



BeFriending Creation

Newsletter of Quaker Earthcare Witness

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How an Earth restoration movement can win

Angela Manno

15th Street (N.Y.) Friends Meeting

AS PROSPECTS for urgent, global comprehensive climate change regulation recede, as the volume of "climate skeptics" voices grow stronger within the United States, as the promise of profit overrides concerns for the viability of life on this planet, it is clear that something must change in the way environmental activists and Quaker Earthcare Witness pursue "an Earth restored."

I came to this realization while reading Scott Ritter's *Waging Peace: The Art of War for the Antiwar Movement*, just before the Copenhagen climate summit and after reading about a poll by the Pew Research Center on the perception of climate change in the U.S. The poll revealed that sharp declines had been found in the number of Americans who believe there is solid evidence that the world is warming. *It showed that 57 percent, compared with 71 percent in April 2008, believe that the world is warming and that 36 percent, as opposed to 47 percent in April 2008, believe it is because of human activity.* In his interview last November in *Newsweek*, Al Gore Jr. blamed this on the "boatloads of money" the coal and oil industries have spent to muddy the science and confuse the public.

It occurred to me that if we who stand for Earth and the truth don't get as aggressive and organized as the purveyors of lies and death and destruction, we don't have a chance, and the world doesn't have a chance. "Isn't this obvious by now?" I wrote to QEW members. I proposed that it was time that Earthcare witnesses joined together with other groups that have a wider reach, that we get louder, and that we develop a common solid strategy and identifiable goals. "That's what the opposition has," I wrote. Then I asked. "Are we willing to shake things up? Are we willing to start thinking outside the Quaker box?"

**Our mission:
Restore the earth,
our only home.**

**Failure is
not an option.**



My mind had already turned to *Waging Peace*. I recognized in it the key to how the Earth restoration movement, for lack of a better term, can win this Promethean struggle for the future of this planet. The approach Ritter describes in his book has not only been used successfully in military campaigns, but by Madison Avenue and, most interestingly, *firefighters*. If there is one mission where "failure is not an option," this is it.

Jim Vyhnak's review of Ritter's book on page 3 of this issue describes the basic elements of a strategy that can be

applied to any effort. It is, Ritter assures us, what the pro-war movement uses to win the battle for the American mind. I became excited about the possibilities for the Earth restoration movement.

The first order of business, says the author, is to have a common "sovereign core." He warns that any movement that operates void of an "agreed-upon single point of reference that all involved parties are working from as their motivator and basis of moral authority... is simply wasting time and effort." Second, he stresses the need for a *set direction* on how to manifest the core vision and clarity as to how the plan will be executed. Essential too is a *unified organizational structure*. All three elements, he says, once clearly defined, can then come together "in a synergistic fashion," comprising a coherent campaign.

WHEN I passed this idea by a like-minded friend she exclaimed, "but we're lovers, not fighters!" I immediately thought about the phenomenon known as "maternal aggression," when mothers can develop almost super-human powers when the life of their child is threatened. They can lift up a bus if

Earth restoration, next page >>

>> **Earth restoration**, from page 1

need be, and often say they would take a bullet to save their child's life. That's the kind of energy that's required now. We will have it when we think and feel for the Earth like mothers do for their children and apply it to a concerted Campaign for the Earth, *which includes Earth's people!*

Ritter also stresses that a winning campaign must be waged *over generations*, independent from, though sometimes galvanized by, charismatic figures who must and do come and go. And it must be global.

If an Earth restored is to become a reality, those who share this vision must waste no time to come together, regroup and re-vision.

I propose that those concerned with the fate of the Earth, now in an excited state due to our president's recent call for "building a new generation of safe, clean nuclear power plants . . . making tough decisions about opening new offshore areas for oil and gas development. . . continued investment in advanced biofuels and clean coal technologies" gather together, discuss adopting Ritter's formula, and then reach out to form a national and global coalition that is willing to organize in this way for this most important and urgent common objective. The Pachamama Alliance, for one, is a powerful and extensive network that can be brought in.

To give an example, Ritter cites the National Wildfire Coordination Group (NWCG, the agency responsible for training wildland firefighters across the U.S.), whose basic course can be adapted to create an activist equivalent. "*The important thing,*" he stresses, "*is to train people to be comfortable in their roles as members of a team,*" alluding to what all successful campaigns have in common in terms of organization: clearly defined roles and—brace yourselves, Friends—hierarchy. This is necessary because of *the need to act swiftly in a crisis situation*. I know this is a challenge to Quaker process, but I know we all feel the frustration with the slowness of progress within and outside Quaker circles when it comes to stopping the rape of our beloved Earth and setting the foundation for a viable future.

Another necessity is to know as much as possible about the opposition. One has only to read the tragic apology in the December '09 *Climate Progress* article, "Right wing bullies Build-A-Bear into removing videos about manmade climate change," in which Maxine

Clark, the founder of Build-A-Bear, is reported to have been intimidated into removing from its website its children's educational videos by advocates of the coal industry. This is despite the industry's publication of a coloring book for children entitled "Let's Learn About Coal."

It should be clear from just this one instance how ubiquitous and relentless the opposition is.

But this is just the tip of the iceberg. The powers against climate action are vast. They include the American economic system itself and its allies across the globe that stand to profit from dirty and dangerous energy.

For a comprehensive understanding, read Lewis F. Powell's confidential 1971 memorandum to the director of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce entitled, "Attack on American Free Enterprise

System." In it, Powell, a corporate lawyer and member of the boards of 11 corporations, laid out a grand strategy and tactics for big business, including what has evolved today into opponents of Climate Action.

In it Powell puts forth a strategy to counter what he perceived as the attacks of the day on the free enterprise system, using the U.S. Chamber of Commerce as a vehicle against targets on university and high school campuses; in the electronic and print media; and in the economic, political, and court systems. In the 40 years since, the political arena has risen from neglected status to star player. With the recent "Citizens United" Supreme Court decision overturning the ban on corporate political spending, the *coup de grace* has been leveled. Would-be protectors of the earth in the U.S. government will have to wage their election campaigns against the billions of corporate dollars that support these polluting industries.

WE are now at a turning point: *we must now act to reverse the pattern of reacting and responding to the offenses and crimes against nature, and to go on the offensive*. This is another principle in the art of war that Ritter explains—to keep on the move. We see plainly how the opposition is always on the advance, gobbling up ecosystems, excreting toxic wastes, leaving the clean-up to the victims using victims' resources in the form of public subsidies and raw material.

We must go on the offensive and establish the rights of nature as a norm and standard of measurement over the rights of the corporation, and turn the

Earth restoration, >>



An effective "Campaign for the Earth" will have to be waged over generations.

Waging Peace—The Art of War for the Antiwar Movement

by **Scott Ritter**

New York: Nation Books, 2007

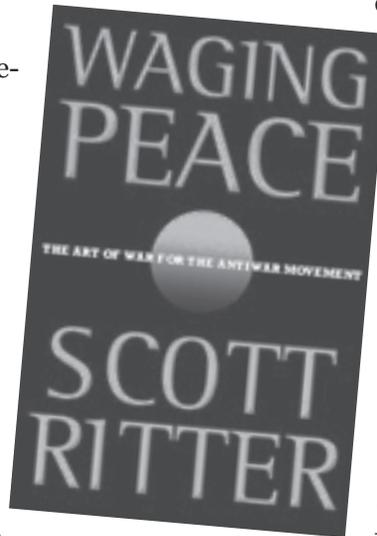
Reviewed by **Jim Vyhnak**

South Starksboro (Vt.) Friends Meeting

THIS WORK of informational non-fiction, inspired by Scott Ritter's awareness of the antiwar movement's recent difficulties, has relevance to the environmental movement as well.

Ritter, a former UN weapons inspector, ssays: "My working assumption in writing this book is that the antiwar movement in America is losing its struggle in the name of peace and justice. This is a harsh critique, one that doesn't go over well within an organization composed of so many well-meaning individuals who have made great sacrifices in support of their cause. But it is an accurate one nonetheless."

The solution, Ritter says, is first to understand how your opponents think, make decisions and implement actions, and secondly to turn their own strategies and tactics against them in an efficient and effective fashion. He says: "In order to even have a chance of prevailing with the American people, the antiwar movement is going to need much more than just good ideas and values. It needs to start thinking like a warrior would, in full recognition that we as a nation are engaged in a life-or-death struggle of competing ide-



ologies with those who promote war as an American value and virtue".

Recognizing that the antiwar opponents, either political, corporate or private, utilize advertising firms and public relations companies who often recruit employees from a pool of U.S. soldiers and intelligence officers, Ritter gives many examples of the ways these individuals were trained. This is so that you can at least understand how they perceive and approach a situation. Knowing a piece of their mindset can help you recognize what game is being played, and just maybe, how to win.

One kind of game is the OODA-Loop, a popular decision-making algorithm used in today's military training. The goal of the OODA (Observation-Oriented-Decision-Action) Loop is, in Boyd's words, is to "simultaneously compress our own time and stretch out adversary time to generate a favorable mismatch in time/ability to shape and adapt to change." Boyd also said "He who is unwilling or unable to take the initiative to exploit variety, rapidity and harmony . . . goes under or survives to be dominated."

If you have ever been part of an activist group that always seemed to be going around in circles, never going forward, it might just not have been by accident. Recent history has shown examples of peaceful groups, Friends included, that have been wiretapped and infiltrated for observation. Wouldn't it be nice to be able to recognize this and know how to respond—to not be wondering, six months later, why no progress has been made despite having kindly people with a just cause?

Waging Peace is a book that hopes to help antiwar [and Earthcare] activists to be more effective by acting smarter, more quickly, with more cohesion and with more agility, based on good information and regular reevaluation. To apply efficient strategy and tactics towards peaceful ends is the goal of this book.

"The wicked are always surprised to find that the good can be clever."

—Luc de Clapiers de Vauvenargues, quoted by Ritter.

Waging Peace is not a manual or blueprint for success. In Ritter's words: "If you recognize that the path to victory lies at the other end of a dense forest, and that this book provides you with an ax and direction on how to fell a tree, then you are well on your way toward prevailing in conflict."❖

>> **Earth restoration**

tables so that the despoilers are reacting to the advancement of nature's rights and restoration. The Earth Charter contains the sovereign core that can be the common vision. The Ecuadoran Constitution is another simple and elegant document that establishes the legal rights of nature and its protection. Marshall Massey's "Nature Amendment to the U.S. Constitution" is yet another. We don't have to wait for any such document to be ratified. We can begin to operate by it and out of it because it is already written in our hearts. And in my estimation, to achieve these ends we must use the tools that are being offered in *Waging Peace*.

If we fail in this, we will slowly watch (as we are right now) the fabric of nature continue to unravel to our ultimate destruction. ❖

Nancy Small (1940-2009)—missionary for the community of life

NANCY CUTBIRTH SMALL, who passed away in November 2009 in Kalamazoo, Mich., will be remembered by QEW supporters for the spirit-led work that she and her husband Tom Small did to promote natural landscapes in urban and suburban settings. She was a former Steering Committee member, and he was Steering Committee clerk from 1995 to 1998.

“Nancy was a missionary,” Tom said in a recent letter. “She dedicated her life, especially after retirement from university teaching, to spreading the word, taking action, and inspiring action on behalf of the community of life. Her main focus was always on the urban and suburban environment, on transforming it, yard by yard, garden plot by garden plot, to habitat for wild creatures, for as much of the entire community of life—from microbes to insects to mammals—as could adapt to human disturbance.

“She and I began transforming our own yard as soon as we married in 1995 and decided that we would not move to the country but instead would work on bringing the countryside into the city. We co-founded the Kalamazoo Area Chapter of Wild Ones, Native Plants, Natural Landscapes, in 1999. When I left her to attend, briefly, the chapter’s 10th birthday party last November, she said her only message to all our colleagues was that ‘Wild Ones gave us a new life.’ (Ten days later, she died.)

“Quaker Earthcare Witness also gave us a ‘new life’ in those earlier years. It made an immense difference, spiritually and practically, in helping us to sense the spiritual dimensions of our mission and to see the local in connection with the global and the cosmic. Our co-writing of ‘Leadings,’ an insert to *BeFriending Creation*, for almost three years was the beginning, for us, of a now quite massive body of writing about how to see what is right in front of us and how to help in the healing of the broken body of the community of life.

“Nancy’s mission was to communicate and to act. From her desk, from our house, from our yard, hardly a day passed without some outpouring of letters, e-mails, packets of educational materials and plant lists, seeds, and plants. She pressed seeds and plants and lists and essays into the hands of passers-by, delivery people, local shopkeepers. We worked with schools, with colleges, with scientists, with local governments, with the regional Land Conservancy, and with the Nature Center. We traveled throughout the area to give illustrated demonstrations of how to begin transforming a sterile, conventional yard into habitat for a

broad spectrum of native wildlife. Twice a year, beginning 18 years ago, we hosted plant exchanges, where thousands of native plants—many of them germinated and propagated by Nancy—passed through and went out from our yard to help establish and enhance natural landscapes throughout the area. It was an entirely free and loving and life-giving exchange.

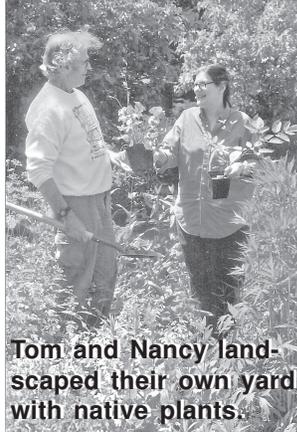
That was Nancy’s vision, and her way.

“Nancy believed in a true commons. Not the limited sort of commons where property rights are held ‘in common’ by all the citizens but the broader, more universal sort of commons where all the creatures have a right to live from the fruits of the soil and the sun—and to be cared for (or left alone) as best we can. That was—and is—our ‘Earthcare witness.’

“Nancy could be violently angry with any individual or agency that caused or condoned suffering and loss to the creatures of the earth. But she was truly a peacemaker. In keeping with the QEW mission, she saw the Quaker peace testimony and the call to Earthcare as one and the same. On her 62nd birthday, Sunday, September 1, 2002, when I asked her what she’d like to do on her birthday, she said, ‘I want to go stand in front of the Kalamazoo federal building at noon with a sign that says, NO WAR ON IRAQ.’ A friend joined us, and the three of us stood. Nancy began to recruit and organize others. She made hundreds of signs. Within a few weeks, there were 800 of us standing. We sent dozens of busloads of demonstrators to Washington and New York City. And the Kalamazoo Nonviolent Opponents of War (of which we were founding members) still stand, at noon every Sunday, in front of the federal building, calling for an end to war and violence; an end to violence against humanity; an end to violence against the earth and all its creatures.

“Nancy made an immense difference in my life—and in countless other lives. To quote Wordsworth, *‘But she is in her grave, And oh, the difference to me.’* Nonetheless, I live to continue her activist mission and to publish the best of the writings we produced together. I live to carry on her spirit and her mission. I give thanks to all the many friends, to QEW, to Wild Ones, to Kalamazoo Nonviolent Opponents of War—to all who give their lives and their spirit to ‘Earthcare witness.’” ❖

Donations in her memory may be made to Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones, P.O. Box 20324, Kalamazoo, MI 49019.



Tom and Nancy landscaped their own yard with native plants.

Fewer meetings, better Earthcare?

Dick Grossman

QEW Steering Committee clerk

AT THE SPRING MEETING in April, the QEW Steering Committee will be considering a significant change in its meeting schedule—holding an electronic, or virtual, business meeting in place of one of its two scheduled annual face-to-face meetings. Although there are a number of drawbacks to consider, many of us feel that there are powerful arguments for such a change.

Foremost is our growing concern about our individual and collective carbon footprints. As you know, we all contribute to global climate change because of our use of fossil fuels. It is possible to mitigate carbon emissions by offsetting them in various ways. For example, QEW adds a few dollars to its meeting registration fees and uses that money to help fund the QEW Mini-grant program, which in turn helps Meetings to reduce their ecological footprints.

But wouldn't we decrease QEW's greenhouse gas emissions even more if we simply used less fossil fuel by scheduling fewer face-to-face meetings?

We already have some experience in what such a change in process would be like. The Continuing Counsel (QEW's executive committee, composed of officers and standing committee clerks) recently started "meeting" electronically. On January 30th the members of the Continuing Counsel conducted an entire business meeting by Skype (an Internet-based live-discussion service) or by telephone conference call for a total of about nine hours. Of course we had breaks—and, unfortunately, breakdowns. My Internet connection failed in the middle of the meeting and I had to switch over to a cell phone.

Despite these and other problems, we concluded that our meeting by electronic means was successful, although we missed our times of worship together. We got a lot of work done, as Recording Clerk Roy Treadway's notes reflect. We also felt close to one another, although many miles separated us. It helped that we all knew each other pretty well. We were able to recognize each other's voices most of the time, which helped with our conversations. (We realized that, as we hold more electronic meetings, we will have had less face-to-face interaction and it will be different since we won't know each other so well.)

It would be easier, of course, to follow old habits. But the amazing era we have been living in is coming to a close. We have enjoyed plentiful and healthy

food, excellent medical care, a great variety of entertainment, and the ability to communicate and to travel widely and quickly.

Unfortunately, the unique advantages of the current era have given rise to new problems. The food supply has allowed the human population to blossom, so there are more consumers on this finite planet. And



the way most food is grown decreases the land's fertility and uses huge amounts of fossil fuel. Although medical care alleviates suffering and has prolonged life and health, it also uses immense resources and has created inequalities. We are starting to experience economic problems as the proportion of older people increases rapidly. The variety and ubiquity of entertainment has made us dependent on others for amusement. And

our lives have become almost totally dependent on modes of travel that have turned out to be one of the causes of global climate change.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD? Susan Swanstrom, clerk of the QEW Outreach Committee, has been working with her committee to determine the best schedule for our meetings. The Outreach Committee is trying to find the best way to do all of QEW's business; share ideas, stories, and inspiration with one another; *and* have fun with just one meeting a year.

This year we will continue to have two face-to-face meetings. This first will be the spring Steering Committee meeting in Chicago, April 22-25. Everyone is welcome! Look for more information elsewhere in this newsletter or on the QEW website, <www.quakerearthcare.org>. This gathering promises to be exciting as we discuss the role of electronic meetings, the direction of QEW over the next couple of years, and how our global economic situation influences the world.

Geoffrey Garver, one of the authors of *Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy*, will be there. *Right Relationship* will be the undercurrent of the meeting. We may only have limited time devoted to discussing the ideas in the book formally, but Geoff has promised to be available for informal discussion. I am sure that he will catalyze many conversations about ways to change our economy to be more friendly to people and to the environment.

Everyone's input will be needed and valued! I hope to see you there.

What's next for Friends after Copenhagen?

European and North American Friends who attended the UN climate summit in December 2009 were asked to share how the experience had affected them spiritually and politically, in light of COP-15's failure to reach a binding agreement on carbon emissions.

Our voice needs to be heard

Leonard Joy

Strawberry Creek (Calif.) Friends Meeting

I SAW MYSELF BEING THERE TO WITNESS.

To me this meant contributing to showing that the parties were being watched and held accountable to the public, being ready to contribute my voice if voice were needed; including you in the experience.

In the event, practical access to public negotiations was mostly by sampling the plenary sessions on the many television monitors and making sense of what was happening by picking up the daily reports. Thus, I found much of my time better used in attending presentations by various bodies on key issues of mitigation and adaptation, and on how countries might be held accountable for commitments made.

One thing was clear—and it was clear even before the conference—the parties had come with negotiating positions, each seeking to limit costs to their country's economy. And the delegations came with limited—zero—authority to go beyond their briefs. Good clerking for collective discernment was not possible. Authority rested with remote bodies with an eye on domestic politics, unengaged in the global conversation and the realities being confronted. There was no sense of assessing the overall need and what each might reasonably be called upon to meet it—even though it was evident that proposed actions did not meet the need.

The issue of what was reasonable was, however, up front in the proceedings. And the issue was couched in terms of justice: those who made the mess should clear it up; more than that, they should pay a penalty by cutting greenhouse gases far enough to allow poor countries to continue to hold their carbon emissions so that they could now catch up. Less clear at the time was how the deep underlying issue—the power struggle between China and America—was being played out. (Manchester *Guardian*, December 22, 2009)

Amidst all this, the cry of poor and vulnerable peoples clearly emerged, especially in the peripheral activities. They held small but effective demonstrations attracting attention and putting their plight clearly on the agenda. So, too, did human-rights con-

cerns, raised by mitigation and adaptation, get prominent attention outside the plenaries.

I was glad to have been one of the few Quakers present, carrying a Quaker banner—literally—among a hundred thousand others. I was ready to contribute my voice. I went with the memory of the Bali conference and the impact of 40,000 e-mails in easing consensus. I was hopeful that such pressures might effectively be brought to bear as needed here. I was wrong.

There will be a continuing process. It is here that our voice—and the larger public voice—needs to be heard, not least in Bonn, and from now on in the lead-up to the next COP, not simply at the conference. ❖

Cycling to Copenhagen

Gerald Conyngham

Devon Area Meeting, UK

THE IDEA OF CYCLING to Copenhagen for Christian Aid caught my imagination. The conference was about climate change, and cycling there seemed in



Gerald Conyngham

keeping with the spirit of the conference. Setting targets is important, but unless we all change our behaviour, they will never be achieved.

The group I joined was very diverse, ranging in age from 15 up till 72. We were all united in our passion for climate justice. We were also raising money for projects in developing countries which were helping them adapt to the consequences of global warming. And my wife Laura and I were bringing pledges from our local community in Devon. Whilst I managed to get lost each day, I still managed to rediscover the group each time and ended up cycling into Copenhagen with the others, to be greeted by Archbishop Rowan Williams and other Christian Aid supporters who had made a long coach journey to be there.

The following day there was a ceremony in the main square, at which Desmond Tutu was presented with 512,894 pledges from all over the world, which he then handed over to Yvo de Boer, the UN coordinator of the conference. Whilst the outcome of the

Climate Summit, page 7 >>

>> **Climate Summit**, from page 6

conference was very disappointing, getting 192 nations to come up with a legally binding agreement which even the USA would sign up to was a major challenge. However, one of the encouraging aspects of the week was the way the developing countries flexed their muscles and made it clear they were not prepared to be walked over by the West—for instance, when they heard about a secret deal being hatched up by some of the Western bloc. And the blame game has already started, with China being seen as the chief culprit, and yet most of China’s emissions come about through producing goods for the West.



Whilst the main conference was proceeding, an alternative one was taking place in the *Klimaforum*, where a plethora of workshops were running, attended by large numbers of young people, as well as from developing countries. I went to one where 10 people from different countries talked about how climate change was already affecting them. For instance, a man from the Massai tribe in Kenya spoke briefly but with great dignity about the loss of their cattle through constant droughts. A woman from Peru talked about the melting of their glaciers on which they depend for water and gave an impassioned plea for us to respect our “mother Earth,” on which we all depend for sustenance.

I felt privileged to be part of such a strong social movement which is increasingly making its voice heard, as Paul Hawken expresses so well in his book, *Blessed Unrest*.

The key question now is how can we all bring about the political pressure to ensure an effective and fair agreement is reached, on which the whole world can unite.

I am left with the image of hundreds of candles being held in the darkness of the cathedral after a very moving service in which Rowan Williams talked about the need for a positive message of hope rather than fear, and to encourage people to believe there are things they can do. As the saying goes, “*It is better to light a candle than curse the darkness.*” ❖

Insightful blogs from Sara Wolcott, Leonard Joy, and other Quakers attending the UN Climate Conference are at: <<http://quakersatcop.blogspot.com/>>.

Moments at Copenhagen

Laura Conyngnam

Devon Area Meeting, UK

THIS HAS BEEN SUCH AN AMAZING journey, being part of a great movement for change, among committed and passionate people.

My most emotional moment—as we cycled into Copenhagen. We were close to completing a 140-mile epic cycle ride from London Stansted to raise money for Christian Aid and raise awareness in our town, Crediton.

Throng of Copenhagen cyclists were moving in the same direction, cyclists of all ages, families with children in Christiania bikes (tricycles with big boxes on the front that take almost anything). One father had three young children tucked up in his. No carbon emissions to damage their future. Just pedal power.

“WOW, what a father!!” I found myself saying. He smiled appreciatively, and then, after we had moved on, I cried.

A moment of admiration—when we met the other Christian Aid supporters. They had been waiting for our arrival but had unfortunately been moved on by the police because the samba band was said to be making too much noise.

We wheeled our bikes into the crowd ready for the big march and when we found them, one couple from Glasgow greeted us with, “Oh, so you are the cyclists!” They themselves had been on a coach for 34 hours! Such was their determination to come to Copenhagen without flying.

A moment of commitment—when I looked down from the third gallery of Copenhagen Lutheran cathedral, past my own candle, into the nave and saw hundreds of lighted candles. The service was over. There was nothing else to do other than to take our own candles outside into the fading light to continue living life mindfully for our planet and for humanity in all nations. ❖

At the center, so far from everything

Sara Wolcott

Strawberry Creek (Calif.) Friends Meeting

STANDING IN THE VAST BELLA CENTRE, looking out at one windmill (largely for show) and, in the distance, a coal plant that fueled most of Copenhagen, I had to remind myself that I was at what had been billed as the most important conference of the decade/century. Despite (or perhaps because of) my

Climate Summit, page 8 >>

>> Climate Summit, from page 7

location, I had rarely felt so powerless to effect—or even to really witness—the change I wanted to see.

Outside, the lines to enter the building I was in were hours and hours long. I was one of the lucky few who got relatively easy access to the Bella Centre—and thus to the dignitaries, hot shots, representatives, and others who were there. But I rarely knew whom I “should” talk to, where to go, whom to see, or what to do. This was partly a result of it being the first time that I or the Quaker Institute for the Future had been there, and we had no institutional memory/capacity to guide any of us through the labyrinth of complex relationships and protocols that make up COP. It was also partly my fault—I had access to people with much more experience and didn’t use them. But I helped pave the way for the future, and it is to the future that we must now turn.

In many ways, it was the most incredible gathering I have ever attended. Members of the Australian and other parliaments rubbed shoulders with 18-year-old-student activists who didn’t know enough to wear a suit. Major companies sat next to major NGOs. Sometimes they shared an agenda. Random conversations ranged from complaining about the queue (something we all had in common), finance, business ethics, religious dimensions of climate change, how nice Danish people were, and how cold it was outside. The sense that climate change was the most important conversation to be involved in was palpable and intoxicating. There was a sense that the visions of the protests against the World Trade Organization in Seattle in 1999 and the subsequent gatherings of the World Social Forum were real—that a global movement of movements really is possible.

In other ways, it was disempowering. Not even those in the know, with vastly more experience (or at least contacts) than I, had much sense of hope during the conference. It felt that “we” (much of global civil society) had worked very hard for a very long time and were still not able to effect the change we knew was necessary. More than once, I held people who were crying. There was much despair, anger, frustration, and sadness.

Yet there was—and continues to be—great fellowship. I was one of the last to leave the building, and was on the last train back to Copenhagen, which was filled with young activists and scholars from around the world who had read aloud the names of those who

had signed a petition for comprehensive action. The train was filled with laughter and future plans and many languages. I am reminded, now, of what Martin Luther King Jr. said in his address to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1967:

*When our days become dreary with low-ho-
vering clouds of despair, ...let us
remember that there is a cre-
ative force in this universe, ... a
power that is able to make a
way out of no way and trans-
form dark yesterdays into bright
tomorrows. Let us realize the
arc of the moral universe is long
but it bends toward justice. ❖*



Four Dreams

Lin Patterson, Bath, UK

TIME AND AGAIN I HAVE TRIED to write about what happened in Copenhagen, but my experience has been extremely difficult to summarise. Since my return, on many nights I have awakened in the small hours, dreaming I was back in the Bella Centre, where the talks were held. These dreams have gradually moved towards a kind of resolution.

The first dreams were anxious. The overarching impact was that “there is something critically wrong; something infinitely complicated urgently needs putting right, needs changing, but is very difficult to hold completely in mind, let alone resolve.”

Later I dreamt that there exist lists of what can be done. When something is just too much to hold in mind, you can break it down and tick it off. This dream felt like progress.

The penultimate dream was “queuing for the toilets”—a place for an act of both individual privacy and universality; for even the Queen, Obama, or Hu Jintao. Embarrassing, but relevant, since it is only by starting with the most intimate and instinctive processes, realising one’s own personal responsibility that we have a chance.

On the 3rd of January I recorded this dream: “The M.C. has children! Dressed in black leather, cool and suave, he is in total control of the program, but his heart is available because he has *children*.”

On waking, I suddenly remembered Danish television footage on the night of Tuesday 15th December, where seated, glittering leaders awaited a welcoming banquet hosted by the European Commission. Hillary Clinton and Ban Ki Moon were serenaded by a large choir of children positioned high above the expectant diners in an encircling gallery. The song they sang was extraordinary. I could not understand the language. I

did not need to. The music itself was haunting, mournful, imploring, like the voices of children yet unborn, souls or ghosts of children. There was a gradual change of expression in the upturned faces of the leaders, from posed to puzzled, questioning, even anxious as the refrain was repeated slowly, again and again. We were taken out of our time, out of our pace to nature's pace, to children's pace, where things can seem to last forever. When it finally ended, there was the customary applause and noticeable relief. I am attempting to track down a recording of this event. Artists, poets, film-makers, musicians, we need you to re-mind us.



I had felt “led” to go to Copenhagen. I couldn't not go. But since the leading did not say what to do or what purpose would be served, I decided my mission simply would be to carry a Quaker banner in the streets with messages from Quakers. That small aim was accomplished, but now I am left with another imperative: with the help of the spirit and dreams, to find ways of responding to the experience and the predicament we're in. ❖

Nearly in Copenhagen

Lindsey Cook, Bonn, Germany

I NEARLY WENT TO COPENHAGEN to observe the UN Conference on Climate Change (COP-15).

Why go? I've begun publishing articles on the environment, and wanted to write about what I saw. But more profoundly, I wanted to connect with those who share my sense of urgency over climate change. I wanted to meet those who care, and to better understand the politics involved with those who don't care. And I wanted shake my middle-aged body into doing what it used to do so naturally—get up and act on a concern without worrying about domestic demands.

Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW) offered to add my name to their “observer list,” an unexpected and generous action, since they had no previous connection to this American Quaker living in Bonn. I bought my train tickets months in advance, was invited to stay with Danish friends, and re-organized the family schedule so that the main parent at home (me) would not be needed.

The day before my departure my daughter got sick, and my son broke down into tears over his German homework that neither he nor I could understand. The two small, domestic realities stole my sleep that night. But I departed that dark, snowy morning only to discover that my—and all other—connections

from Bonn to Köln had been diverted through another city. The mess would effectively cut my visit to one day in Copenhagen and disrupted my chances to meet up with QEW colleagues. By then the Bella Conference Centre would be closed off to nearly all with observer status. So I stood in the cold station and considered two day's train travel for one day's vigil outside the Bella Centre. I went home to the sick child and stressed father. I have not felt such desperate heaviness in my heart for years. I knew that one person might not have made a difference, but one plus hundreds of thousands more might. There were some 4,000 people braving the cold who might have been

warmed by more live bodies.

I read and watched, read and watched, and was shaken by an E.U. representative's words, *we were shocked when we realized how many others do not share our sense of urgency.*

I publish articles on the environment for a group of people who, as far as I can tell, do not seem to share my sense of urgency. But I keep writing, and am initiating a monthly discussion on “Global Change.” Next autumn I plan to start a Master of Science in Climate Change and Sustainable Development, to marry new learning with my past work in humanitarian aid. Despite the aborted trip I am connecting with our QEW observers. And on a small scale, I announced to my family that I saw no logic in buying from countries whose politicians refused regulated and substantial carbon emissions cuts. Why feed an economy that doesn't care about its effect on our planet? The children have their own pocket money, and must make the decision for themselves. However, they seem keen on the idea, though they did check, with trepidation, the manufacturing origin of their favorite toys.

Return back to 12 December. A vigil was planned in Bonn to mark the climate conference. We bundled the children into warm clothes (perhaps not warm enough, as my daughter's illness proved), and took them by U-Ban into Bonn. I showed the children the candles and matches in my bag, and explained about a candle-lit vigil and how our presence would mark our concern over pollution warming the planet. My children stood uncomplaining in the cold, holding their candles. With time they turned their flames to re-light a few candles on the ground that the wind had blown out. They lit more, then found unused candles and added them to the street. Soon they had created whole circles of light that had previously not existed.

Day by day. ❖

Friends World Committee moves forward on Global Change*

Julian Stargardt

Clerk, Hong Kong Friends Meeting

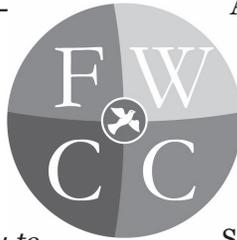
Co-Clerk FWCC-AWPS Global Change Committee

***POLLUTION** makes the air of many cities dangerous to breathe. Forests, which produce the oxygen we breathe, are being devastated, causing atmospheric oxygen levels to fall. To see the consequences of reduced oxygen levels and increased pollution, place a lighted candle under an inverted glass and watch. We rely on forests to produce oxygen and store carbon dioxide. They are the lungs and air filter of the world. They are the cheapest, best way to capture and sequester carbon. Why do we cut them down?*

In the wake of Copenhagen, Friends want to know what we as a worldwide religious society are doing about what we call Global Change, i.e. climate and related changes. In 2010–2011 Friends around the world will hold local Clusters on Global Change. In late 2011, Friends will hold a world Consultation on Global Change. The purpose is to worshipfully discern Friends' voice on Global Change, ahead of the 2012 Friends World Conference in Nairobi, Kenya. The Clusters and Consultation are organised by Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC), Friends' worldwide umbrella organisation. FWCC defines Global Change as the interconnection and unity of all change, including, for example, environmental and climate change, economic change, and social change*. The Clusters and Consultation are a worldwide exercise in Friends' spiritual discernment of our message on issues like the environment, equality, social and economic justice, and climate change.

Clusters are local meetings with a concern for Global Change where Friends share their experiences of change in their communities and lives, where local and regional groups of Friends seek and find discernment of what their message is for Friends and the world. Cluster messages are to be sent to FWCC and will be available on the FWCC website and form part of the Consultation. FWCC will use all Cluster messages in a deepening process to seek the themes of Friends voices. The work of the Clusters and the Consultation is rooted in Friends' spirituality and Testimonies. The purpose is to worshipfully discern the voice of Friends in every part of the world on Global Change. Advance

*The definition of Global Change is from "Friends and Global Change" by this author, published by FWCC-AWPS in 2008, available at <www.fwccawps.org> .



documents will be distributed to Meetings and will be available on FWCC's websites.

Information on Friends and Global Change is available on FWCC websites <fwcc.org> and <www.fwccglobalchange.org> and on FWCC-Asia West Pacific's website: <fwccawps.org>. In 2008,

Asia West Pacific (AWPS) Friends established a Global Change Committee, meeting monthly by Skype phone conference, as a virtual Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Global Change. In late 2009 Australian Friends held a Yearly Meeting Earthcare Meeting in Canberra. Europe and Middle East Section (EMES)—of which Britain Yearly Meeting is a part—is establishing a Global Change Committee. Many other Meetings, individual Friends and stand alone Friends NGOs are active in this important work. Friends are encouraged to network, share experiences, and focus on the spiritual discernment of the way forward for Friends in these challenging times. FWCC is reorganising <fwccglobalchange.org> to be more user-friendly and provide an on-line forum as a marketplace for Friends' views, insights, and ideas on global change matters.

- ♦ FWCC seeks Cluster Facilitators. Please e-mail <friends.hk@gmail.com> if you are interested.
- ♦ FWCC actively seeks funding for the Global Change project and welcomes donations.

Get ready for QEW spring meeting

ALL ARE WELCOME at the spring meeting of the QEW Steering Committee, April 22-25, at the Cenacle Retreat & Conference Center in Chicago. This will be a important opportunity not only for conducting committee business face to face, but also for fellowship with like-minded Friends and deep sharing of our common concern for restored health of the Earth community.

The theme of the meeting will be "right relationship," and a special presentation will be made by Geoffrey Garver, a Quaker from Montreal, Canada. He is one of the authors of *Right Relationship, Building a Whole Earth Economy*, a new book that was featured in *BeFriending Creation* last year.

Information and registration forms are available from the QEW office or on the QEW website, <www.quakerearthcare.org>.

You can also register on-line in the "Meetings/Spring Meeting section of the the QEW website.

Registration deadline is April 1, 2010.

Mini-grant Application

QEW HAS GRANTS available for Friends meetings, groups, and churches who want to enhance their relationship with the earth. This year we can make at least 10 *matching* grants of \$250 each to help with projects consistent with the QEW Vision and Witness statement (see right column of this page).

The application deadline is May 1, 2010, and funds are available by July 1, 2010. For more information, contact the QEW office at 802/658-0308, visit <www.quakerearthcare.org>, or e-mail Ruth Hamilton at <Ruth@ArtsCanHeal.com>.

Mini-grant application instructions

E-mail applications are preferred. In MS Word, please provide the information requested below and attach it to an e-mail to Ruth Hamilton at <Ruth@ArtsCanHeal.com>.

If you do not have e-mail, you may mail a hard copy of the application to: QEW Mini-Grants, c/o Quaker Earthcare Witness, 173-B N. Prospect St., Burlington VT 05401-1607.

If you mail your application, please do so *at least two weeks before the May 1, 2010 deadline*, to be sure that it is received in time. Also call Ruah Swennerfelt, the QEW General Secretary, at 802/658-0308 to say the application has been sent.

PLEASE COMPLETE

Name of Quaker meeting, church, or group: _____

Address: _____ Zip _____

Telephone number: _____/_____-_____

Contact name: _____

Contact's e-mail address: _____

Contact's telephone number: _____/_____-_____

Total cost of your environmental project: \$ _____

Treasurer of your meeting or church: _____

Please include a typed one-page description of your project, stating: 1) Why it is necessary, 2) Who will be directly involved in the implementation of the project, 3) How you will meet the \$250 grant match, and 4) How your Quaker meeting, church, or group will benefit from the project. Use at least 10-point type face and at least 1" margins.

You will need to include a signed letter from your treasurer, stating the cost of your project and that your Friends meeting, church, or group can match the \$250 QEW grant for the specified project. If you are awarded a mini-grant, you are required to send QEW a report on the progress of the project by September 15, 2010. We also would appreciate a final report on the completed or continuing project by April 1, 2011. Digital or printed photographs are appreciated.

Thank you for your interest in the QEW Mini-grant.
—Ruth Hamilton, Clerk QEW Mini-Grant Committee

Contributions to QEW's Mini-grant fund are welcome.

BeFriending Creation

BeFriending Creation, Vol. 23, No. 2, March-April 2010. 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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Membership is open to all who demonstrate commitment to support the work of Quaker Earthcare Witness and who support its work at the Monthly or Yearly Meeting levels, or through other Friends organizations. Quaker Earthcare Witness is a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation; contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

VISION AND WITNESS

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

Steering Committee Clerk: Richard Grossman, <richard@population-matters.org>.

Gen. Secretary: Ruah Swennerfelt, 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: Louis@QuakerEarthcare.org.

Website: www.QuakerEarthcare.org

Earthcare Calendar

April 7, 2010. Deadline for article submissions for May-June 2010 *BeFriending Creation*.

April 22–25, 2010. Spring meeting of the QEW Steering Committee at the Cenacle Center in Chicago.

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QEW General Secretary looks forward to retirement

QEW GENERAL SECRETARY

Ruah Swennerfelt will be retiring at the end of this year, after 15 years of rewarding and productive service. As she approaches her 63rd birthday, Ruah says she is looking forward to having more time for volunteer work, gardening, quilting, and other pastimes. Her husband, Louis Cox, will continue as QEW Publications Coordinator, editing QEW publications and managing the QEW website.

What Ruah has liked most about her position is the way it has allowed her to use her varied talents and to work in harmony with her values. However, it is time to bring fresh ideas and new perspectives into the organization, she says.

Ruah's connection with QEW actually goes back to 1991, when she attended FWCC's 5th World Conference in Honduras. Bill Howenstine, who had served as QEW's first Steering Committee Clerk back in 1988, found himself in a worship-sharing group that Ruah was co-facilitating. "My being in her small group was very fortuitous for QEW and for us," Bill says. "I was very impressed with the way she was able to engage everyone in the group, including a Friend from Kenya, bridging our diverse backgrounds, cultures, and outlooks," Bill says.

"Her leadership abilities were so clearly evident that I was delighted to learn three years later that she was an applicant for the QEW staff opening—and I have been delighted every since! With her skill and dedication, QEW's membership has multiplied, our financial position has improved greatly, and we have developed good relations with all branches of Quaker-



RUAH with Luna, her faithful feline "office assistant," will continue working for QEW until January. A QEW search committee will advertise for a replacement in the May-June *BeFriending Creation*.

ism. Our standing in the Religious Society of Friends has been enhanced. We're sorry to be losing her."

"When I read the job description in *BeFriending Creation* in the summer of 1994, my first reaction was 'This is the perfect job for me,' Ruah recalls. "It seemed to combine all the different skills that I had acquired in my life and focused on all the things I cared about deeply. I had already organized a Friends in Unity with Nature committee in my home meeting of Burlington, Vt., and I was serving on the Unity with Nature Committee of New England Yearly Meeting. I had been organizing and speaking out on current issues, combining my concern for peace, justice, and care for the earth. With a master's

degree in business management, I was working as a consultant for non-profits, but I was always hoping for work that would be more in line with my values."

Inspired by Jan de Hartog's historical novel, *The Peaceable Kingdom*, Ruah became a Friend in 1975. She was active in Friends Meeting at Cambridge until she moved to Burlington, Vt., in 1982 to become Assistant City Treasurer in that city's newly elected progressive administration. In the early 1980s she was led to join with others in protesting U.S. policies in Central America, and she spent several periods in jail for civil disobedience.

"My peace witness and my Earthcare witness both come from the same place," Ruah explains. "It started when I read a statement in one of QEW's publications that said, *'there'll be no peace without a planet.'*" ❖