand up to the fossil fuel industry.

THIS WON'T BE EASY, says McKibben: *"We're up against the most profitable, powerful, and dangerous industry in history. But we have our own currency: creativity, courage, and, if needed, our bodies."*

There is also the precedent of the citizen-led movement that ended apartheid in South Africa through divestment campaigns aimed at the corporations' Achilles' heels—their bottom lines. Such actions carry the same *moral authority* as those taken against tobacco companies and other health-damaging industries, who have no right to make profits at the expense of the common good. ❖

BeFriending Creation

BeFriending Creation, Vol. 25, No. 6, November-December 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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Website: <www.QuakerEarthcare.org>

Earthcare Calendar

December 7, 2012. Deadline for article submissions for January-February 2013 *BeFriending Creation*.

May 2, 2013. Deadline for applications for QEW Mini-Grants for Meeting environmental projects.

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173-B North. Prospect Street
Burlington, VT 05401-1607 USA

Printed on 100% post-consumer
recycled paper, bleached without chlorine

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 488
Burlington, Vt.

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New QIF booklet builds framework for an ecologically integrated economy

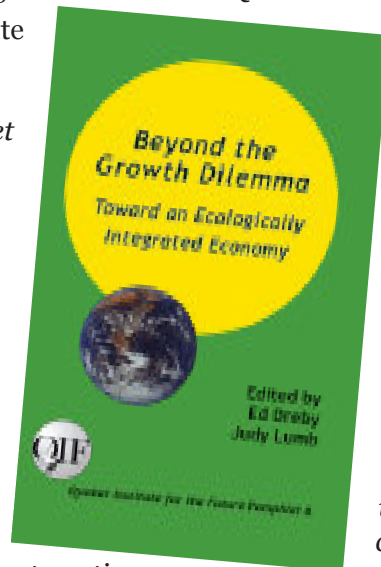
BEYOND THE GROWTH DILEMMA, is the sixth booklet in the Quaker Institute for the Future (QIF) series in collaboration with the Growth Dilemma Project of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

The Growth Dilemma Project website states, “*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.*”

QIF #6 is a companion booklet to QIF #5, *It’s the Economy, Friends: Understanding the Growth Dilemma*, which provides background information on the current functioning of our economy and shows why its unremitting drive for economic expansion cannot continue within the limited ecosystems of Earth.

Beyond the Growth Dilemma builds a framework for the changes that are needed for an ecologically integrated economy. This kind of economy leads to prosperous and thriving lives for humans and other creatures within the limits of planet Earth. Our society’s basic goal must change from “more” to “enough.” Changes in the way we earn our livelihoods, organize and carry out production, and govern the commons are all discussed.

Here is a link to the website, where it can be read online: <http://www.quakerinstitute.org/?page_id=5#pamphlet> It can be purchased at Quaker Books at FGC, <www.quakerbooks.org>.



Excerpts: “*Our Quaker testimony of Simplicity stands today as it has for 300 years as a pillar of our faith and needs only constant reinterpreting as way opens. We need not oppose economic growth per se, nor need we embrace it as a cure-all. What we need is kinder, gentler growth, with attention paid to the pressing social problems of our time....*”

“*...The standard economic model is a circular flow involving goods, services, labor, and money. Despite booms and busts, this circular flow of goods and services, labor and wages, investments and contracts, interest and dividends, income and taxes, expenditures and savings, has long been accepted as accurately representing the self-perpetuating activity of economic life in human communities.*”

“*The fundamental flaw in this model has now become obvious at the intersection of economics and ecology. It fails to account for the stocks of ecosystem capital that feed the economy and the costs of the pollution that the economy creates. It fails to account for the cumulative trajectory of depletion, degradation, and toxification that is steadily reducing Earth’s capacity to support life....*” ❖