



# BeFriending Creation

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

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## *In Sight of Sustainable Hope*

By Ruah Swennerfelt

CAN WE HAVE HOPE in the face of the human-caused climate disruption that is threatening the very home where we live? Although many now believe that the trajectory of increasingly chaotic climate isn't likely to be stopped through any likely combination of technological solutions or political programs, can we change our destructive habits sufficiently and quickly enough to alleviate the inevitable suffering of all life on the planet?

I, for one, am an optimist. It's just in my nature. But there are days when I can't imagine that enough people will wake up and change the way they live, the way they run their businesses, or the way they vote for change in the halls of Congress. But my optimistic nature stands in the way of despair getting the best of me. Much of my continuing hope comes from the intelligent and caring responses I witness around me. Countless friends and neighbors are joining me, not only in trying to reduce energy consumption and get more energy from renewables, but also in thinking far ahead to a resilient and sustainable planet for future generations. This gives me hope.

I've been creating electricity from the sun for more than 20 years. In 1991, when our house was built, the sun gave us the electricity for the construction and has continued to supply more than enough electricity for us, even when the QEW offices were in our home. In 1991, it was a novelty to have solar panels on one's roof. Today as I drive into town I see many solar panels on rooftops, on lawns, and in fields. This gives me hope.

A number of years ago, Vermont legislators approved a surcharge to Vermonters' electric bills that would help fund Efficiency Vermont, a program that "promotes and facilitates energy efficiency across the state of Vermont." Created in 2000 and operated by nonprofit Vermont Energy Investment Corporation,



500kW Solar Array in Middlebury, VT. Photo credit: Encore Redevelopment, Burlington, VT.

it has substantially reduced electrical demand. Its programs, among many, include home visits. Transition Town Charlotte, of which I am a board member, invited Efficiency Vermont to lead a workshop for Charlotters to become well enough informed to visit their neighbors and help them reduce their use of fossil fuels. I was among 30 people who were trained to meet in pairs with neighbors. We sat together in their homes and explained all the ways homes lose heat and overuse water and electricity. We distributed inexpensive products—such as water-conserving shower heads and water line insulation tubes—that began to reduce their energy costs immediately. Many energy visits were completed, and although I don't know specific

See *Hope*, page 3

### IN THIS ISSUE:

<i>In Sight of Sustainable Hope</i> .....	1
<i>Letters to Share</i> .....	2
<i>Fasting for the Climate: Two Reflections</i> .....	4
<i>4 Asks: Recommendations for All Friends</i> .....	5
<i>IPBES: A Rosetta Stone for Nature's Benefits</i> .....	7
<i>Courage for Creation</i> .....	9
<i>QEW Spring 2015 Steering Committee Meeting</i> .....	10
<i>Thanks to Long-Time Supporters!</i> .....	11
<i>What Is Your Elevator Pitch?</i> .....	12

## BeFriending Creation

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We publish *BeFriending Creation* to promote the work of Quaker Earthcare Witness, stimulate discussion and action, share insights, practical ideas, and news of our actions, and encourage among Friends a sense of community and spiritual connection with all Creation. Opinions expressed are the authors' own and do not necessarily reflect those of Quaker Earthcare Witness, or of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). The editor is responsible for unsigned items. Submission deadlines are February 10, April 10, June 10, August 10, October 10, and December 10.

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### VISION AND WITNESS

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

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### Earthcare Calendar

**April 20, 2015.** Extended deadline for article submissions for May-June 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,

Carbon sequestration with regenerative organic agriculture (including well-managed grassing of grass-fed ruminants) could sequester all of the excess carbon dioxide now in the air. Soil not oil, Cook Organic, not the Planet. This can be done at low-tech levels worldwide by the two billion small farmers still on their land. Boycotting factory farmed meat is a great way to help this change begin. Another way to do this is through carbon sequestering, while building soils and growing nutrient dense, biodiverse local crops.

See the full report at <http://rodaleinstitute.org/regenerative-organic-agriculture-and-climate-change/>. And here is a snippet I want to share from <https://www.organicconsumers.org/essays/reversing-global-warming-hunger-and-poverty-supercharging-global-grassroots>:

"It is dangerous, disempowering and irresponsible to talk about eliminating greenhouse gas emissions and dismantling the fossil fuel industry without also talking about maximizing natural carbon sequestration through agro-ecological agriculture and regenerative land use practices. There's no way we will ever get back to 350 ppm of CO<sub>2</sub> without a global food, farming and land use revolution that literally sucks downs and sequesters in the soil 50-100 ppm of CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases, utilizing enhanced plant photosynthesis and regenerative grazing practices."

"Our literal survival depends upon uniting the climate, food, environmental and economic justice movements—both North and South."

Sheree (Cheryl) Cammer  
Albany Friends Meeting, NY ☞



## Did You Know...?

QEW is continually creating new materials for you to share with your Meetings. Come to <http://www.quakerearthcare.org/pamphlets> and download pamphlets to share on a variety of Earthcare topics, including population, energy, food, money, peace, simplicity, sustainability, and water.



*Hope*, from page 1

numbers, I do know that some folks took the next step of having an energy audit and most folks made significant changes. This gives me hope.

Today many towns, cities, and states are gearing up for producing much of their electricity from renewable sources. It's definitely a trend. Recently the city of Burlington, Vermont, announced that it is now producing all of its electric generation from renewable sources. The sources are solar, wind, biomass, and hydro. The city's publicly owned utility, Burlington Electric Department (BED), says in its mission statement, "BED will continue to be a leader in sustainability by producing power that is as clean and as locally produced as possible. BED will continue to treat the environment with the utmost respect and will continue to influence decisions and public policy that enhance environmental quality, the use of renewable resources, and sustainability of Burlington." BED has aggressive energy-efficiency programs and boasts that it uses less electricity now than it did in 1989. And despite its small size, Burlington already has nine charging stations for electric vehicles. This gives me hope.

Beyond Burlington, Green Mountain Power (GMP) is one of the largest electric utilities in Vermont. GMP is the first utility in the world to receive B-Corp certification. A B-corporation (which stands for benefit corporation) is a type of for-profit corporate entity that includes a positive impact on society and the environment. The purpose includes creating general public benefit, which is defined as a materially positive impact on society and the environment. GMP's mission is "to embrace a new energy system that can improve lives, reduce costs, and be produced in a more environmentally and economically sustainable way. We are actively pursuing moving away from the traditional grid, to one that is more resilient and reliable, and that uses a series of micro-grids through renewable generation and

innovative energy storage." This gives me hope.

It's exciting to note that today 39 states have Interfaith Power & Light affiliates. The mission statement of Vermont Interfaith Power & Light (VTIPL) is that it "seeks to educate faith communities and individuals about the threat that global warming presents to Creation and Earth, and to engage communities of faith in promoting energy conservation, energy efficiency, and renewable energy as a solution. The goal of the organization is to move Vermont's faith communities toward sustainable energy use and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, while living out our covenant with the Creator." I've been serving on the board of VTIPL since its founding and have witnessed many congregations add solar power, tighten up their buildings to reduce heat loss, add ground-source or air heat pumps, and increase their awareness of the importance of caring for Creation. Burlington Friends Meeting (my Meeting) benefitted from VTIPL's offer of a free energy audit and a grant to insulate its attic. This gives me hope.

I'm not naïve about the hurdles we face. I know there are many who are not yet willing to admit to the dangers that challenge us or to make the lifestyle changes necessary for a resilient and sustainable planet. It's possible that, once again, no action or commitment will come out of the UN climate summit in Paris in December 2015. But I can get up each morning with a sense of gratitude for the many people in Vermont and elsewhere who are doing everything they can to make a difference. I can face the day because through my involvement with my Meeting, Transition Town Charlotte, and Vermont Interfaith Power & Light, I see what can come from dedicated people.

And I can feel grateful because of you who are reading this journal. You want to make a difference and are learning what you need to do. You give me hope. ♡

## Congratulations and Many Thanks for Direct Action

IN MARCH, PNC BANK ANNOUNCED that they will limit their funding for mountaintop removal coal mining. This is a particularly egregious form of coal mining—laying waste to large areas and contaminating local water supplies. Earth Quaker Action Team (eqat.org), Rainforest Action Network (Ran.org), and the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition (ohvec.org) led the resistance to this kind of coal mining in Appalachia. Many thanks to those of you who were part of these actions.

PNC follows several other banks that began phasing out mountaintop removal financing at the end of 2014. J.P. Morgan, Wells Fargo, BNP Paribas, Goldman

Sachs, RBS, and UBS had all pledged to move away from financing such projects; banks that still continue to finance mountaintop removal coal mining include Morgan Stanley, Barclays, Bank of America, and Deutsche Bank. In addition to mounting protests over this method of coal extraction, coal mining in general is becoming less profitable.

EQAT conducted a five-year campaign to pressure PNC bank to end financing this method of coal mining. Their efforts increased over the years, expanding to include Friends from Pittsburg to Tampa, and even one action in the U.K. They are currently working on their next plan of action—stay tuned! ♡

# Fasting for the Climate: Two Reflections



IN NOVEMBER 2013, TYPHOON HAIYAN DEVASTATED THE PHILIPPINES, killing more than 6,000 people and destroying homes and livelihoods all across the country. Climate commissioner Yeb Saño was at the UN climate talks in Warsaw when the typhoon struck, and his own family was imperiled back at home. He addressed the Warsaw conference in a moving speech, declaring that he would not eat until countries acted to “stop the madness” of the climate crisis. Hundred of thousands have risen in solidarity and Fast for the Climate has become a global movement. The fast continues around the globe, and two QEW Friends participated recently and agreed to share their reflections on the experience.

## Jim Kessler:

I recently spent a Sunday participating in the Fast for the Climate effort as a representative of QEW. I have engaged in the spiritual discipline of fasting at times in the past. I drink tea and diluted fruit juice so that I can focus on the spiritual dimensions of the fast instead of physical hunger. Periodically during the day I paused to reflect and pray for one of the following topics:

1. for people who are suffering from the impacts of climate change,
2. for plants, animals, and ecosystems that are experiencing the damaging effects of climate disruption,
3. that diverse communities of faith may unite in support of action in behalf of the climate, and
4. that the many actors that impact climate change policy (politicians, citizens across the political spectrum, fossil fuel companies, the scientific community, and environmentalists) may find common ground and support reduction of carbon emissions.

Several of my silences were spent gazing at the incredibly beautiful snow-covered Bur Oak savanna that is visible from our living room. Its visible presence helped me to reflect on why we must press on with efforts to address climate change despite the forces arrayed against climate action. I am overwhelmed when I reflect on the free ecosystem services with which God so freely blesses us through His Creation. Fasting helped me to understand that I must communicate with my family and friends the urgency of climate action as a moral imperative.

## Judy Lumb:

Saturday, February 7, 2015, was my day in the Fast for the Climate’s rolling fast from the Lima COP20 to the Paris COP21, the meetings of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. It reminded me of the other time I was involved in a fast as spiritually based political action, one of the most memorable events of my life. It was the “Fast for Life” in 1982 and the issue was the deployment of nuclear warheads in Cruise and Pershing Missiles placed in Germany. The Peace Coalition group in Atlanta chose August 6–9 (Hiroshima and Nagasaki Days) and obtained permission from the Martin Luther King Center to hold a three-day, 24-hour fasting presence at the gravesite. Each evening was Vespers, a silent meeting for worship attended by about 20 supporters from several different denominations, although those of us fasting were all Quakers. During the final Vespers, when we were passing bread to break our fast, Ralph David Abernathy, Martin Luther King, Jr.’s second and his successor, came to pray at the grave. He joined our worshipping group and expressed his appreciation that we chose this place because of the strong connection between peace and civil rights.

This time my fasting day included an indigenous ceremony, which included a Garifuna Mass for their ancestors. I explained about the fast afterward in conversations and the purpose was well understood. It seemed ominous to be holding this for the whole world. I felt like I was holding Earth in my hands. The quote they used from me was, “I think this fast is extremely important because this period of time is make or break for the future of human life on this planet.” ☞





# Asks: Recommendations for All Friends

By Sophie Quest and Paula Kline

IF YOU'VE BEEN fortunate enough to attend Pendle Hill in Pennsylvania, you'll remember all of the amazing trees planted there over many years. Caring for these acres as people studied Quaker testimony together was a strong part of the stewardship of nature—a nature freely offering its gifts to people. Fifteen people came to the two meetings of the “Sustainability: Faith and Action Working Group” held during the October 2014 QEW meeting. We were a motley group: an activist with Earth Quaker Action Team, a farmer, a writer, a guerilla gardener, a teacher, several retired old women (I can phrase it this way because I, Paula, was the oldest), a biologist, a businessman, a doctor. We all love the earth and want to work in its service, knowing that it has sustained us all our lives.

A Friend from the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting had inspired us earlier with the moral argument for divesting from fossil fuels, and several young people had shared the cloud forest habitat restoration work they did in Mexico, learning about and working for the land. We were sharing with each other the work

we were doing in divesting from fossil fuels, in putting solar on our meeting houses, in retrofitting homes, in giving presentations explaining the impact of the exponential increase in populations, in planting native plants that could interact with pollinators and other insects who are the backbone of our entire food system, in creating edible gardens where once there had been useless lawns.

How could we expand our efforts? After a period of discernment we settled on four distinct recommendations that we call the “4 Asks.” In October, we presented them to the entire QEW meeting. It was too late for formal approval, but it has been going around as much as possible. This April we will ask for formal approval to send the document as an Epistle to all Yearly Meetings. We hope to expand the QEW website greatly with information and stories as we all work on this. Keep your eye out as this material gets posted. We hope that you will join us. We hope that you will “Discern what form of witness will most effectively make visible our deep commitment to protecting the commonwealth of life now and in the future.”

To Friends Everywhere,

The Sustainability, Faith and Action Working Group of Quaker Earthcare Witness developed Four Asks which are recommendations for Friends Churches and Meetings throughout North America. We ask local Friends fellowships and Yearly Meetings to prayerfully examine the Four Asks and to explore ways to act upon part or all of them. These are suggested actions to encourage Friends to set an example of active service in behalf of the many free gifts that we receive from God's Creation. We encourage these actions as a witness to those outside of our Churches and Meetings.

## **Recommendations for all Friends from the QEW Sustainability, Faith, and Action Working Group October 5, 2014, Pendle Hill**

1. We ask that all Yearly and Monthly Meetings address the moral dimension of investments in fossil fuels and consider reinvestment options that reflect your Meeting's value. The call for divestment includes freezing any new investments in the top 200 fossil fuel companies with the largest reserves and committing to shift any current fossil fuel investments over the next 5 years to investments which better reflect Friends' testimonies. As many Meetings do not hold investments, consider a Minute in support of divestment as well as holding discussions about how individuals can divest. 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>.
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

*Continued on next page*

plantings. QEW will provide instructions and resources on their website. Visit the Xerces Society and Plant.Grow.Fly for information on native habitats and what to plant in your region.

3. We ask that all Friends' Houses of Worship (which are able to 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). By switching to solar or wind, many meetings could eventually redirect their resources away from utility bills to immediate needs and other projects that further Kingdom work.
4. Given that the United States is one of the largest carbon polluters and given that the EPA has proposed a commonsense plan to cut carbon pollution from power plants, and given that each state will be required to craft their own plan to meet the new emissions standards by 2016, 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.
  - Identify your state's current climate change plan.
  - Compare it to the 100% 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 policy makers.
  - Prepare a minute of support for the state plan which reflects the urgent need to lower carbon pollution.
  - Discern what form of witness will most effectively make visible our deep commitment to protecting the commonwealth of life now and in the future.

Blessings and peace to all,

The Sustainability, Faith and Action Working Group  
Quaker Earthcare Witness ☞

## Young Friend Asks Quaker School to Take Climate Care Seriously

On February 13 and 14, Friends in many parts of the world participated in Global Divestment Day. Creative actions took place in some 60 countries ranging from concerts, rallies, marches, artistic projects, teach-ins, and more. (For photos and videos, go to <http://gofossilfree.org/wrap-up/>).

Fossil Free Friends and the Sustainability, Faith and Action Working Group issued a call to Yearly Meetings, Friends educational institutions, and foundations to join the global divestment and reinvestment movement. A copy of the Epistle to Yearly Meetings can be found at <http://www.quakerearthcare.org/article/global-divestment-day-epistle-qews-sustainability-faith-and-action-working-group>.

Melissa McLaughlin, a Young Friend studying at Westtown School in Pennsylvania, learned of the Epistle sent to Friends schools and was led to write a heartfelt letter asking her school to take the Epistle seriously. You can read her letter on the QEW website here: <http://www.quakerearthcare.org/article/young-friend-appeals-her-school-divestment>. Her moving words may

inspire you to consider whether you also have a relationship with a Quaker school or college. Fossil Free Friends would be interested in knowing of Friends school alumni interested in supporting their alma mater to consider moving their money to protect the planet. If you are an alum and want to help organize an outreach campaign for your school community, please contact us at [nextgenconference@gmail.com](mailto:nextgenconference@gmail.com). ☞





# IPBES: A Rosetta Stone for Nature's Benefits to People

by Mary Gillbert, QEW Representative to the UN

The UN is like the city on a hill with its ideals gleaming in the sunlight. But up close, you can see that the city's silhouette is defined by acres of canvas draped over the whole thing. If you lift the edge of the canvas to peer underneath, you find that the structure is cobbled together of unfinished lumber with wobbly joints and debris strewn all over. The city is real, but shaky and full of discord.

This shaky and discordant but real city does accomplish useful work. The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has produced a comprehensive report that tells us what is happening climate-wise and, at least theoretically, helps to ensure policy decisions are based on sound information.

The UN has spawned another such organization; this one gathers information on biodiversity and the ecosystem services that support human life. It's called the Intergovernmental Platform for Science/Policy on Biodiversity and Eco-system Services (IPBES, pronounced "Ip-Bes").

In January I attended the third plenary session of IPBES in Bonn, Germany. The meeting was purely organizational; no science was discussed. The countries that have signed on to fund and manage the work of IPBES are sorting out who will do what, and who will watch over what gets done, in a mixed atmosphere of high hopes and low trust.

Nations have agreed that policy decisions should

be science- and knowledge-based, and that the relevant science and knowledge must be assembled into a coherent platform that can be understood and freely shared by all. IPBES is attempting to do that. The challenge is enormous.

The need for an integrated science-policy platform is a no-brainer. Scientists, on the whole, want both to grasp more about this fascinating world than they find within their disciplinary silos and to do everything they can to have their own fields of study understood and respected, both by other scientists and by policy makers. At this point, decisions that affect bio-diversity and ecosystems are made by whoever can get funding together for a project, with little understanding of how that project impacts everything else. It's really chaos, contributing to the bio- and ecological degradation we see all around. Establishing a solid, shared knowledge platform does not guarantee that decisions will be based on it, but without it, we cannot assess what is happening.

## The Structure

The structure of the IPBES is complex. The 123 nations that have signed on comprise the Plenary and their delegates, who are not themselves scientists; they are there to look out for the interests of their countries. The Plenary appoints a Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (MEP, pronounced "Mep"), which is then in charge of orchestrating the assemblage of knowledge and assur-

*Continued on next page*

ing that it is sound. The MEP has regional and gender balance and represents all relevant disciplines. The Plenary and the MEP run the show with the help of a small Secretariat. A Bureau oversees administrative functions when the Plenary is not in session.

The science itself will come from everywhere: government agencies, universities, industry and private research institutions, research museums, NGOs, and even from four branches of the UN which have never before collaborated with each other. In IPBES all these science organizations are referred to as Stakeholders. It is worth noting that the Indigenous Peoples do not want to be called Stakeholders, a term from the corporate and colonial systems that have undercut their existence. They are Rights-holders. Indigenous and local knowledge (ILK) is specifically included in the IPBES package.

There is also a special category of Stakeholder organizations called Observers who monitor the functioning of the various aspects of IPBES, especially between sessions. Various factions want control over who fills this important role, and after three years of discussion the nations have not agreed on criteria for granting Observer status. They did adopt a less-than-perfect procedure about conflicts of interest, in the MEP as well as among the Observers.

The work to be done is expensive, and the budget is very tight. There even was a question about whether the five-person Secretariat could add three more staff. The U.S. wants no project to go forward unless funding for the specific project has been secured, which would give the funder great influence over what is included, and possibly over the findings.

## The Work

“Scoping” is underway for both thematic and regional assessments, but it will be some years before findings are published. In 2014, experts were gathered to work on 1) Pollination; 2) Land degradation and restoration; 3) Invasive alien species; 4) Scenario analysis and modeling; 5) Value, valuation and accounting; 6) Sustainable use; 7) Agriculture and food security; and 8) Migratory and transboundary species.

This year the call is for experts to fill Task Forces on 1) capacity-building; 2) indigenous and local knowledge systems and 3) knowledge and data, and to form two Expert Groups to develop guides on 1) production and integration of assessments from and across all scales and 2) a catalogue of Policy support tools and methodologies.

The actual compilation of research findings has begun on only the Pollination and Pollinators Assessment. Work on the Open Oceans is on hold because of an ongoing World Ocean Assessment.

Many Stakeholders are very concerned about the impact of commercial interests on the integrity of IPBES. “It’s not about honey; it’s about the number of species of bees.” Experts from Syngenta and Bayer, who make products believed to negatively affect pollinators, are on the MEP.

## Conclusion

Us? We get to applaud the noble intentions of IPBES, worry about the effects of jousting for power, watch for the publication of findings and, as with the IPCC, work here at home for the reports to be taken seriously. Our challenge too is enormous. ☞

### Pitch, from page 12

*I care about the kind of world the children of today will inherit. Everyone should have healthy air to breathe and clean water to drink, a decent place to live and enough food. We know that continuing to burn fossil fuels will jeopardize the ability of our planet to sustain ourselves and other species, so I am working to use less energy and to use energy from renewable sources. For instance, did you know that Texas is rapidly increasing its use of windpower, and last year (2014) over 10 percent of their electricity came from wind (or choose any number of good examples such as: the price of solar power is dropping dramatically, and there are many ways to install solar without upfront costs; the city of*

*Portland OR is now generating extra electricity every time someone pours a glass of water from the tap or flushes their toilet).*

What canst thou say, Friends? Send me your elevator pitch (email them to [shelley@quakerearthcare.org](mailto:shelley@quakerearthcare.org)), and I’ll post the best ones on our website. ☞





# Courage for Creation

By Minga Claggett-Borne

THE BOLDER AND DEEPER ACTION GROUP formed at Friends Meeting at Cambridge partly to discern strategic action and partly to act as an affinity group as more Friends were considering breaking the law, so as to follow God's law.

BDAG consists of 15 Friends who began out of Cambridge Earth Care Witness with a training in non-violent action in June 2014. We meet twice a month: prayer is central to our group. We sit with questions, like, How can we encourage one another to be authentic witnesses? What is the Holy One asking us to do that is uniquely Quaker?

We laugh, we carpool to reduce carbon footprint. We have fasted and sung together. Yet these are strategies, not addressing our fundamental malaise. We need a structural change, a quality of Light change.

We aren't satisfied that as the Bolder and Deeper Group, we have lived up to our name. Are we acting bolder? Deeper in what ways? But we are persistent in our quest. And we have worked with radical inclusivity with mutual support for those who are sick and those who are approaching 90.

We decided to go out and cheerfully answer to those who want to turn to the healing of our greed for dirty electricity. On December 6, 2014 about 20 Friends went to Brayton Point in Somerset, Massachusetts, the largest producer of coal power in New England. We held a worship service for two hours on the power plant's property, under the looming towers of the plant. This was an illegal act—the police watched our every move—but no one was arrested. Despite a cold rain, we experienced a powerful time of worship. Spoken worship included pleas, hopes, prayers for

forgiveness, and recommitments to our goal. We felt connected to the homeless and to the assertion that "Black Lives Matter." We are all crying for love to be made public. Many went to the nearby town of Fall River, giving out information on how to convert from coal to wind and solar. We aren't environmentalists; we are humanists, listening to God.

How do we move faithfully in our commitment to repair the rupture made from carbon gas emissions? The famous Quakers, Patience and Preserved Brayton, lived near Brayton Point and were strong abolitionists. They married in 1758 and decided, when wed, to release all their slaves. Do Friends need liberation today? Do we need to be released from the chains of fossil fuels?



Friends Meeting at Cambridge has a long history of public witness.

*"There is a principle...pure and proceeds from God. It is deep and inward, where the heart stands in perfect sincerity. In whomsoever this takes root and grows, [such nations become brothers and sisters.]"*

-John Woolman, 1746



Brayton Point Power Station and Cooling Towers. Photo by Z22.

# QEW Spring 2015 Steering Committee Meeting

**Where:** Ann Arbor Friends Meeting  
1420 Hill Street  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104  
[www.annarborfriends.org](http://www.annarborfriends.org)

**When:** Thursday, April 23, 2015 1:00 pm to  
Sunday, April 26, 2015 1:00 pm

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN for our April 23-26, 2015 Steering Committee sessions in Ann Arbor, Michigan. We hope you'll join us! You can register online by clicking the following link:  
<http://secure.quakerearthcare.org/civCRM/event/info?reset=1&id=8>

QEW has two steering committee meetings each year: one in the spring or early summer that allows us to conduct business and hold committee and working group meetings face to face, and the other in the fall when we have time for business, committee/work-group meetings and presentations.

Ann Arbor Friends have graciously invited us to share their beautiful Meetinghouse (close to the University of Michigan campus) and their retreat center in nearby Chelsea, Michigan. We will be holding sessions at both locations (see the agenda at [http://www.quakerearthcare.org/sites/quakerearthcare.org/files/event/2015\\_spring\\_agenda\\_rev\\_3\\_-\\_draft.pdf](http://www.quakerearthcare.org/sites/quakerearthcare.org/files/event/2015_spring_agenda_rev_3_-_draft.pdf)).

Ann Arbor Friends will also be helping with our meals and providing Friendly hospitality as needed. Please register well in advance of these sessions so we know how many beds we need to find for out-of-town participants and how many meals to plan.

We hope that all Steering Committee members will attend and we invite interested Friends to join us for any or all of these sessions. Please contact Shelley at [Shelley@quakerearthcare.org](mailto:Shelley@quakerearthcare.org) with specific questions.

P.S. Hold the date for our fall Steering committee session, October 22-25, 2015, at Ben Lomond Quaker Center near Santa Cruz, California. Ben Lomond Quaker Center is a retreat center within the redwood forest and it is sure to be a beautiful and inspiring meeting. ∞



Ann Arbor Friends Meeting



Michigan Friends Center



Ben Lomond  
Quaker Center



# Many Thanks to Long-Time Supporters!

SOME OF YOU have been supporting Quaker Earthcare Witness for many, many years—possibly starting when we were called Friends Committee on Unity with Nature (FCUN). I marvel when I receive a donation to QEW and see a long history of support, both in financial donations and in spiritual guidance and committee work. QEW/FCUN is here today, doing important work on Earthcare and sharing information throughout North America about what Friends are doing, only because many of you have been part of this network for such a long time.

We want to acknowledge and thank the families of Doris Ferm and Douglas Whyte for the bequests that we received in the past year from these two generous donors and long-time QEW supporters. Their support, in the form of monthly/annual donations, guidance, and inspiration, were greatly appreciated



Doris Ferm

over the years. Their bequests help us move forward with our work on climate change, environmental justice, and the right sharing of world resources.

If you are not already a monthly donor, please consider doing so. You can fill out, clip, and mail the coupon at the bottom of this page or click the Donate button on our QEW home page at [www.quakerearthcare.org](http://www.quakerearthcare.org) to get started.

And—hopefully for a time far into the future—please consider making a bequest to Quaker Earthcare Witness to help carry on the long-term work of inspiring and educating others toward sustainable and spirit-led care of our planet.



Douglas Whyte

## Stay in Touch!

Thanks for sharing our posts on Facebook and following along on Twitter. Join us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Quaker-Earthcare-Witness/143510792334460> or @quakerearthcare on Twitter.



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

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

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

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

**Thank you, Friends!**

**Quaker Earthcare Witness**

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## What Is Your Elevator Pitch?

by Shelley Tanenbaum, QEW General Secretary

Suppose that you are sitting next to your second cousin at a family function or you bump into your neighbor from down the street in a coffee line, and they ask, “What’s up?” How do you convey (in two minutes or less!) all the passion and concern you are feeling about Earthcare, without causing them to run screaming from the room? What is your elevator pitch?

When Katharine Hahoe, a self-described “climate change evangelist” received the American Geophysical Union’s 2014 award for climate communication, she responded in her acceptance speech, “climate change is now the most politically polarizing issue in the United States. Credible sources—scientists who understand the problem and can connect climate change to our values and the things we care about—present a real and dangerous threat to those who would maintain the status quo and deny the reality of climate change.”

She was asked about her elevator pitch (<http://www.realsceptic.com/2015/02/07/climate-change-elevator-pitch/>) and her response is to start with values and identify concerns that you share with your audience. From there, you describe something specific that you both care about. Then, follow-up with examples of what is being done about this concern. She and her husband, an evangelical pastor, have co-written a book called *A Climate for Change: Global Warming*



*Facts for Faith-based Decisions.* (You can watch her engaging description here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T1eGJLqxxKQ>.)

Another key piece of advice for your elevator speech is to know your audience. In a group of deniers, you are not likely to get anywhere in a two-minute pitch if you use the words “climate change.” It might be better to talk about clean energy, local energy, jobs, national security, or independence from Middle East turmoil.

So, given that one size does not fit all, I still want to hear what you say in these situations. What have you found effective? Here is my first try:

***See Pitch on page 8***