



# BeFriending Creation

Newsletter of Quaker Earthcare Witness  
*Affirming our essential unity with nature*

Volume 27, Number 6 • November-December 2014

## *Eco-Witness Roots and Shoots, Seeds and Trees*

by Shelley Tanenbaum

Greetings, Friends! We hope as 2014 draws to a close you are feeling a sense of gratitude and hopefulness about the changes we're seeing—and making—in the world around us. Quaker Earthcare Witness coordinates a network of Quakers working on Earthcare, in part by sharing our stories through our bi-monthly journal and our website. We learn what Friends are doing in their local communities, meetings, and regionally—we share resources, get inspired, and use our collective Quaker voice to speak out on environmental issues. We work toward nothing less than a spiritual transformation within the Society of Friends, so that eco-justice and environmental integrity can guide us.

### Roots

All of our work is grounded in eco-spirituality. QEW was founded more than 25 years ago during a session of Friends General Conference after several Friends felt an upwelling of passion and concern for the way we were living on this planet. Originally calling themselves Friends Committee on Unity with Nature (FCUN), Friends came together with the following purpose:

- To search and to help others search for that life which affirms the unity of all creation.
- To apply and to help others apply Friends' practice of living in deep communion with all life spirit.
- To be guided by and to help others be guided by the light within us to participate in the healing of the earth.
- To provide resources, networking, and support to



yearly and monthly meetings of the Religious Society of Friends, and to others of whatever persuasion; to help them in their search for effective ways to achieve the above objectives.

Our name was changed 10 years ago to broaden our reach, but our purpose remains the same: to nurture and inspire Friends' spiritual connections to each other and the natural world and to be guided by this sense of spirit in how we live our lives and how we witness in the world.

### Shoots

QEW is a grassroots organization, with a small staff and a long reach within the Quaker community. Our

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## 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 typically February 10, April 10, June 10, August 10, October 10, and December 10.

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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.

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### Earthcare Calendar

**December 30, 2014.** Deadline (extended) for article submissions for January-February 2015 *BeFriending Creation*.

## Letters to Share

*"WHAT CANST THOU SAY" ABOUT SPIRIT-LED EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF EARTH, about your own stirrings toward care for the planet, in relation to the vision and thoughtful action of Quaker Earthcare Witness as a whole? We'd like to hear from you. Send your letters to Katherine at [katherine@quakerearthcare.org](mailto:katherine@quakerearthcare.org), and share your thoughts and leadings with Friends and caring others throughout North America.*

Dear Editor,

I appreciated the recent article about indigenous peoples. This is an area where environmental justice and social justice meet, as these are the cultures who have a better sense of how to live in harmony with the land.

I want to draw attention to a local (to me) indigenous concern of the Winnemem Wintu, near present-day Redding, California. This is a group of people doing a great job of keeping their culture's vitality alive, with the inspiring leadership of Chief Caleen Sisk. The first time I heard her speak at a forestry panel, I was floored by the wisdom she brings.

Currently the Winnemem are struggling with a proposed raise to Shasta Dam, which would flood most of the remainder of their sacred sites (most of their sites were already flooded without compensation during the initial dam construction). They are asking for support in the form of calling on representatives to oppose this dam and support more sustainable solutions to California's water crisis. You can find more information about this, as well as Wintu efforts to restore salmon, and the other Good Work they are doing at [winmemwintu.us/](http://winmemwintu.us/).

Thank you,

Meagan Fischer  
Chico, CA ☞

## Please Consider a Gift to QEW!

The end of the year is fast approaching, Friends. Please consider a generous gift to QEW so we can continue our good, Spirit-led work for the planet and continue offering our publications free of charge!



**It's Easy!** You can now donate online by going to [www.quakerearthcare.org](http://www.quakerearthcare.org) and clicking the **Donate** button. Thanks, Friends!



*Seeds*, from page 1

Steering Committee includes 29 representatives from 20 yearly meetings plus 13 at-large members. Most representatives and at-large steering committee members visit their own monthly and yearly meetings on behalf of QEW, distribute our resources, and/or provide workshops and interest groups. Most of our connections are with North American FGC and unprogrammed Friends, although we welcome FUM and EFI Friends and have started to build those connections in recent years. All Friends' yearly meetings are invited to send up to two representatives to serve on our Steering Committee or connect with us through a designated liaison. In recent years, we added four yearly meetings to our network: welcome to Alaska Friends Conference, North Pacific, Wyoming, and Iowa Conservative yearly meetings!

## Seeds and Trees

If you are not already involved with QEW beyond receiving *Befriending Creation*, please consider working on a project with one of our committees or working groups, helping us spread our resources by collecting information from our website and bringing it to your meeting, sharing your story with our network, attending a QEW Steering Committee meeting, and visiting our resource display and programs at FGC. Is your monthly or yearly meeting looking for inspiration and information on Friends' spiritual connection with nature and what that means for our witness in the world? If so, we can provide a speaker or workshop leader.

Here are ways you can get involved with QEW and be part of the Quaker effort to advocate for our planet:

- Take on a project with one of our committees. This year, our Sustainability: Faith and Action working group is promoting divestment of fossil fuels, native plantings and permaculture, use of renewable energy sources for meeting electricity and participation in states' climate action plans (see the article in this issue). Our Outreach committee will be building connections with our current representatives and looking for ways to reach other yearly meetings. Our UN working group tracks international agreements and negotiations and suggests organizational sign-ons. Our FCNL working group follows national legislation on energy and environmental issues. Our Mini-Grants working group provides funds for hands-on projects from Philadelphia to Uganda.
- Contribute to our publications and website by sending us stories about what is going on at your monthly and yearly meetings or sharing your expertise in an earthcare topic area.
- Explore our website for useful material and bring it

to your monthly and yearly meeting.

- Join our lively online discussion list—serve to exchange ideas and share resources.
- Invite QEW to provide a speaker or conduct a workshop at your monthly or yearly meeting
- Join us at a Steering Committee Meeting in 2015. We'll gather April 23-26 in Ann Arbor, MI and October 22-25 at Ben Lomond Quaker Center near Santa Cruz, CA.
- Like us on Facebook and share our posts with your network. Follow our tweets at @quakerearthcare.
- Suggest a project. Do you have a project you would like to see us working on or material you would like to see us distribute? Let us know, and we will connect you with like-minded Friends to make it happen.

QEW was pleased to play a major role in organizing the Quaker contingent to the People's Climate March in September 2014. QEW was an early sponsor of the March, which eventually included more than 100 religious groups and 1,500 organizations. We publicized the march in our journal, *Befriending Creation*, in our e-newsletter, on our website, and via Facebook and Twitter. We coordinated logistics for Quakers, allowing us to communicate directly with more than 100 Friends who had signed up for information (on average, each sign-up included four more March participants who were attending along with the sign-up person). Six hundred Friends joined the 400,000 marchers in New York. This is an example of how we join coalitions to speak publicly.

If we hope to limit the effects of climate change to merely bad (rather than catastrophic), we have only a small window of time to change the way we use energy and the way our economy runs. Already we are seeing enormous losses of ecosystems, with subsequent loss of species, some of which are linked to climate change and some of which are a result of land grabs and other destructive practices. There is urgency to our work—both to bring our message to all Friends and to witness in the world. The good news is that we are experiencing an awakening among Friends: collectively, we are beginning to acknowledge that peace, justice, and earthcare are truly interconnected and that a spirit-led response makes a difference for the world.

For information about getting involved with QEW, please contact me at [shelley@quakerearthcare.org](mailto:shelley@quakerearthcare.org) or visit our website at [www.quakerearthcare.org](http://www.quakerearthcare.org). Our annual report will soon be posted with more detail about last year's projects, activities and finances, and our plans for 2015. ♪

# Considering the Consequences of Unchecked Population Growth

by Roger Plenty

I am a Quaker living in Stroud, UK, and I have been a Friend for about 50 years. My interest in population started at a precise point in 1958. During an economics course, the lecturer told us about Thomas Robert Malthus and his assertion that any population would grow until it absorbed all the resources available to it. My instant reaction was, "Of course: that's absolutely obvious," so I was astonished when the lecturer went on to say that no one took any notice of that these days, and that events had proved Malthus wrong.

To learn more about the ideas of Thomas Robert Malthus, visit [http://cgge.aag.org/PopulationandNaturalResources1e/CF\\_PopNatRes\\_Jan10/CF\\_PopNatRes\\_Jan108.html](http://cgge.aag.org/PopulationandNaturalResources1e/CF_PopNatRes_Jan10/CF_PopNatRes_Jan108.html)

I took the lecturer to task on this, but his answer was "But technology will always keep ahead, and besides, a growing population is good for the economy". However, he didn't shift my conviction that Malthus was right, nor did he give me a good impression of the clear thinking of economists.

Years later, I became more informed about population, and, after I had become a Quaker, I brought this to the attention of my Local Meeting (Nailsworth) who recognised this as a Concern. Area Meeting confirmed this; and I and another Friend, Cherry Foster (she has the organising ability that I lack), were supported in our intention of taking it to Yearly Meeting as a Special Interest Meeting (SIM). Friends from other Meetings joined us and finally a team of six took on the task of running the SIM. Among our visitors was Judy Lumb, a QEW Friend from the United States.

Yearly Meeting this year took place in Bath University. I had asked Population Matters for a speaker, and was delighted when Roger Martin's name was offered. He is Chair of Population Matters, and has had careers in diplomacy and in conservation. He is an excellent speaker.

The whole event aroused considerable interest. About 80 Friends attended to hear Roger, and much discussion followed, both after the meeting and at our stall which was there for two evenings. At the close of the meeting, Friends gave him an enthusiastic round of applause.



## Roger Martin's Talk

Roger spoke of the ethical consequences of ignoring population growth. In the end growth will stop, either from more deaths or from fewer births. Which outcome it will be depends on our reaction now. The anticipated increases to between 8.3 and 10.9 billion in 2050 cannot be sustained in a world running out of natural capital. Consumption of all resources rises with population. He referred to the well-known equation  $I = P \times A \times T$ , where  $I$ =impact,  $P$ =population,  $A$ =affluence (consumption),  $T$ =technology.

In Africa, Nigerian population is predicted to rise from 168 to 443 million by 2050: Niger has the highest growth rate in the world yet can't feed 50 percent of its population: the Sahel is already in crisis and faces immense mortality.

The world faces insecurity of food, water, and fuel supplies. The UK's former Chief Scientist, Sir John Beddington, warns of a "perfect storm" in the 2030s, brought about by population growth, climate change, and peak oil.

Only 2 percent of mammals by mass on the planet are wild: the rest are humans and their animals. In 1750, 88 percent of mammalian life was wild.

If we made provision for the 225 million women who have no access to modern contraception, we could be well on the way to resolving this problem: but world funds for family planning are only equal to 10% percent of Goldman Sach's bonus budget.

These facts are greeted with total indifference. Few governments, NGOs, and conservation organisations will talk about it, although they know it to be true. But ignoring it is telling a silent lie. ❧

Roger Martin's full talk can be heard on <http://www.jw34.net/temp/PCWC-Edited.mp3>.





## Prelude to the Mother of All Movements?

by Bob McGahey

Geeta and I joined the amazing People's Climate March in New York in September 2014. We marched with Quakers amongst the faith communities, a cohort with a pre-march estimate of 10,000, rivaling Labor as the biggest bloc. Over 600 Quakers showed up, positioned next to the Unitarians. This march, carefully planned and brilliantly executed, was billed as a watershed event for the climate movement. Whether or not this will prove to be the case, we will know soon enough. As many—including the International Energy Agency—have said, we are now in “decade zero”; it's now or never. The immediate goal is to sign an international climate treaty under UN auspices at COP 21 in Paris next December to replace the fading Kyoto Treaty.

The careful planning was everywhere evident. The march was led by front-line folk, those already affected by the climate beast: the poor boroughs of NYC, refugees from the Philippines and terrifying typhoon Haiyan and residents of island nations threatened by rising seas—some of whom have already packed their bags, heading for new homes. A “climate train” came all the way from the West Coast, and Florida citizens arrived who are fearing the loss of their communities to rising seas. At the head of the parade were Ban Ki Moon in a march t-shirt and baseball cap, whose initiative to call a climate summit was the inspiration for the march, and France's environment minister Segolene Royal, impeccably dressed in a tailored business suit, among other dignitaries.

We were joined by people of color, a notable shift from my previous climate actions, including the big march in Washington in February 2013. At the powerful interfaith service later in the day at St. John the Divine, an old associate of Dr. Martin Luther King proclaimed that the civil rights movement would be the “rock” of this ecojustice movement, because the poor and colored would be the first affected by the massive changes underway. In addition to African Americans

from North America, many indigenous folk from south of the border were on hand, colorfully dressed and with beautifully crafted signs. The sign art everywhere was eloquent. One Central American native was pulling a little clay-and-wattle kiln, which he told us represented the earth, seeking a delegate's seat at the negotiating table. Inside was a woman in fetal position.

The large faith contingent was to gather on a side block, joining the march at the appropriate time. We waited well over three hours for this moment to arrive, with those who arrived early for Quaker-style silent worship to bless the effort waiting much longer. The entire march was asked to observe a minute of silence in honor of those who have already lost their lives to climate change. I would say the partial silence lasted less than 15 seconds. Believe me, there is not much silence when 400,000 put on their boots and take to the streets! While we waited, we had prayers and a lot of rallying songs and hymns from the speaker trailer up front. True to form, the Hari Krishnas next to us drummed and danced with such cacophany that the loudspeakers couldn't dint them. I hope Krishna heard, because we couldn't. Next to them were middle-class South Asians, also gathered beneath the neat little pennant reading “Hindu.” This was a Big Tent affair, so the mainstream faith communities were joined by groups like ethical humanists, atheists, and “New Thought.”

The march began in Central Park and wound its way through the streets, proceeding right through Times Square, up to 34 Street and 11th Avenue. At one point progress of the march was halted, because the entire route, 80 city blocks, was filled. We were making a statement, amplified by some of our onlookers, including a large group of meditators in a park along the route and the Bard Grad School, who egged the crowd on to huge roars beneath their strategic quarters about eight stories up on 42nd Street near Times Square.

The gargantuan rally coincided with the announcement of fossil fuel divestment by the Rockefeller Foundation, who some speculated may have bankrolled the

See *Prelude*, next page



# COP 20: Preparing for the Road to Paris

COP 20 opened on December 1 and will continue until December 12, 2014 as organizations, individuals, government representatives, and participants from UN bodies and agencies gather in Lima, Peru, to work toward developing a global agreement to help pave the way for success at the COP21 world summit in Paris in 2015. On December 10, 2014 (just a few days from the time this article is being written), the high-level ministerial presence will arrive and include Presidents from Mexico, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Peru and possibly more. This participation represents a huge show of support for this work.

Last year, COP 19 in Poland attracted more than 8,300 attendees and 650 media personnel, and COP 20 organizers are hoping for high attendance—12,000—as the world prepares for the next step in global response to climate change.

The COP goes on for two weeks and the main focus is on preparing a draft for a new climate change agreement, including agreement on the definition of INDCs, the intended national determined contributions which will help define each country's effort to bring down



*UNFCCC Executive Secretary, Christiania Figueres at the opening ceremony of the COP 20 Conference on Climate Change.*

emissions.

COP 20 provides civil society, organizations, governments, and business leaders with opportunities to network and learn more about global trends and issues in responding to climate disruption. Many are working to try to help shift the negotiations to focus beyond economic competition so that a new climate change agreement can be reached.

You can follow what's happening at COP 20 and get news after-the-fact by going to <http://newsroom.unfccc.int/>. ♪

## *Prelude*, continued

public relations for the march. Other companies also announced divestment that day. A high official from the World Bank said before the week began that folks were “going to be surprised” by how many corporations and various regional political unions, as well as provinces and municipalities, were lining up behind a carbon tax.

However, on Tuesday, given their chance to answer Ban Ki Moon's call, national leaders ducked, waiting, as usual, to see what commitments other nations might make. Many on the Left, notably Chris Hedges, dismissed the march as a huge greenwashing stunt ([http://www.truthdig.com/report/page2/the\\_last\\_gasp\\_of\\_climate\\_change\\_liberals\\_20140831](http://www.truthdig.com/report/page2/the_last_gasp_of_climate_change_liberals_20140831)) by corporations, orchestrated by the U.N., and the lack of commitment on Tuesday gave these arguments a depressingly prophetic air.

But I am going to have to cast my lot with the “last gasp” liberals and Naomi Klein, a brilliant radical who refuses to cut Hope off at the knees. Though she largely agrees with Hedges' analysis of the problem, her sense of the solution diverges from his. Hedges sees the march as a “prelude” to direct action and “revolution” against the international capitalist empire,

while Klein sees the beginning of a broad movement with such numbers and momentum that it cannot be denied by powers that be. You can read more about Klein's take at <http://dandelionsalad.wordpress.com/2014/09/21/the-talk-before-the-walk-bernie-sanders-bill-mckibben-naomi-klein-kshama-sawant-chris-hedges-brian-lehrer/>.

I am one small nexus of that movement, and I agree with economists who convincingly argue for an international carbon tax, bound by a treaty which nevertheless allows individual sovereign nations the option to use the dividends as they choose best. The 11th hour is past. We have a small window in which to build the movement to awaken the political will to create a strong, binding international treaty. The proposed Paris Protocol would take force in 2020, right at the end of our current “decade zero.” This is indeed a mid-night hour's decision, and it may be too late. But it is the only moment we have. ♪

\*This post was original published on Bob's blog at [http://ecospirit.blogspot.com/2014\\_09\\_01\\_archive.html](http://ecospirit.blogspot.com/2014_09_01_archive.html).



# Can We Get Off Carbon?

By William Beale

Several years ago, my wife and I decided that it was time to act on the ever-rising threat of climate change. Climate scientists had repeatedly warned us that we must stop putting carbon into the atmosphere or face the high likelihood of a near-term global collapse of the biosphere, to the deep regret of our grandchildren.

But what could we ourselves do, in our own household and our daily activities? After all, we had already cut our carbon energy usage to roughly 1/4 the national average. Could we cut it to zero? We decided to give it a try.

It happened that a clear opportunity opened to us: we could buy a container load of quite low-cost solar panels, use some ourselves, and pass out the others to friends at cost.

Since I am a do-it-yourself type, I immediately set about making a simple array of mounts for about 2kW worth of PV panels. We got all this working just in time to take up our whole house electric load after the huge wind storm of two summers ago knocked out grid power for our entire region. We on our short dead-end road were left without grid power for a full 11 days.

While our neighbors were scrambling, often unsuccessfully, to find generators and fuel to keep their fridges and freezers going, we squeaked by on our solar electricity through the entire outage with hardly any feeling of deficiency. Fortunately for us, the post-storm period was quite sunny, so our one-day battery storage was barely adequate.

As an immediate result of that experience, we decided to add much more PV and move all of our house appliances—for cooking, heating, hot water, lights, computer, and more—to solar electricity exclusively.

What I actually decided on was a larger system, grid connected, in parallel with the off-grid smaller system we already had. The two of them added to 10kW peak rating. This gave us an excess of solar power, as well as flexibility and redundancy.

So, we went ahead and traded out all of our propane

driven appliances and replaced them with electric ones. And in addition, we bought our first ever new car: an all-electric Nissan Leaf, trading our already frugal Honda Fit to a granddaughter, with the caveat that we could call it back at any time if we needed the longer range.

The result of all of this was indeed what we had hoped. My wife particularly enjoys the induction cookers, which are neat, clean, and, amazingly, heat only the bottom of the pot sitting on them, not the rest of the stove, and not the room they are in. And also, they have highly competent control systems: set and forget, and come back to a job done perfectly every time.

So. No carbon, at least for daily household operation. And, far better service in every way. Hardly a sacrifice!

Costs? Every one of the things we bought had an average cost. This includes the stove, heat/cooling pump, water heat pump, LED lights, and car, which had the same out-of-pocket total cost as the typical passenger car bought last year.

And of course the PV system itself brought costs. As a result of careful shopping and some personal labor, its total cost was the same as a quite ordinary, used pickup truck of the kind frequently purchased by my neighbors without much thinking. This is also half of what some of them have paid for those obese, show-off pickups (also an altogether too common a purchase around here).

And again on the positive side, so far the Leaf has saved us about \$800 in gasoline we would otherwise have put into the Honda and cost us nothing to run above what we already had invested in the PV. Our electricity bill stays at zero; in fact, the electric company seem to owe us about \$200 so far this year for the large excess we gave back to them.

So when a neighbor stops by and, after a few words of envy, adds “Musta took a lotta money for all that! I wish I had that much to spend, and the time it to put it

up,” I consider my response. So far, I have made some mild, non-confrontational reply, heeding the wisdom of my guardian angel on my right shoulder, and not that hot little devil on my left, whispering that I answer with, “I paid for it by not buying that ludicrous pickup you are sitting in, and all your jaunts to the west coast, and I got the time by not mowing your two-acre lawn, or watching that TV you spend your weekends dozing in front of.”

So far, I remain safe, but tomorrow the temptation of the little demon might prevail, with possibly fatal result.

Or, a happier thought, those with the persuasive powers needed may somehow be able to change the ambitions of my good neighbor and his millions of like-thinkers, from chrome tail pipes emitting noxious vapors, to solar electricity, emitting nothing but what we want and may even need. ♪

*William Beale is a long-retired R&D engineer (Sunpower, Inc, Athens, OH) whose profession and hobby is improving thermal machines.*

## QEW Upcoming Events

We welcome your participation in any and all of the following events!

- QEW Spring Steering Committee Meeting: April 23-26, 2015 in Ann Arbor, MI
- Young Adult Friend Gathering: June 5-10, 2015 at Pendle Hill in Wallingford, PA
- FGC Gathering: July 5-11, 2015 at Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, NC (west of Asheville)
- QEW Fall Steering Committee Meeting: October 22-25, 2015 at Ben Lomond Quaker Center near Santa Cruz, CA

## Dreaming of a Green Christmas

by Katherine Murray

Many of us look forward to the holidays as a time of family togetherness and much-loved traditions. In addition to the deep spiritual significance, we enjoy cookies, eggnog, caroling—what’s not to love?

But the holidays are also often a time when we may throw caution to the wind and buy things we might not ordinarily buy, indulging in special gifts, turning loose on the reins we might otherwise use to keep our purchases in check. This article shares a few ways we might balance our joy with some Earth-friendly considerations (if not for this year, then next).

### Considering the Earth Impact of Our Purchases

For years I’ve been considering the purchases I make in terms of their “earth impact.” I wonder whether my purchases are reinforcing a purchasing system I feel is unsustainable or going toward a company I feel follows sustainable and humanitarian (and animal-friendly) practices. What kind of a global citizen is this company? Were the animals treated ethically? Does the item I’m considering buying promote waste or conservation?



Before you start thinking that my gifts aren’t any fun, let me clarify: These kinds of questions come into play when I’m considering whether I should buy Item A or Item B:

- Are either of the items created locally? If no, which will have to travel least to get here?
- Were any harsh or dangerous chemicals or hard-to-replace resources used to create either item? What do I know about the manufacturer of the gift?
- How long will this item last? Is it a durable product that will serve my family member a long time, or is it a fun, fad gift that will be forgotten after the holidays?
- Does the item need batteries? If so, recyclable batteries and a charger should be part of the gift.



Two years ago I started what has become an annual tradition: I purchased a freezer-full of meat for my kids and grandkids from a local, sustainable, organic farm in my area (Tyner Pond Farm, at [www.tynerpond-farm.com](http://www.tynerpond-farm.com)). It may sound like a scene from *Scrooged*, but my kids loved it and I knew the grandkids were eating healthy (free-range, happy meat, no antibiotics), which was an added plus for me. Don't worry, though—the grandkids have fun things to unwrap and play with as well: Christmas isn't all sausages.

You might also consider buying a live, potted tree this year and then replant it after the holidays. If you're one of the 33 million households that prefers a cut live tree, check in your area to find out whether there are companies that mulch the tree instead of simply sending it to the landfill.

Additionally, email is a viable alternative to sending traditional Christmas cards; but if you yearn for the touch-and-feel tradition of writing and stamping messages of goodwill, be sure to look for recycled cards. They are everywhere this year—just look on the back or the side of the box for the recycled symbol.

### How Do We Wrap it Up?

Each year as I wrap the gifts I buy, I feel that nagging concern about the wastefulness of the paper I use. Sure, it's pretty. Yes, it does buoy the soul to see all the colorful, wrapped gifts under the tree. But the paper also is ripped open and discarded in just a matter of minutes Christmas morning. Is the pretty effect worth the cost, in terms of trees, energy, and landfill space? Perhaps. But perhaps not.

There are paper manufacturers that offer eco-friendly gift wrapping options: [www.papersource.com](http://www.papersource.com) is one such vendor. [Treehugger.com](http://www.treehugger.com) also posts a number of green Christmas ideas, including wrapping alternatives and options. And Stanford University's Holiday Waste Prevention page ([http://bgm.stanford.edu/pssi\\_fa\\_holiday\\_waste](http://bgm.stanford.edu/pssi_fa_holiday_waste)) says, "If every family reused just two feet of holiday ribbon, the 38,000 miles of ribbon saved could tie a bow around the entire planet." That's quite a savings!

### To Grandmother's House We Go

Of course the travel industry counts on us flying all over the globe to visit family and friends during the holiday season, and I wouldn't begrudge anyone a face-to-face with Grandma or a ho-ho-hop to the Bahamas in the middle of a snowy cold season. But we know that travel does have a considerable CO<sub>2</sub> cost, so perhaps some more discernment is in order. We could consider the number of trips we make in a year with

an eye toward deciding which ones are "have tos" and which ones are "want tos." We might still fly to Arizona for Christmas but skip a trip (or drive, or Skype) for another trip later in the year.

Thinking of our travel as part of a system that impacts a planet can be a helpful exercise. And if we just can't offset the amount of traveling we need to do, one option to help mitigate our impact is to purchase carbon offsets to help "pay for the cost" of CO<sub>2</sub> we are contributing.

If you're thinking of purchasing a carbon offset, check out the Voluntary Carbon Tax site, created by Mt Toby Friends Meeting: <http://voluntarycarbon-tax.org/>

### Seeing the Lights in Their Eyes

If you love holiday lights (and I do—I couldn't give them up completely) be sure you upgrade to energy-efficient lights if you can. The old bulb strings may be nostalgic (and what isn't, at holiday time?) but today's lights use much less electricity and are safer, too. If you really want a super-green option, take a look at LED lights (LED stands for light-emitting diode), which use 80 percent less energy than conventional lights. LEDs can be used both indoors and out.

These days you can also find solar-powered holiday lighting in common big-box stores like Target and WalMart (as well as online at big retailers like Amazon.com). Contrary to popular belief, you don't need full-on sun in winter to power-up your solar-powered holiday lights; even on a gray, blustery day they should be able to store up what they need to gleam brightly into the night.

We'd love to hear your ideas for a green holiday season! Email your tips to [katherine@quakerearthcare.org](mailto:katherine@quakerearthcare.org) and we'll include them in the November-December issue of *BeFriending Creation* next year.

Wishing you and yours a soulful, peaceful, and green holiday!

### Resources

- Holiday tips from the EPA: <http://www.epa.gov/wastes/wyecd/funfacts/winter.htm>
- Reduce.org: <http://www.reduce.org/>
- Center for a New American Dream: <http://www.newdream.org/holiday>
- Ideas for Giving to Green Causes: <http://www.treehugger.com/culture/5-green-causes-holiday-gift-donations.html> ↻

## For Peace on Earth and Unity with Creation: Recommendations for All Friends

From the QEW Sustainability: Faith and Action Working Group

Recognizing the urgency of reducing our carbon footprint and living sustainably on the earth, QEW's Sustainability: Faith and Action working group will be reaching out to all monthly and yearly meetings this year with resources and encouragement to take action in four specific areas. The committee will be sharing resources and making this request directly with meetings, and will be offering resources and an opportunity to share with our network via the QEW website.

We are asking meetings to consider the following, for action starting this year (this is a working document, and is subject to change; we expect to finalize this soon and distribute this as an epistle):

1. We ask that all yearly and monthly meetings address the moral dimension of investments in fossil fuels and consider reinvestment options that your meetings value. The call for divestment includes freezing any new investments in top 200 fossil fuel companies with the largest reserves and committing to shift any current fossil fuel investments over the next five years to investments which better reflect Friends testimonies. As many meetings do not hold investments, consider crafting a minute in support of divestment. Visit <http://www.quakerearthcare.org/node/530> to read an example of a statement on divestment from the Eco-Justice Working Group of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Conversations on how individuals can divest may be sparked by these actions as well.
2. We ask that all Friends' Houses of Worship (meeting houses) surrounded by grass begin their ministry to beneficial insects by planting a patch of native pollinator plants, followed by a gradual transition to edible plantings. QEW will provide instructions and resources on their website. Visit the Xerces Society for information on native habitats in your region: <http://www.xerces.org/pollinator-resource-center/>. Also visit <http://pollinator.org/guides.htm> and type in your ZIP code to access an excellent, detailed booklet for your specific bioregion written by Pollinator Partnership. If you are interested in pollinator gardens, here is another helpful resource: [http://www.blankparkzoo.com/en/conservation/plant\\_grow\\_fly/](http://www.blankparkzoo.com/en/conservation/plant_grow_fly/).

3. We ask that all Friends' Houses of Worship (which are able in their locality) shift from non-renewable to renewable electricity suppliers by 2016. That we may serve as models and examples, showing our willingness to welcome the transition to a low-carbon world. All Friends are encouraged to do the same. Your local power company may offer the ability to buy energy from renewable sources. This is also possible through Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs). To learn more, visit the Green-e website: [http://www.green-e.org/getcert\\_re.shtml](http://www.green-e.org/getcert_re.shtml).
4. Given that the United States is one of the largest carbon polluters, that the EPA has proposed a commonsense plan to cut carbon pollution from power plants, and that each state will be required to craft their own plan to meet the new emissions standards, we call on meetings to develop a plan of action to encourage their state to hold the highest possible standard to address the risks of climate change, protect our health and environment now and for future generations. Visit <http://thesolutionsproject.org/> and scroll down to click on the image of your state to find a realistic 100 percent renewable energy plan designed by researchers at Stanford University.

We urge meetings to do the following:

- Identify their state's current climate change plan. Visit <http://www.epa.gov/statelocalclimate/state/state-examples/action-plans.html> to see Climate Change Action Plans state-by-state.
- Compare it to the 100 percent renewable plan proposed by the Solutions Project.
- Identify and reach out to other faith and community partners.
- Create the space for dialogue and negotiation with policymakers.
- Prepare a minute of support for the state plan which reflects the urgent need to lower carbon pollution. To see the Minute written by Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting in California, visit <http://www.quakerearthcare.org/article/strawberry-creek-monthly-meeting-minute-climate-change-and-divestment>.
- Discern what form of witness will most effectively make visible our deep commitment to protecting the commonwealth of life now and in the future.

These ideas grew out of our committee time together during the October sessions. We expect to continue to find resources and links to add. For information about the Sustainability working group, contact Sophie Quest at [quests600@gmail.com](mailto:quests600@gmail.com). ☞

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about the impacts of climate change than white Americans (<http://mic.com/articles/105120/new-poll-finds-something-surprising-about-race-and-climate-change>).

Part of what makes climate change so intrac-table for many people is that despite the storms and droughts we are experiencing, greater impacts will be felt in the future and the impacts are likely to be more severe outside of the temperate zones where most of us live. As people of faith, we must care about future generations and people in distant lands.

Deirdre Smith, the Strategic Partnership Coordinator for 350.org wrote a provocative essay in the aftermath of the Michael Brown decision. She challenged us with the title, "Why the Climate Movement must stand with Ferguson." You can read her essay at <http://350.org/how-racial-justice-is-integral-to-confronting-climate-crisis/>. A lack of indictments in the Michael Brown and Eric Garner cases raises issues of fairness and equality—do those outside the African American communities become allies or do they see this as someone else's problem? She explains:

Demonization and the illusion of the "other" allows mainstream US to feel unaffected and disconnected to the employment of unacceptable and institutionally supported militarized violence. If we hope to build anything together

and employ our combined power we must deny that anyone is an "other"—denying this pervasive cultural norm isn't easy but it's a central challenge we face.

I see breaking down the barrier of the "other" to be integral to both racial equality and climate change. We need to care about each other, whether our distance is measured in geography, time, race, or ethnicity, so that we can work together to create a fair and sustainable world. Deidre Smith says it better than I can:

Part of that work involves climate organizers acknowledging and understanding that our fight is not simply with the carbon in the sky, but with the powers on the ground ... But solidarity and allyship is important in and of itself. The fossil fuel industry would love to see us siloed into believing that we can each win by ourselves on "single issues." Now it's time for the climate movement to show up—to show that we will not stand for the "otherizing" of the black community here in America, or anyone else.

Whatever ethnicity you identify with and wherever you live, may we all find the courage and love to embrace the "other" as we work together to create an equitable, caring, sustainable future. ✍



**YES, I'd like to show my support for QEW!**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State/Province \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP/Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

I want to contribute \$100\_\_\_\_; \$200\_\_\_\_; \$500\_\_\_\_; Other \_\_\_\_\_

My check/cheque is enclosed. Payable to QEW, P.O. Box 6787, Albany, CA, 94706

\_\_\_\_ I'd prefer to pay by my credit card: MC\_\_\_\_; Visa \_\_\_\_; Amount \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ I would like to give monthly. Please charge my credit card \$\_\_\_\_\_ each month.

**Thank you, Friends!**

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## Climate Change and Racial Justice



by Shelley Tanenbaum  
General Secretary

I experienced a great shot of inspiration and hope from the September People's Climate March in New York—not just from the sheer size of the turnout (400,000!), but also from the diversity of the organizers and the participants. Marchers were like the city of New York itself—incredibly diverse according to race, ethnicity, age, and class. Hardcore labor activists marched with lab-coated scientists, Buddhists marched with Evangelicals (and even quite a few Quakers), and cowboys marched with Indians (the Cowboy Indian Alliance, or C.I.A.). I was delighted to see so many people coming together to raise our voices about climate change—recognizing that climate change impacts all of us and will continue to do so well into the future.

It is not hard to understand why this issue unites people, once they understand the implications. Although all of us will experience more severe and more frequent storms and/or droughts, rising sea level and shortages of fresh water, the impacts of climate change are likely to be felt more severely in poorer countries and within poorer communities here at home.



*Beautiful diversity at the People's Climate March.*

Communities at risk, often with high percentages of people of color and the socially and financially disadvantaged, have learned lessons from hurricanes Katrina and Rita, plus super-storm Sandy: those who suffered the most from these storms were most often those who did not have the resources to leave the area ahead of the storms and to rebuild afterwards. A recent poll showed that people identifying as Hispanic or African American are more likely to be concerned

*See **Racial Justice**, page 11*