

Special 2006 QEW resource issue!

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What time is it? ...It may be later than we think!

by Louis Cox

SOLUTIONS to ecological problems are elusive in part because so many people today have a *time-perception* problem. That is, they may understand clock time or calendar time, but they have forgotten how to experience *Earth Time*.

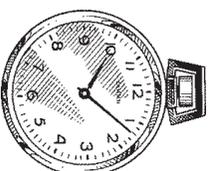
Here's a parable to explain what I mean—from a made-for-television movie of the early 1990s:

It's 1945. An American intelligence agent awakens in a disoriented state in a U.S. Army hospital in occupied Germany. The attending physicians break the good news that while he had lain in a long coma, World War II had ended with Allied victory. They encourage him to share his last memories—of a desperate fight with Nazi agents who believed he had information about the impending Allied D-Day invasion—as an aid to recovery from his trauma, they say.

The American feigns impaired recall because has an uneasy feeling about what's going on. He eventually figures out that he is in the middle of a clever con game: The war isn't over. D-Day still hasn't happened. In his earlier clash with enemy agents he was captured and drugged. The "American hospital" he was brought to is a detailed replica that the Nazis had painstakingly

created behind the front lines to lull him into believing, upon awakening, that he is living in a later time—so that the Allied invasion plan would no longer be viewed as a secret to be guarded.

Many of us today are feeling similarly uneasy and puzzled by some of the things going on around us. Suspicion grows that



it may be later than we think, despite the glib statements of our political and corporate leaders—that the GNP is growing, that there is still ample oil and other resources to support the "American way of life," that our enemies are on the run.... Our *quality of life* is another matter. We have less free time, less hope, less security. But that's never open to discussion.

Those currently in power have an obvious interest in diverting attention from such inconvenient contradictions by gearing public debate to a kind of time-keeping that measures growth in stock prices, but not the disappearance of wetlands; that tracks industrial output, but not the toxic chemicals accumulating in our tissues. They don't want us to know that, as Lester R. Brown states in *Plan B*, that we are in a time of planetary emergency. They know that if we woke up to this reality, we wouldn't be able to continue business as usual.

As Jeremy Rifkin explained in his 1987 book *Time Wars, the Primary Conflict in Human History*, time frames are ways that people understand unfolding events and thus learn how they are supposed to act. *Whoever controls the framing of time controls history.*

Time, next page >>

Get ready!

THIS NEW YEAR'S ISSUE of Befriending Creation highlights the many resources that are available to help us be stronger and better informed witnesses for the earth.

For us gardeners, winter is a kind of Sabbath. It is our time to rest up, to reassess our achievements, and plan for the planting and harvesting to come.

In this issue, we invite you to set aside time to try out the recommended readings and reflect on them. As the late Donella Meadows said, "There is too much bad news to justify complacency and too much good news to justify despair." Then let us look for ways, as individuals and as members of our faith communities, to get more involved in tending the garden of Creation in 2006.

>> **Time**, from page 1

It is possible to relate to the world in terms of many different time frames simultaneously. We use a calendar that embodies the time-line of the early Christian church; but this doesn't keep us from thinking of ourselves on an evolutionary time-line.

For the last third of the 20th century we were reminded constantly by our culture of being part of the "post-war generation," the "space age," the "computer age," the "Aquarian age," or the "post-modern period." Each framing sends a subtle but powerful message about what to expect from life and what goals to strive for.

Interestingly, environmentalists have been characterizing whatever decade they are in as a "decade of decision," but the struggle goes on.

Today people are marking permanent shifts in consciousness in terms of "post-9/11 attacks," and "post-Hurricane Katrina." "The New American Century" maps out a Neo-conservative agenda.

THOSE of us who want to engage the future in a positive way need to be aware when such time-framing is happening and to actively explore alternate time orientations. For instance, "Earth Time" can help put us back "in sync" with the fundamental processes of nature on which all life depends.

Earth Time can be thought of as a *nonlinear unfolding*, in which events emerge not according to arbitrary timetables and blue-



CRUZ CONCEPCIÓN, Cuba Yearly Meeting's representative to the QEW Steering Committee, sketched this "political cartoon" a couple of years ago, reflecting her non-North American idea of sustainability as a very slow-paced process. She seems to have a better grasp of "Earth Time" than most of us!

prints but according to the potentials that exist at each moment. As the Bible puts it, there is "a time for every purpose under Heaven."

Mary Coelho, QEW supporter and author of *Unfolding Universe, Emerging Personhood*, notes that there was a time, about a century ago, when the need, the resources, the tools, and the conditions were right to build the New York City subway system. Such an undertaking would not be possible today because the potential has changed.

The Industrial Revolution itself had to wait until certain people had lived and certain discoveries had happened. Similarly, the modern environmental movement could not have unfolded as it has until visionaries like Aldo Leopold, Rachel Carson, and Wendell Berry had come on the scene, or until the DNA molecule had been discovered and the Hubble Telescope had unveiled the unfolding universe.

Thomas Berry, author of the 1988 book, *The Dream of the Earth*, believes that we are moving into what he calls the Ecozoic Era. The Industrial Age has run its course, and enough humans have reached a level of spiritual awareness and ecological wisdom that it is possible to establish a new kind of non-mutually enhancing relationship with the earth, he says.

Berry does not envision a world without clocks or calendars, but people will learn to regulate their lives more by the cycles and rhythms of nature. When tempted by worldly powers to chase after false promises of a materialistic culture, they will think, "*We're too busy living and loving; we don't have time for that.*" ❖

Don't forget to register!

Friends
General
Conference
2006
Gathering
of Friends

**Swimming in
Living Waters**

July 1-7, 2006
Pacific Lutheran University
Puget Sound, Washington

You're invited to dive in!

Practicing Earthcare with integrity in 2006

by Barbara Williamson, QEW Steering Committee clerk

GEORGE FOX taught the need for integrity, or wholeness, in everyday life. What we profess on the Sabbath should be carried over into every other day of the week. Our "no" should mean "no," and our "yes" should mean "yes," and all our commitments should be fulfilled.

Early Quaker history is rich with examples of how those first Quakers lived by the Testimony of Integrity. As Cecil Hinshaw wrote in 1974, "*The essence of early Quakerism is precisely a demand for complete integrity of the individual in his relation to God, to other people, and to himself....*"

How does integrity relate to Quakers seeking "an earth restored"?

The environmental degradation we see everywhere today often can be traced to *lack of integrity*. Many people in our culture seem to have no qualms about lying, stealing and cheating to exploit the natural resources of the earth. The commitments of national leaders to the environment are frequently riddled with cover-ups, deception, and fraud. Even ordinary people, without profit or power motives, do not seem to be concerned about their participation in the degradation of the earth.

Before we can restore the integrity of Creation, we need to bring about greater integrity in ourselves and in our society. As we manifest power and wholeness from being fed by the Spirit and rooted in the earth, our integrity can move outward to our friends and family, from there to our communities and state and national governments and then on to the international stage.

We cannot stand on the sidelines and hope that another faith community, political party, or en-

vironmental action group will take charge. A Quaker woman from Kenya once told me that God had shown her the many hungry orphans in her hometown, and because she had seen these children

she was responsible for addressing their needs. We have recognized the problems with the environment. The Testimony of Integrity requires that we step forward and speak for the earth.

How will we resolve to heal the earth in 2006?

Pray!

1. Spend time in prayer.
2. Spend time in natural places, connecting with the Spirit revealed in God's Creation.
3. Ask for divine assistance discerning how you are called to care for the earth.

Learn!

4. Read at least one book about the environment. Check out the book reviews in this issue. Become a regular reader of *BeFriending Creation* and QNL's bimonthly *Quaker Eco-Bulletin*.
5. Check out the publications and videos available from Quaker Earthcare Witness. Order something of interest and share it with F/friends.

Act!

6. Renew your membership in Quaker Earthcare Witness with a generous contribution. Make sure your Monthly and Yearly meetings are making generous contributions to QEW.
7. Get five friends to join QEW.
8. Join or form an Earthcare Committee in your Monthly Meeting and/or Yearly Meeting. Contact the QEW Outreach Committee for assistance.
9. Make sure your Yearly Meeting appoints representatives to the Steering Committee of QEW; consider becoming a representative.
10. Lead Earthcare-related ac-

tivities in your Meeting, such as helping Friends measure their ecological footprints or teaching about spirituality and ecology in Quaker religious education.

11. Be patterns and examples. Model mindfulness of the limits of the earth's resources and the need for right sharing among humans and other species. Recycle, conserve, bicycle, and walk. Support your local economies and food systems.
12. Get involved in local, state, and national environmental initiatives. Write to your representatives.
13. Write articles for *BeFriending Creation*, or send in ideas or leads for articles.
14. Arrange for someone from QEW to speak to your Monthly or Yearly meeting or other Quaker group on some aspect of Earthcare.

Let us know which action items you and your Meeting have undertaken or plan to undertake in 2006.

Remember that we, the environmentally concerned Friends of North America, hold the key to QEW's growth and success.

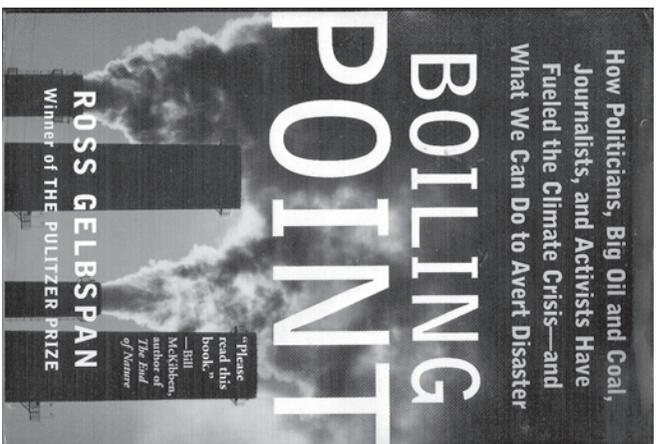
Working together in 2006, we can significantly increase the number of individual supporters and Monthly Meeting Earthcare Committees.

Let us all today renew our commitment to this vital work!

Two books to scare the bejebers out of you...

Boiling Point

by Ross Gelbspan
Basic Books, 2004
ISBN 0-465-02761-X



JOURNALIST ROSS GELBSPAN wrote *The Heat Is On* after becoming concerned that mainstream media weren't adequately informing the public of the most important news story of the century—the steady accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and the inexorable and disastrous rise in average global temperatures.

That well-researched book and others on the subject were immediately attacked by oil, coal, and gas industry lobbyists and other vested interests who saw it as a threat to continued profitable extraction of fossil fuels.

In *Boiling Point*, Gelbspan reviews the latest research, as well as numerous accounts of unprecedented weather extremes around the world, to reinforce his original warnings. He also exposes the well-funded campaign of disinformation and intimidation that has been carried on by politicians,

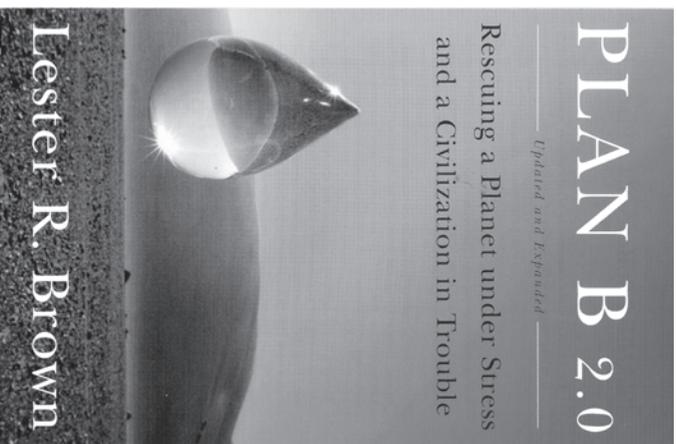
trade groups, and others in recent years to spread doubts in the public mind about what is otherwise a very well-documented crisis of planetary survival.

Gelbspan's latest book engages readers in what he calls "the climate war," a struggle over public opinion on whether climate change is real and serious and whether alternatives to fossil fuels are practical and affordable. In the United States, unfortunately, the Bush administration and many legislators are unduly beholden to well-funded special interests.

Bill McKibben, who in 1989 wrote *The End of Nature* (one of the first books on global warming written for popular consumption), praises Gelbspan's reporting: "On the highest stakes issue of our time he has broken new ground.... His proposals make urgent sense. Most of all, he manages to get across just how desperate our situation is. Please read this book."

Plan B 2.0

—Updated and Expanded—
by Lester R. Brown



LESTER R. BROWN, president of the Earth Policy Institute, distributed a copy of his *Plan B* to everyone who attended his evening talk at the 2004 FGC Gathering in Amherst, Mass. Brown matter-of-factly explained that food shortages will be first of many severe crises about to descend on the world. Shortfalls in food production are brewing now from the combined effects of over-dependence on "fossil water" (non-recharged aquifers) for irrigation, loss of topsoil and soil fertility, depletion of petroleum reserves, and population growth.

Brown's book outlines other ways in which the earth's carrying capacity is being undermined by foolish and extravagant uses of resources, careless release of toxins and disruptive chemicals into the environment, and the stress of global warming on biological systems that undergird the ecological sta-

bility of the planet.

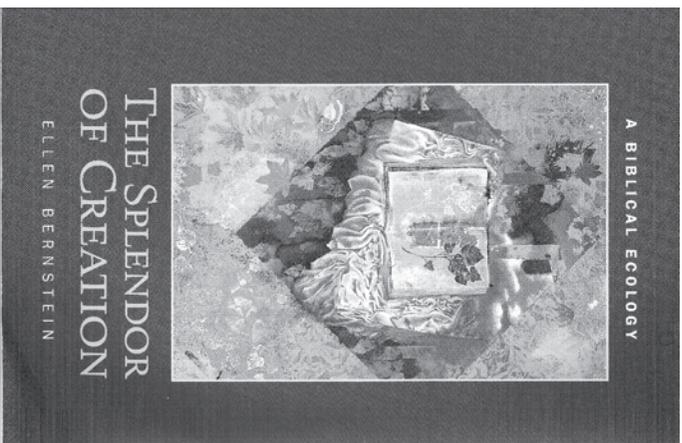
Since "Plan A" (business as usual) obviously isn't working, Brown outlines a radically different agenda to be carried out immediately on an international scale. The ability of the United States to quickly tool up for war production in the early 1940s provides ample evidence that his proposals for emergency measures are within the realm of possibility.

While acknowledging the importance of cumulative individual actions, Brown asserts that dealing with problems of this magnitude will require bold initiatives at the public policy level, with sweeping reform of laws and institutions and courageous shifting of public spending priorities.

Copies of *Plan B 2.0* can be ordered for \$14 from the Earth Policy Institute, 1350 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 403, Washington DC 20036. Bulk rates are available.

The Splendor of Creation

by Ellen Bernstein
ISBN: 0-8298-1664-X



ELLEN BERNSTEIN founded Shomrei Adamah, the first national Jewish environmental organization, in the early 1990s. There are fascinating parallels between this author's thoughts and experiences and my involvement with Quaker Earthcare Witness since the late

1980s. We both had been active for many years in the secular environmental movement, trying to reach people through facts and persuasion. But after suffering frustration and disillusionment, we both had come to the conclusion that people must be engaged at a deeper, spiritual level before they will care enough to significantly change the way they treat the earth. Returning to the roots of our religious traditions, we both were surprised and delighted to find a rich vein of teachings about right relationship to Creation in the Bible as well as in the principles and practices of our particular faith traditions.

Bernstein believes that the

modern science of ecology and the creation story of the Book of Genesis are really different ways of talking about the same reality. Each of her seven chapters highlights basic ecological issues in terms of the central themes of the seven days of Creation.

She maintains that the controversial term "dominion," as translated from Hebrew into English, never meant that humans had a divine right to crowd out other species and prevent them from thriving in their rightful habitats. On the contrary, it is the very awareness of our power to exploit, abuse, and destroy nature that can lead us instead to vigilant care and thoughtful restraint.

Bernstein also explains how the commandment of keeping the Sabbath by refraining from work is a corrective to humankind's tendency to mistake its role on earth as one of mastery over nature.

—Louis Cox

The Kids' Book of Awesome Stuff

by Charlene Brotman
ISBN: 09762568-0-0



THIS WORKBOOK offers a series of short readings and stimulating activities for children, expanding on the good news that "You are a part of the wonderful web of life."

At first look, it's a creatively packaged set of junior-level lessons about nature. But rather than demystifying nature, as so many conventional scientific texts do, these fun activities celebrate the mystery of how the earth, this accumulation of dust from ancient exploding stars, has unfolded to be a miraculous oasis in space, home to us and all other living things.

Included are breathtaking Hubble Telescope photos of deep space galaxies and nebulae, as well as fascinating microscopic views of crystals and butterfly wings, supplemented by delightful pen-and-ink illustrations.

The readings and activities cover all the basic earth processes

from photosynthesis to decay, in a way that young, inquisitive minds can readily relate to. They also spell out the dangers of upsetting the delicate balances of nature through thoughtless human acts, such as habitat destruction and the release of synthetic chemicals into the biosphere.

This 112-page book can be used in First Day School programs on Earthcare, with the understanding that it does not use "religious" language or cite Bible verses on stewardship. But it is decidedly spiritual as it urges readers young and old to be thankful for being part of the whole buzzing, blooming miracle of Creation and to reflect on the way that they are connected to everything else.

Copies can be ordered from Charlete Brotman for \$15 each at brotnanco@aol.com; 207/282-4539. Bulk prices are available.

Pacific Northwest Quarterly Meeting focuses on 'Deepening Our Relationship with Earth'

by Doris Fern
Bellingham, Wash., Friends Mtg.

"DEEPENING OUR RELATIONSHIP with Earth: Happy Hearts, Helping Hands, Small Footprints" was the theme of the fall 2005 Pacific Northwest Quarterly Meeting, hosted by Bellingham (Wash.) Friends Meeting and San Juan Worship Group. Preparations included making or buying at garage sales 400 cloth napkins. Lazy P Ranch, where we meet, agreed to launder these mid-weekend and to keep them for future quarterly meetings. They also agreed to make receptacles available for recycling aluminum cans, glass bottles, and mixed paper. They were open as well to the suggestion that they use locally grown produce for meals to the greatest extent possible.

Bellingham Friends, with the help of San Juan Worship Group, prepared a simple meal of beans and rice for Friday's supper, in place of brown-bagging or potluck. Contributions went to Right Sharing of World Resources, and Friends found the meal delicious! It also encouraged more mixing than when each family brought their own food.

The Saturday plenary commenced with a panel of Friends, with open sharing out of silence. I told of a childhood experience that taught me to love nature at an early age. I shared a mountaintop experience in Colorado, where as a college student from the East I first stood on a high peak and saw range after range of mountains as far as the eye could see. Aware of all the hidden lives unseen in the vastness of the unbroken forests, I felt simultaneously utterly insignificant and at the same time an integral part of it all.

Mike Kaill of San Juan Worship Group told of an experience when he was a "young turk" college professor, full of himself and

We have forgotten who we are

We have forgotten who we are.
We have alienated ourselves from the unfolding cosmos.
We have become estranged from the movement of the world.
We have turned our backs on the circles of life.
We have forgotten who we are.
We have sought only our own security.
We have exploited simply for our own ends.
We have distorted our knowledge.
We have abused our power.
We have forgotten who we are.
Now the land is barren, the waters poisoned, the air polluted.
We have forgotten who we are.
Now the forests are dying, the creatures are disappearing, the humans despairing.
We have forgotten who we are.
We ask for forgiveness.
We ask for the gift of remembering.
We ask for the strength to change.
For we have forgotten who we are.
—UN Environmental Sabbath Programme

full of anxieties. Walking past the kindly old gardener on campus one day, he paused for a moment's greeting. The older man, talking in much that was unspoken, said to Mike, "Plunge your hands into this earth I have just turned." As Mike came into contact with the loose, fertile soil, he felt the tension drain out of him. This simple connection with the earth changed his life.

Monika Tippie, a teenager from Salmon Bay Meeting in Seattle, read a poem from the UN Environmental Sabbath Program and talked about our human alien-

ation from the natural world. Thinking of ourselves as separate and living in the unsustainable way that we do, she said, will destroy our culture and civilization itself.

Daniel Kirkpatrick of Bellingham told of his passion for climbing mountains, the excitement and exhilaration, the exertion and exhaustion, and finally the exultation of reaching the summit. This endeavor and these memories keep him in touch with the reality of the natural world.

Among the ten interest groups offered was one for doing aikido, led by Daniel, who says he sees aikido as "Quakerism in motion."

I led one on "Healing Ourselves, Healing the Earth," based partly on Elizabeth G. Watson's pamphlet of similar title and partly on a workshop on "Compassionate Listening" I had attended in May. I ended the time with the hand exercise from Joanna Macy found in *Earthcare for Friends*. Terry Thorsons led an interest group on "Low Energy Cooking." Others included "Evolution and Creation," Haiku poetry, and card making to benefit Iraqi children.

A SUNSET NATURE WALK led by Susan Campbell gave us a taste of knowledge of the flora, fauna, fungi, and geology of the bioregion. It was much appreciated.

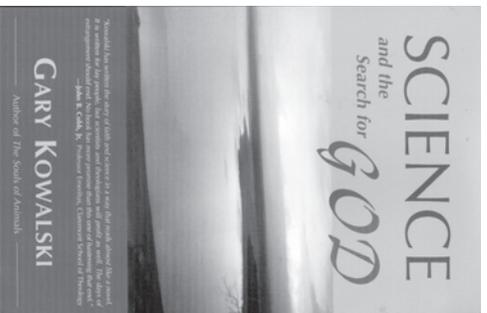
Attendance at this quarterly meeting was said to be the highest ever, and evaluations were overwhelmingly positive. I believe that Friends are truly moving toward a Testimony to the Earth and wanting to make changes in the direction of living more sustainably. Like me, many of us still have a long way to go, but we are moving in the right direction. ♦

Science and the Search for God: Theology as if Animals Mattered

by Gary Kowalski, Lantern Books, 2003, ISBN 1-59056-045-0

Reviewed by Ruah Swennerfelt

IN THIS ERA of much talk of moral values, religion, and science, this little book is very timely. How can we think about the nature of things both scientifically and religiously? Gary Kowalski, a Unitarian minister, has written a basic handbook about the evolving universe and its relevance to our lives today, in a very readable and easily understood format.



Kowalski begins with an examination of the fragmentation between science and religion and looks at the history that has brought us to this schism. He then lays the groundwork for the basis for a new conversation between the two camps. He examines the new physics and quantum theory and never loses the reader in dry explanations.

I appreciated the review of how our universe began, in scientific terms, yet being regularly reminded of the great unexplainable mystery. If you have not read about the “immense journey” from stars to humans, this would be a good place to begin. Kowalski does not avoid the scientific explanations, but his descriptions are easily understood. He then gives us an overview of the development of science from matter to Darwin. But what I found profound are his conclusions:

“To see the wonder in each bit of time and space is indeed the occupation of a scientist or a saint. To perceive the mystery that lies

behind and beneath this world is to live in a state of astonishment and reverence for What Is. All things exist, yet only we, the human creation, are

fully aware that we exist. To become completely conscious of the mystery within us and around us, to look steadily at the unknown, to contemplate the infinite heights and depths of existence, is what it means to be most deeply human and

most genuinely alive.”

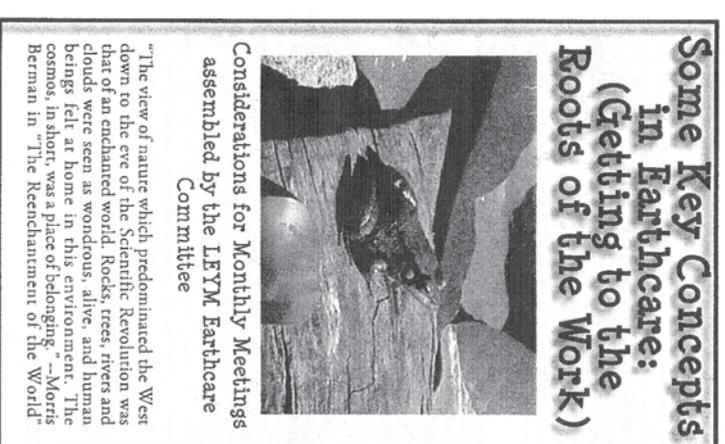
Kowalski argues that many of the ills of the modern world—from the rise of fundamentalist intolerance to secular society’s endless (and empty) search for thrills—stem from the mistaken view that science and faith are antagonists rather than natural allies. He suggests that science and faith compel us now to move beyond materialism toward an understanding of the world that includes the realities of consciousness and spirit.

This is an excellent book for Friends. We often do not involve ourselves with science/religious discussions. This book will help the reader become aware of the issues and it will give us a basis for being rooted both in the world and in the spirit. ❖

LEYM committee outlines key terms, concepts, and principles of Earthcare

THE EARTHCARE COMMITTEE of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting (LEYM) has published a useful booklet to explain to Monthly Meetings what Earthcare means for Friends and what resources are available to them

The 10-page booklet contains goals, inspirational quotes, recommended reading, suggestions for lifestyle changes, queries, and a glossary of Earthcare terms like “commons,” “sustainability,” “biodiversity,” and “permaculture.” Principles for action are based on Vandana Shiva’s Earth Democracy movement: 1) Democracy for all life, 2) Intrinsic worth of all species and peoples, 3) Diversity in nature and culture, 4) Natural rights to sustenance, 5) Earth economy, 6) Living economies, 7) Living democracy, 8) Living knowledge, 9) Balancing rights with responsibility, 10) Globalizing peace, care, and compassion.



Ending quote: “Our Great Work is to sustain the great story of a God that is in all and through all.”

—Thomas Berry

Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed

by Jared Diamond, Viking Penguin, 2005, ISBN 0-670-03337-5

Reviewed by Michael Moore

Michael Moore is a member of Agate Passage Friends Meeting, which meets west of Seattle, Wash. He is a former QEW Steering Committee member.

I RECOMMEND that people become familiar with Diamond's weighty book for two reasons: The first reason is to gain pictorial images of truly sustainable societies. The second reason is to grasp in detail the principles by which our society can clearly evaluate and plan "to live long in the land." (Deuteronomy 5:33)

I am reminded of the QEW Annual Meeting in 1995, where the word "sustainability" came up several times in several contexts. I gathered that many of the attendees had been using that term for a long time, but I wasn't clear about what they meant. After dinner one evening, I had a chance to chat with a long-term member of the Steering Committee, who shared a fairly precise definition of sustainability that he had found helpful. Using that definition, he and I agreed that our industrial society is *not* sustainable.

During those meetings and conversations I also pondered various Quaker values, such as, our Peace Testimony and our witness to preserve human life. I came to understand that a sustainable society needs to be able to accept human death and thereby affirm the process of continual regeneration of population and resources. Reading Diamond's *Collapse* confirms and expands on what I began to grasp intuitively ten years ago.

Early in the book Dr. Diamond outlines a five-point framework that he developed to account for the successes and failures of the cultures he had studied across time

and around the world: 1) environmental damage, 2) climate change, 3) hostile neighbors, 4) friendly trade partners, and, always important, 5) the society's response to its environmental problems.

His descriptions of various societal successes and failures include, however, only two societies that survived over time as truly sustainable societies. They were the people of the highlands of New Guinea and the people of the small island of Tikopia (1.8 square miles) in the southwest Pacific. (From other sources I understand there might have been two other societies that achieved a similar distinction: Tibet and a valley in northern Chile.) Dr. Diamond also includes one period in Japan's history that he would consider sustainable.

These successful societies learned to live through drought, hurricanes, earthquakes, and "good times." They maintained their forests, their fisheries, and their wildlife. To stabilize their human population the people of Tikopia practiced various forms of contraception and abortion, while the people of New Guinea practiced on-going warfare. (I understand the approach in Buddhist Tibet was different. They had a system of monasteries and convents in which 25 percent of the population lived celibate lives.)

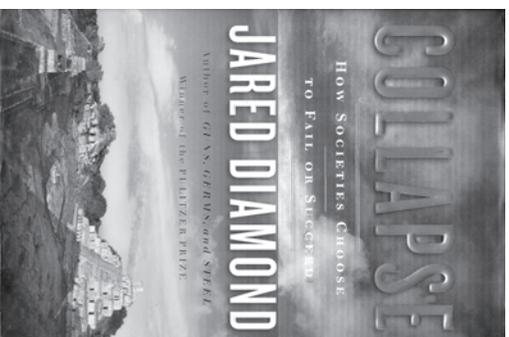
The descriptions of these two island societies confirmed what I had expected—that I would not like to live in a truly sustainable society, because I fear there would

be no room in such a society for many of the things I find interesting and pleasurable in life. But I *would* like to live in a society that finds ways to exist for a very long time, "to live long in the land."

I found it interesting that little correlation was found between long-term successes and failures and the so-called "top-down" versus "bottom-up" models of societal decision-making. The best model for a larger, complex society like ours may be a hybrid: top-down decision-making to provide consistent decade-by-decade implementation *and* bottom-up consensus to provide human sensibility to live with the implementation.

I was also intrigued by questions that Diamond raises about why so many societies seem to behave irrationally and self-destructively even when solutions to their sustainability problems are knowable and achievable. Why are New Guinea and Tikopia the exceptions rather than the rule? Why, on the other hand, did the United States elect leaders whose goal was to weaken a good (not perfect) set of environmental programs?

Perhaps we lack the intention to survive *as a society*. I often hear people say, "Why should I care? That won't happen until long after I'm gone." We need to acquire the "seventh-generation" ethic of planning for one's *grandchildren's grandchildren's grandchildren* before we can deal constructively with threats to our sustainability and learn to "live long in the land." ❖



A book about the end of cheap oil:

A way of life is about to change

by Alice Wald

THE PARTY'S OVER, by Richard Heinberg, is a book that I think everyone—I said *everyone*—in the U.S. and Canada needs to read.

The core message is that North Americans' current way of life, based on the consumption of energy resources that are inherently limited in quantity and about to become scarce, will change drastically when competition for the remaining resources escalates.

Heinberg brings together an enormous amount of data on energy sources and availability based on past and current research. Although much of this information is likely new to the average citizen, Heinberg engages the reader in a very personal way.

Take for example his "thought experiment," which has us sitting in the middle of a typical North American city for at least 20 minutes. During that time we are asked to observe where and how energy is being used, what forms of energy are being consumed, what work that energy is doing, etc.

Then he instructs us, "Try to follow some of the strands of the web of relationships between energy, jobs, water, food, heating, construction, goods, distribution, transportation, and maintenance that together keep the city thriving."

Next he asks us to imagine what the scene would be like with 10 percent less energy available, then 25 percent less, then 50 percent less, then 75 percent less.

Heinberg asks, "What substitutions would be necessary? What choices would people make? What work would not get done?"

With a skill for analyzing varying viewpoints and articulating them succinctly, Heinberg puts before us four perspectives on this

emerging energy crisis.

"The loudest and most confident voice belongs to the conventional free-market economists, who view energy as merely one priced commodity among many."

"A more strident voice issues from environmental activists, who are worried about the build-up of greenhouse gases..."

"A third and even more sobering collective voice belongs to an informal group of retired and independent petroleum geologists..." whose message is that petroleum will run out and much sooner than anticipated.

"Finally, there is the voice that really matters: that of politicians who actually set energy policy and do not want to be the bearer of the awful news that our energy guzzling way of life is waning."

As a journalist and educator

who teaches classes like "Energy and Society" at New College in California, Heinberg is convinced that global conventional oil production will peak sometime during this first decade of the 21st century. However, Heinberg documents and presents all viewpoints, leaving you to decide for yourself.

The Party's Over is quite readable, and I found the quotes at the beginning of each chapter delightfully informative.

I'll close with one of my favorites, a Saudi saying, "My father rode a camel. I drive a car. My son flies a jet airplane. His son will ride a camel."

First published in 2003 by New Society Publishers, there is now a revised and updated second edition that can be ordered at <www.newsociety.com> or 1-800/567-6772 for \$17.95. It is also available at public libraries. ♦

—Adapted from the October 5, 2005 *Keowee* (S.C.) *Courier*

NW Earth Institute discussion courses educate and help build eco-community

THOUSANDS of people who are concerned about peace, justice, and ecological integrity have been informed and brought together as informal eco-communities through discussion courses offered by the Northwest Earth Institute (NWEI) of Portland, Ore.

Institute co-founders Jean and Dick Roy say their self-guided courses are dedicated to "motivating individuals to examine and transform personal values and habits, to accept responsibility for the earth and to act on that commitment."

NWEI courses include "Choices for Sustainable Living," "Voluntary Simplicity," "Exploring Deep Ecology," "Globalization and

Its Critics," "Developing a Sense of Place," and "Healthy Children."

The eight to nine study sessions in each series are based on provocative and informative

excerpts from recent publications, such as *Yes! A*



Journal of Positive Futures. There are also questions to stimulate discussion, as well as suggestions for setting up and facilitating regular meetings.

After completing one course, many groups have elected to continue together on other courses.

To get started, contact NWEI at 506 Sixth St., Suite 1100, Portland OR 97204; 503/227-2807. E-mail them at info@nwei.org or visit their web site at www.nwei.org.

MY NAME is Wendy Clarissa Geiger. I'm Al Geiger's daughter. Fa and I appreciate *BeFriending Creation* very much. You'd recognize me from Southeastern Yearly Meeting (SEYM). You briefly visited our farm here in Jacksonville, Fla. Anyway, I thought you'd enjoy the "Deep Ecology" paper I wrote for a community college philosophy course years ago. Perhaps you might print the book list, also enclosed, in *BeFriending Creation*.

Wendy Geiger's recommended 'deep ecology' reading

- Abram, David. 1996. *The Spell of the Sensuous—Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human-World*. Pantheon Books. ISBN: (hard-cover) 0-679-43819-X.
- Adams, Cass, ed. 1996. *The Soul Unearthed—Celebrating Wilderness and Personal Renewal through Nature*. G.P. Putnam's Sons. ISBN: 0-87477-838-7.
- Allen, Judy. 1998. *Anthology for the Earth*. Candlewick Press. ISBN: 0-7636-0301-5.
- Badiner, Allan Hunt, ed. 1990. *Dharma Gaia—A Harvest of Essays in Buddhism and Ecology*. Parallax Press. ISBN: 0-938077-30-9.
- Berry, Thomas. 1988. *The Dream of the Earth*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books. ISBN: 0-87156-622-2.
- Berry, Wendell. 1987. *Home Economics*. Fourteen essays. North Point Press. ISBN: 086547-275-0.
- Barnhill, David Landis, ed. 1999. *At Home on the Earth—Becoming Native to Our Place—A Multicultural Anthology*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press. ISBN: 0520-21684-9.
- Bullard, Robert. 1993. *Confronting Environmental Racism—Voices from the Grassroots*. South End Press. ISBN: 0-89608-446-9.
- Carlson, Laurie. 1993. *EcoArt—Earth-Friendly Art & Craft Experiences for 3- to 9-year-olds*. Charlotte, Vt.: Williamson Publishing. ISBN: 0-913589-68-3.
- Carson, Rachel. 1956. *The Sense of Wonder*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Castaldo, Nancy Fusco. 1996. *The Little Hands Nature Book—Earth Sky Critters & More*. For ages 2-6 and their families. Charlotte, Vt.: Williamson Publishing. ISBN: 1-885593-16-3.
- Cornell, Joseph. 1998. *Sharing Nature with Children*. Dawn Publications. ISBN: 1-883220-73-4.
- . 1989. *Sharing Nature with Children II*. Nevada City, Calif.: Dawn Publications. ISBN: 1-883220-87-4.
- Deval, Bill. 1988. *Simple in Means, Rich in Ends—Practicing Deep Ecology*. ISBN: 0-87905-294-5.
- . *Living Rightly in an Age of Limits—Using Deep Ecology for an Abundant Life*. Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, Publisher/Peregrine Smith Books. ISBN: 0-87905-559-6.
- Diehn, Gwen, and Terry Krautwurst. 1995. *Kids Style Nature Crafts—50 Terrific Things to Make with Nature's Materials*. Sterling Publishing Co., Inc. ISBNP: 0-8069-0997-8.
- Elder, John, and Hertha D. Wong, eds. 1994. *Family of Earth & Sky—Indigenous Tales of Nature from Around the World*. Beacon Press. 313 pp. ISBN: 0-8070-8529-4.
- Glendenning, Chellis. 1994. *My Name is Chellis & I'm Recovering from Western Civilization*. Shambala. ISBN: 0-87773-996-X.
- Horn, Gabriel (White Deer of Autumn). 1996. *Contemplations of a Primal Mind*. New World Library. ISBN: 1-880032-55-4. This author is editor of the bestselling collection of Native American elder stories *Wisdomkeepers*.
- McLuhan, T.C. 1996. *Cathedrals of the Spirit—The Message of Sacred Places*. HarperPerennial. ISBN: 0-06-095119-2.
- Macy, Joanna, Pat Fleming, and Arne Naess. 1988. *Thinking Like a Mountain—Towards a Council of All Beings*. Gabriola Island, B.C.: New Society Publishers. 128 pp. ISBN: 0-86571-133-X.
- . 1991. *World as Lover, World as Self*. Berkeley, Calif.: Parallax Press. ISBN: 0-938077-27-9.
- and Molly Young Brown. 1998. *Coming Back to Life—Practices to Reconnect Our Lives, our World*. Gabriola Island, B.C.: New Society Publishers. 240 pp. ISBN 0-86571-391-X.
- Plant, Judith, ed. 1989. *Healing the Wounds—the Promises of Ecofeminism*. Gabriola Island, B.C.: New Society Publishers. ISBN: 0-86571-153-4.
- Roszak, Theodore, Mary E. Grimes, and Allen D. Kanner. 1995. *Ecopsychology—Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind*. Sierra Club Books. ISBN: 0-87156-406-8.
- Sale, Kirkpatrick. 1991. *Drillers in the Land—the Bioregional Vision*. Gabriola Island, B.C.: New Society Publ. ISBN: 0-86571-225-5.
- Sessions, George, ed. 1995. *Deep Ecology for the 21st Century—Readings on the Philosophy and Practice of the New Environmentalism*. Shambala. 467 pp. ISBN: 1-57062-049-0.
- Snyder, Gary. 1999. *The Practice of the Wild*. North Point Press. ISBN: 0-86547-454-0.
- Swimme, Brian. 1984. *The Universe is a Green Dragon—A Cosmic Creation Story*. Bear & Company Publishing. ISBN: 0-939680-14-9.
- Swimme, Brian, and Thomas Berry. 1992. *The Universe Story—From the Primordial Flaring Forth to the Ecozoic Era, a Celebration of the Unfolding of the Cosmos*. Harper-SanFrancisco. ISBN: 0-06-250835-0.
- Terzian, Alexandra M. 1993. *The Kids' Multicultural Art Book—Art & Craft Experiences from Around the World*. Charlotte, Vt.: Williamson Publishing. ISBN: 0-913589-72.
- Webb, Benjamin. 1998. *Fugitive Faith—Conversations on Spiritual, Environmental, and Community Renewal*. Orbis Ecology & Justice series. Orbis Books. ISBN: 1-57075-170-6.

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

From Sea to Rising Sea

The story of the 10,000 km Climate Change Caravan



AFTER ANOTHER failed international climate change conference, a group of students are frustrated by the Canadian government's inability to address the largest threat the world has faced. With the help of environmentalists from across Canada, the Climate Change Caravan begins in Tofino, B.C., with over 20 bikers, one vegetable-oil powered bus, and two modest goals: to cycle across the second largest country on the planet and to build a national environmental movement along the way.

From Sea to Rising Sea tells an inspiring story of idealism coming face to face with reality, as young environmentalists with staggering determination are put through a 10,000-km cross-Canada road test. Faced day to day with endless



challenges, the realities of their ambitious endeavor quickly become visible. Halfway across the country the group is burnt out and struggling to lead the sustainable lifestyle they are promoting.

Entering the final leg of their trip, the tired Caravaners' perspective on their campaign changes, and spirits lift as they receive an unexpected source of inspiration. Arriving in Halifax, Nova Scotia, the group feels a new sense of success for their amazing accomplishment, which might not have changed the world in a summer but undoubtedly changes these young people forever.

This DVD is now available through the QEW video lending library.

BeFriending Creation

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

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

VISION AND WITNESS

WE ARE CALLED to live in right relationship with all Creation, recognizing that the entire world is interconnected and is a manifestation of God. WE WORK to integrate into the beliefs and practices of the Religious Society of Friends the Truth that God's Creation is to be respected, protected, and held in reverence in its own right, and the Truth that human aspirations for peace and justice depend upon restoring the earth's ecological integrity. WE PROMOTE these truths by being partners 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: Barbara Williamson, 2710 E. Leigh St., Richmond VA 23223; 804/643-0461; barbarawilliamson@imno.com.

Gen. Secretary: Ruah Swemerfeld, 173-B N. Prospect St., Burlington, VT 05401. 802/658-0308; Ruah@QuakerEarthcare.org.

BFC Editor: Louis Cox, 173-B N. Prospect St., Burlington, VT 05401. 802/658-0308; e-mail: LouisC@QuakerEarthcare.org.

Website: www.QuakerEarthcare.org

January-February 2006

- ✓ *What time is it?* Is 2006 a 'year of decision' for the earth? 1
- ✓ Clerk's message: Practicing Earthcare with integrity in 2006. 3
- ✓ Some books to terrify you and some books to inspire you. 4-5
- ✓ Northwest Pacific Quarter: Deepening our relationship to the earth. 6
- ✓ *Science and the Search for God: Theology as if Animals Mattered.* 7
- ✓ Jared Diamond's *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed.* 8

How do we nourish the seeds of peace in the Middle East?

TOM FOX and the other Christian Peacemaker Team members who were recently abducted in Iraq are in our prayers. As *BeFriending Creation* goes to press, on December 9th, we still do not know the outcome of this tragedy.

Tom Fox is a member of Baltimore Yearly Meeting attending Langley Hills Friends Meeting and is known by a number of QEW Steering Committee members. Louis and I know others who have served with Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) and know of the fine work of this organization.

CPT offers an organized nonviolent alternative to war and other forms of lethal inter-group conflict. CPT provides organizational support to persons committed to faith-based nonviolent alternatives in situations where lethal conflict is an immediate reality or is supported by public policy. CPT seeks to enlist the response of the whole church in conscientious objection to war, and in the development of nonviolent institutions, skills and training for intervention in conflict situations. CPT projects connect intimately with the spiritual lives of constituent congregations.



Quaker Earthcare Witness, along with Friends Committee on National Legislation, has attempted to reveal the connections between our increasing dependence on imported fossil fuels in the United States and our willingness to put our men and women at great risk in wars. John Woolman reminded Friends to discern whether the seeds of war may be finding nourishment in their possessions. Most of our possessions today are directly or indirectly created with fossil fuels, from the plastics we use to the food on our tables.

A Friend from Burlington (Vt.) Meeting recently was arrested during a human rights protest at the School of the Americas at Ft. Benning, Ga., and faces three months in jail. When asked what we can do to support her she responds by asking us to put our own bodies to work either in protest, letter writing, or changed lives. I'm sure that's what Tom Fox would want as well.

Let us remember during these times that "Peace on Earth" includes "Peace with Earth."

—Ruah Swennerfelt