



BeFriending Creation

Newsletter of Quaker Earthcare Witness
Affirming our essential unity with nature

Volume 28, Number 3 • May-June 2015

An Earth Testimony

By Adrian Ayres Fisher
Oak Park Friends Meeting, Illinois Yearly Meeting

ONCE DURING MEETING FOR WORSHIP, a member spoke of how she had always heard the saying that Friends should walk cheerfully over the earth...speaking to that of God in everyone. Then she read what George Fox actually wrote: that we should “walk cheerfully over the earth...*answering* that of God in everyone” (*italics mine*). There are differences, she said, between “speaking to” and “answering.” The former sets us apart: perhaps it is didactic, or implies lecturing, as a schoolteacher, public speaker, or media commentator might do. The latter requires looking and listening, even searching; it puts us in relation to others and provides openings for reciprocity. On reflection it seems to me there are many “everyones”—not only humans, but other species. Fox’ dictum could be extended further: “walk cheerfully over the earth...answering that of God in all of creation.”

Humans often “speak to” nature, as when we assume a dominant attitude and expect to be able to “improve” upon nature with technological solutions to perceived (or real) problems, rather than looking to see how nature does things, learning from nature’s processes, and coming up with nature-based solutions—all of which could be considered a form of answering that of God. This idea applies to many areas of concern. For instance, there is the difference in approach between those who favor technological fixes for climate change (itself a result of speaking to rather than answering nature), and those who would look to how land heals itself, often with the aid of humans who have combined closely studied ecological processes and traditional indigenous knowledge. By the word “land,” I mean Aldo Leopold’s sense; that is, the whole package of rock, soil, and all the living things therein and thereon forming all together a well-functioning ecosystem, the



“biotic community.” Humans can and should be citizens of this community, for after all, we belong here too. There are quite a few people—ecologists, biologists, regenerative farmers, carbon ranchers, permaculturalists, agroecologists, ecological restorationists, and I’m sure, readers of this publication—who, however they articulate it, believe this very thing. To help solve climate change we must help our ecosystems heal themselves. One way to do so is to start with the earth we are walking over (hopefully cheerfully); in other words, begin with the soil.

For much of my life I didn’t think about soil, though I grew up playing in the mud and later gardened partly so I could keep digging in the dirt. I’ve been lucky

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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 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

June 10, 2015. Deadline for article submissions for July-August 2015 *BeFriending Creation*.

Thanks, Friends

QEW wants to thank Friends at Ann Arbor Friends Meeting in Ann Arbor, Michigan for their wonderful hospitality and participation during the QEW Spring 2015 Steering Committee meetings at the end of April.

New friendships were formed, ideas were explored, and plans were made as we worshipped, listened, talked, and shared meals and activities together. On Saturday we made a trip out to the Michigan Friends Center and enjoyed a wonderful mix of business for worship, hikes in the woods, and a spiritual activity from the Spiritual Nurturance committee. ☺



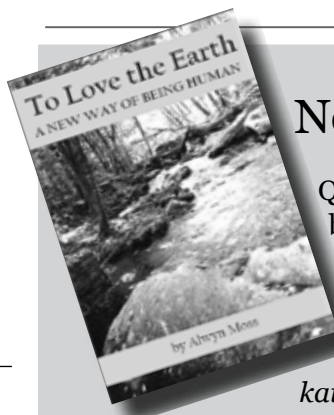
Our Yearly Meeting Representative meeting. A great turnout!



Great conversations happened spontaneously through the weekend.



On Saturday we spent the day at the Michigan Friends Center. Beautiful!



New! To Love the Earth

QEW is pleased to announce a new booklet written by Friend Alwyn Moss of Blacksburg Friends Meeting. Her booklet, *To Love the Earth: A New Way of Being Human*, tells Alwyn's story of engagement with and advocacy for the Earth.

Request your copy today by emailing katherine@quakerearthcare.org. ☺



Testimony, from page 1,

enough to live in pre-WWII houses built on prairie in a place blessed with good precipitation. As a child I believed all soil was black—a sign, I later learned, of good organic content. As an adult in another house, whatever I planted grew just fine as long as other factors such as climate and available light were paid attention to. I’ve dug a trench for rhubarb starts and holes for shrubs and never hit subsoil. Lucky, lucky me. Though I’ve always made compost, not until I trained as a master gardener did I learn very basic soil science: about pH factor; the differences between clay, silt, and sand; the existence of subsoil; the need to improve fertility; how organic matter improves the soil; and the importance of good tilth.

In the last few years I have learned some new, astonishing things. With proper attention and care, the earth beneath our feet—in city backyards, in gardens, parks, on corporate campuses and on farms and ranches—has the potential to sequester enough carbon to help us mitigate drastic climate change while we transition to a low-carbon society. In fact this effort rightly can be seen as a major part of the transition. Not only that, but organic gardening, regenerative farming, and carbon ranching, which actually improve soil, if taken to scale across the globe have the potential to feed billions sustainably. This is a far cry from standard landscaping and industrialized agriculture that strip the soil of its organic content—and its carbon—and destroy the complex web of life involving billions of tiny creatures, bacteria, and fungi interacting with organic matter, minerals, water, and plants that we call topsoil.

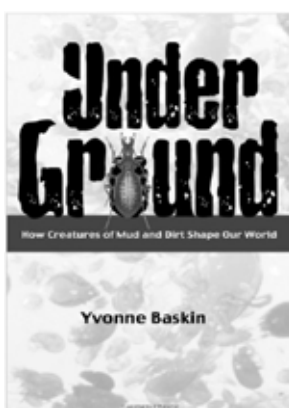
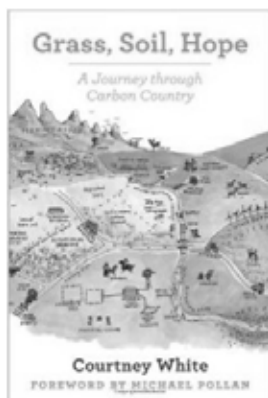
To me, answering that of God means learning enough of the science—some of it very new—to understand how practice can be changed so that residence on a piece of land, no matter the size, includes helping this subterranean ecosystem thrive. Long-term research shows that more biodiverse ecosystems store more carbon, are more productive, and include higher populations of beneficial insects than single species monocultures. Research has also demonstrated how carbon storage comes about through the complex interactions among plants and soil-dwelling fungi and organisms. And answering means practicing, as practice around the world has shown that carbon can

be sequestered and topsoil built up through specific gardening, farming, and ranching techniques, coupled with ecological restoration.

So how can we all become carbon sequestration practitioners, wherever we happen to live? By following some old-fashioned advice: We can educate ourselves by reading books such as *Grass, Soil, Hope: A Journey through Carbon Country*, by Courtney White, *The Soil Will Save Us* by Kristin Ohlson, or *Under Ground: How Creatures of Mud and Dirt Shape Our World*, by Yvonne Baskin, or by watching films such as *Symphony of the Soil*. We can learn the basic ecosystem facts—including plants, animals (including insects), and soils—of the places where we

live. Gardeners can grow perennial, biodiverse, polycultures of mostly native plants; make compost and use it; and refrain from using pesticides or artificial fertilizer. Rural land managers can learn the techniques innovative farmers and ranchers are using to harvest remarkable results by growing carbon as well as crops and herds. We can all join or form groups involved with earthcare and ecological restoration, and if we are practitioners, can help educate others.

Answering that of God includes having a vision of what a restored piece of land—restored earth—might look and function like, nurturing it so that it can repair itself, and in so doing, repair and restore the humans who are tending it. Eventually it might mean taking on an earth-centered identity, in the sense of the deepest green recognition that our selves are formed by the ecosystem of which we are a part and the earthly place in which we reside. When we say we “seek an earth restored,” we literally need look no further than our own backyards. In seeking to answer, in putting ourselves in relationship, in remembering we literally are of the earth, in changing our practice: there lies hope. ∞



You can read more of Adrian’s writings by visiting her blog, *Ecological Gardening: Practicing Reconciliation Ecology in the Chicago Wilderness Region*, at <http://www.ecologicalgardening.net/p/about.html>.

Don't Google That!

By Brad Stocker



IF YOU'RE SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING ONLINE, you can find what you need and donate to your favorite cause at the same time by using Goodsearch as your search tool. Goodsearch is a search engine that donates a penny per search to the cause of your choice, if that organization has established a relationship with Goodsearch. The donation comes from advertisers on the site and is given to the cause you identify. You might not think a penny per search is significant, but when many people choose the same cause, the pennies can add up over a year's worth of searches.

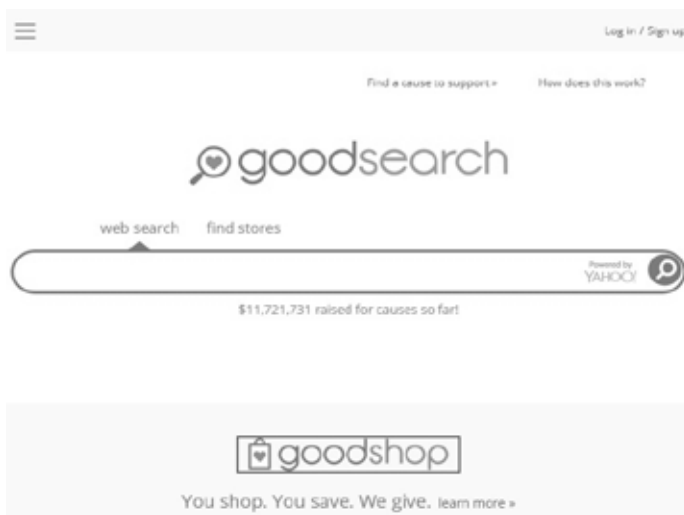
In addition to the penny-per-search donation at Goodsearch, you can also shop using the site's online store, called Goodshop. When you go through the Goodshop page to browse online stores and make purchases, you are giving again to your pre-established cause of choice.

The Goodsearch engine is driven by Yahoo's search engine and seems to be as powerful as Google or other online search tools. Recently, Quaker Earthcare Witness has become one of the causes affiliated with Goodsearch. To have your penny-per-search donation sent to QEW, go to Goodsearch's page at www.goodsearch.com, click the Find a cause to support link in the upper right corner of the page. On the Who Do You Want to Help? page, type *Quaker Earthcare Witness* (not QEW) and press Enter or

click the Search tool to find us.

If you set up Goodsearch as the default search engine for your web browser, you'll be able to replace your Google habit easily and still find what you need with a click of the mouse. And at the same time, you'll be helping QEW!

Give Goodsearch a try. You can always go back to your other search engine if you aren't satisfied. And if you test it out, drop us a note and tell us what you think! ☺



Go to www.goodsearch.com to earn \$.01 for QEW each time you search!

Upcoming Events: Mark Your Calendars Now!

JUNE 5-10
Young Adult Friends
Conference on Equality
at Pendle Hill
Wallingford, PA

JULY 5-10
Visit the **QEW Earth**
Center at the FGC
Gathering, Cullowhee,
NC

SEPTEMBER 20
Join QEW in the **Moral**
March for Climate
Action in Washington,
DC

OCT 22-25
Come to the **QEW Fall**
2015 Steering Commit-
tee, Ben Lomond Quaker
Center, CA



Measuring What Matters

By Mary Gilbert, QEW Representative to the UN

MEASURE WHAT YOU TREASURE...or you might just treasure what you measure.

Imagine for a moment that you are the chief statistician of your country. You regularly generate data on everything your nation asks for, along with the statistical analyses that make the data useful. Together with the chief statisticians of other countries, you make up the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC).

Suddenly people not sophisticated in statistics come along with non-traditional ways of thinking. They want measurement of, say, the nexus of transport systems, agriculture, and water use. Also, the data collected are to be disaggregated rather than clumped in traditional ways. Gender, age, socio-economic class, ethnicity, location (that is, urban or rural), disability status, and other categories are now perceived as meaningful distinctions, and your government wants to compare the different groups. There is demand, too, for data about processes, not just outcomes. A new understanding of complexity underlies this need for non-traditional data, and you may well have to devise new measuring tools.

Goals, Targets, and Indicators

Last year the UN General Assembly (GA) agreed on a list of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These goals will apply to all nations, will be in effect from 2015 to 2030, and are intended to provide transformational guidelines for both the elimination of human poverty and protection of the planetary biosphere.

Within each of the 17 SDGs, multiple targets have been identified. Measured changes in these targets will indicate progress toward the goals, or the lack of same. The GA has agreed on 169 targets, many of which will require new statistical procedures, called "indicators." The UNSC is charged with providing these indicators. It's a whopper of a challenge that the UNSC doesn't welcome.

Disgruntled Statisticians and Conflicting Nations

The UNSC will meet for the first time in May, but back in January its members received the list of 169

targets. One observer remarked, "it was very clear that this was new to them." In responding, the UNSC asserted that "just 29% (of the targets) are well defined and based on the latest scientific evidence, while 54% need more work and 17% are weak or non-essential." The UNSC would like their task changed to something more manageable.

What will the systemic transformation promised by the SDGs entail? Targets and meaningful indicators are very important. Powerful nations like the United States and Canada are pushing to drop some targets and combine others. They say further that such early "improvements" will create a precedent for making further changes as time goes on. This is a threat to weaker countries which hold that loss of crucial information from targets would make it easy to ignore difficult systemic problems and to continue "business as usual." They insist the decision reached last year was a hard-won political compromise that must be respected, and that statisticians are not the right body to shape international policy ...even if they are being asked to stretch their competence to include the complexity of current understandings.

A separate challenge is the capacity of poor countries to carry out the work needed. Not all nations have adequate staffs of statisticians and data gatherers. Where will the money come from to get them up to snuff? Will funds needed to collect and process data have to be diverted from on-the-ground programs that are supposed to transform the way we live? There is a move at this time to add this need for funding capacity-building to the agenda of finance discussions.

Civil Society to the Rescue?

I attended a March meeting of the UN General Assembly (GA) on targets and indicators for the SDGs. Every morning we in civil society had a meeting of our own. This was the best hour of the day. We brought each other up to date on what had happened the day before and looked ahead at the day to come. Exchanges

Continued on next page

were frank and open, and people got to know each other.

Although the UNSC had previously stated that they have no interest in collaborating with civil society organizations (CSOs), there was great energy at these meetings to get CSOs involved in the nuts and bolts of working on indicators. There are statistical models being used by civil society that the UNSC may not know about. CSOs could offer examples, even put together a coordinated “best practices” demonstration of what CSOs are doing. A platform where these demonstrations are posted could be useful, but interaction at the beginning of the UNSC process would be best.

Ambassador Kamau of Kenya, a co-chair of the meeting, has been a champion of increasing civil society participation for the last two years. Before the end of the week, Kamau said he would ask the UNSC to consider “space for civil society input.” Our fingers are crossed.

In May, the whole thing will be opened up again, this time with the statisticians in attendance. I plan to be there. If the world is going to understand the consequences of policy actions and make better decisions, we need good data. I want to know whether the UN will be able to measure what matters.



Ambassador Macharia Kamau of Kenya.

Resources

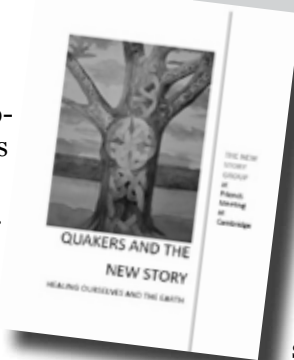
- The UN Statistical Commission is comprised of the chief statisticians of all UN member states. It is not itself a branch of the UN, but it oversees the UN Statistical Department, which is a UN branch.
- For an awesome example of disaggregated data, go to <https://www.worldwewant2015.org/>. To learn more about the criteria for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), go to <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/sustainabledevelopment-goals>. ☞

Quakers and the New Story

by Mary Coehlo

IT WAS ONLY IN THE LAST CENTURY that scientists have been able to connect their many discoveries in astronomy, geology, evolutionary biology, and other subjects into a continuous story of the origins of human beings, the earth, and all its beings. It is an origin story we never could have imagined. It tells us of the unbroken, unfolding of the light and energy of the great flaring forth (big bang), the formation of the elements in the stars, the beginnings of life on Earth and the remarkable evolutionary story of life on this planet to its present great diversity. Human beings have arisen within (not out of) this story. Upon learning the story, innumerable questions about human identity and the nature of the earth and cosmos immediately come to mind.

A group at Friends Meeting at Cambridge in Massachusetts has been meeting monthly, some of us for eight years now, to ponder the implications and revelations of the story. We find it profoundly engaging to explore the depth of our belonging within the story from both scientific and spiritual points of view. We have been informed by Brian Swimme’s video series *Canticle to the*



For a printed version send \$6.00 to New Story Group, Friends Meeting at Cambridge, 5 Longfellow Park Cambridge, MA 02138

Cosmos and *The Powers of the Universe*, by the writings of Thomas Berry, and by the books *Evolutionaries* by Carter Phipps and *Evolution’s Purpose* by Steve McIntosh. Recently a member of the group spoke to us about Teilhard de Chardin and his Mass on the World.

We have found the New Story can strengthen the witness and understandings of Friends. It offers a home for the Light, a depth of belonging that deepens human self understanding as earth beings, and important changes in perception of human relation to the life systems of the earth. The shift in consciousness offered by the new story is one important change among the many required for the survival of the human species and the great diversity of species that yet remains.

The Cambridge New Story Group has written an 18-page illustrated pamphlet called “Quakers and the New Story” that describes some of our understandings. It can be read in electronic form at <http://fmcquaker.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Quakers-and-the-New-Story-Final.pdf>. ☞

SEYM Breaks New Ground with a Field Secretary for Earthcare

by Barbara Letsch and Brad Stocker



By Mary Coehlo, *The Great Read Oak*

THIS APRIL, SOUTHEASTERN YEARLY MEETING gathered and among other decisions Friends took a huge leap of faith. They established a new, full-time position under the care and guidance of SEYM and its Earthcare Committee: Field Secretary for Earthcare. This position will have a salary and benefits. Its work is outlined by the minute posted on the SEYM website (<http://www.seym.org/earthcare-committee.html>).

This new position is the outcome of many Friends' efforts to bring Earthcare issues and climate change in particular to a level of attention commensurate with its urgency and need. The bioregions within the area of SEYM are all particularly vulnerable to climate change and its effects on sea rise, water, and more.

Some time ago SEYM Friends began sending representatives to Quaker Earthcare Witness meetings and established an Earthcare Committee. Three years ago the Earthcare Committee offered a Minute on Climate Change which went through a year of seasoning. At last year's SEYM gathering, the Minute on Climate Change was approved. When it was, Phoebe Anderson, the Clerk, asked that we all consider how to implement the Minute. She reminded us that often we, Friends, are good at writing elegant and beautiful language and then letting it go at that. She challenged us to find a way to turn the words into productive action.

The Earthcare Committee undertook writing a working set of Minutes to implement a position for a person led to this work. Over the year, these Minutes were threshed by Monthly Meetings and the committee brought those results to this year's SEYM Gathering.

After the first reading, there were many valuable comments that needed to be considered. Lunches were given over to the work, and weighty Friends thoughtfully and spiritually reshaped the Minutes into five separate and interdependent Minutes to establish the Field Secretary for Earthcare (FSE) position as a full-time role; to set up a restricted fund for donations specifically for the financing; to ask the Trustees to put in money to seed the fund; to evaluate the work of the FSE at the next Gathering to determine whether the position should continue.

Each of the five Minutes were brought to the fourth plenary and offered one at a time. As each Minute was discerned and approved, we felt the room alive with spirit and Light. Each step unfolded this beautiful blossom. It was truly an exercise in Quaker spirit-led process.

What had come out of the Earthcare Committee as a humble recommendation for a part-time volunteer as Field Secretary for Earthcare through the nurturing and care of Friends in action bloomed into a full-time position, with seed money beyond initial requests and expectations. It was emotionally, spiritually, and physically challenging to experience. It is clear that we were held in the Light by the Gathering.

Before we left the Plenary, we had added nearly \$3,000 to the fund established only minutes prior with donations from those present. There was a buzz of excitement that we had accomplished the first steps in a very important movement toward doing our moral part in caring for Earth and future generations.

Continued on next page

Now new tasks lie before us. We must quickly build the fund to the minimum we have set for the position, find a spirit-led individual to fill the position and get the real work of the Field Secretary for Earthcare into motion. To this end, we have raised about one third of the money and we are seeking donations and grants to help find the rest. Our target is a modest \$30,000 to cover salary and benefits.

We will update our progress with other articles as our preparations continue to unfold, and we hope that other Yearly Meetings will find a way open to a similar action. Anyone who is interested in the particulars of

the process to this point can visit the SEYM Earthcare webpage or contact one of the SEYM Earthcare Committee co-clerks: Barbara Letsch at bjletsch@gmail.com or Brad Stocker, brstocker@yahoo.com. We are anxious to share this with others as we feel deeply the pains of Earth.

If you are so led to help fund the position, checks can be made to SEYM with a memo or note on the check that it is for FSE. Send them to:

SEYM
P.O. Box 4024
Winter Park, Fl. 32793 ☞

Is This Your Year? Apply for a QEW Mini-Grant!

HAS YOUR MEETING BEEN DREAMING of creating a community garden, harvesting rainwater, relandscaping to make use of native plants, putting in a low-flush toilet, or otherwise improving the energy efficiency of your meeting house or neighborhood?

QEW makes grants available for Friends' organizations who want to enhance their physical/spiritual relationship with the Earth. We offer matching grants of up to \$500 each to support projects consistent with QEW values. We accept applications on a rolling basis, so if your meeting has a project you'd love to do this summer, download an application today!

QEW Mini-Grant Criteria

We are looking to help fund projects that meet the following criteria:

- Improve your immediate environment
- Involve, inform, and educate members young, old and in between
- May reduce carbon footprints
- Create opportunities to improve and learn about your own local ecosystems
- Enrich your local community
- Set examples and inspiration for others
- Provide spirit-led, meaningful work and create fun for all participants

See Examples of Past Projects

If you'd like to see some examples of projects we've funded in the past, visit the Completed Mini-Grants page on our website (<http://www.quakerearthcare.org/mini-grant-history>). Click the links in the column



Vancouver drip irrigation project, produced with matching funds from a QEW Mini-Grant

on the right side of the page to display PowerPoint presentations of Mini-Grant projects funded in years past.

How to Apply

When you're ready to apply for a QEW Mini-Grant, go to the Apply for a QEW Mini-Grant page (<http://www.quakerearthcare.org/article/apply-qew-mini-grant>) and download the application. If you have questions about the eligibility of your project or the completion of your application, please contact Maia Wolff at maia.wolff@gmail.com.

Help Fund Future Mini-Grants

If you want to be part of the effort to encourage and support meetings as they work on greening their local meeting houses, we invite you to make a donation to QEW in support of Mini-Grants. You can easily make an online donation to QEW Mini-Grants by going to this page: <https://secure.quakerearthcare.org/civicrm/contribute/transact?reset=1&id=6>. Thank you!

And good luck! ☞

Finding Our Inner Activists—with Humor and Heart

By Katherine Murray

ARE YOU AN ARMCHAIR EARTHCARE ACTIVIST? Do you have a growing concern for the planet that you aren't sure what to do with? If you feel a gentle stirring (or a more insistent inner nudge) in your life, take heart: Eileen Flanagan's new book, *Renewable: One Woman's Search for Simplicity, Faithfulness, and Hope* (She Writes Press, 2015) will encourage you and help you find ease with your own unfolding.

Flanagan is the clerk of the Earth Quaker Action Team (EQAT), a grassroots, nonviolent social action group taking on important issues like mountaintop removal or their latest campaign, BLAM! (Bank Like Appalachia Matters!), which was instrumental in getting PNC bank to step back from financing this devastating and dangerous form of surface coal mining.

Flanagan's high-energy, engaging story begins with the moment she handcuffed herself to the White House fence in her first committed act of civil disobedience. Readers then are taken on a colorful retrospective journey that begins in Flanagan's austere-but-able only-child upbringing, to her formative years in Botswana as a Peace Corp volunteer, and into middle life, where she finds herself with two kids and a husband, a larger house than she expected, and a lot of angst and inner pressure about the idea that her living is out of sync with her earlier values on consumption, sustainability, and community.

As she struggled to reconcile her image of herself as a middle-aged mom with a big house and two teenagers (including all the requisite devices and accoutrements) with who she'd been and how simply she'd lived in Botswana, Flanagan began to see how simplicity and sustainability could be goals in her life in U.S. culture as well:

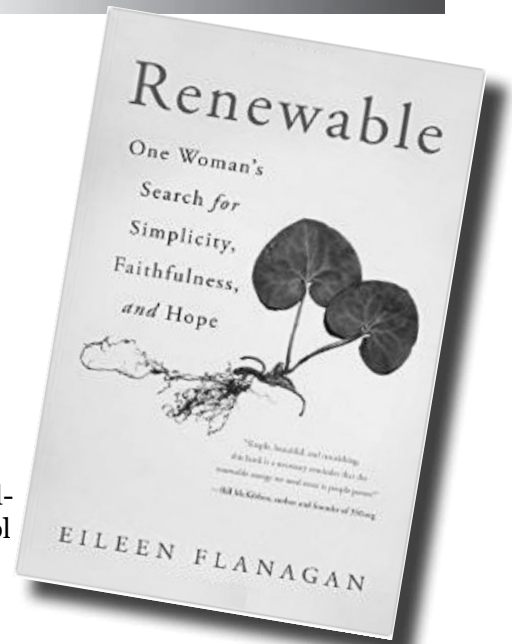
"Even so, we did have choices. The size of our house was within our control, obviously, as well as the temperature we set our thermostat, though we had

no individual control over the process that produced the gas that heated our home. Similarly, we chose what kind of food to eat and where to buy it, but our options were shaped by farm policies that favored big agribusiness, which used a lot of fuel to produce and transport food. Given this tension, I wondered, how guilty should I feel about my carbon footprint, which was much lower than the U.S. average, but much higher than the global average?"

She talked about this with her wise friend Deb, who offered some compelling clarity: "Being conscious just means that I am willing to make a deliberate choice." (p 107-108)

Flanagan's book weaves the rich storyline of her inner and outer life expertly. She invites readers into the messy times when she felt caught in tide pools of despair and regret, but she balances it with a light touch and more than a little humor and self-compassion. And as for her big moment of civil disobedience, getting arrested for handcuffing herself to the White House fence? Darryl Hannah was one of the celebrities also participating that day, and Flanagan shares that she shows up in the background of the photos the press inevitably captured of Hannah, munching on an energy bar. (It's true; I googled it.) These types of funny, down-to-earth moments are sprinkled liberally throughout the book, enabling Flanagan to bring compassion and heart to season the struggle between idealistic call and realistic action.

Renewable is a wonderful, story-filled book, showing us ultimately that activists are not born—they unfold gradually, one choice at a time. That of course means there's hope for all of us—in armchairs, on sidewalks, and every place in-between. ♪

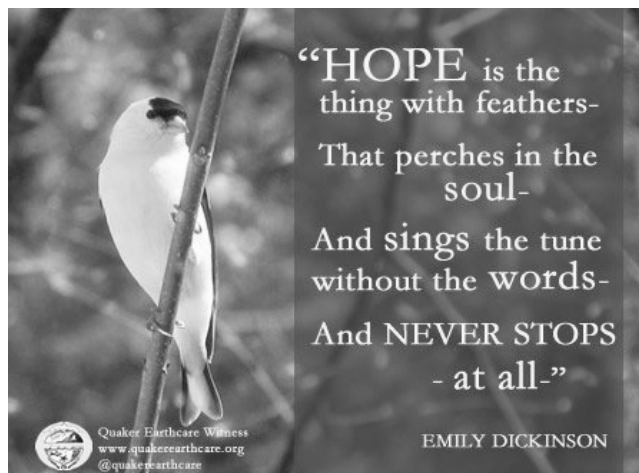


Get Resources for Your Meeting

THE PROGRESS ALL ACROSS THE CONTINENT is encouraging: Friends meetings throughout the U.S. and Canada are talking about their earthcare concerns and moving toward discerning how to respond to our call to ecological stewardship and sustainable living.

Here are a number of resources you can review and download to share with your meeting. You can also request information, toolkits, pamphlets, QEW speakers, and more!

- Many meetings and Friends organizations have come to unity on statements and minutes that they have shared with us. We post all the statements and minutes you send in the Speak Out section of our website. You'll find the statements here: <http://www.quakerearthcare.org/article/minutes-and-statements-friends-meetings-and-organizations>.
- Similarly, you can read and download all the statements QEW has drafted (<http://www.quakerearthcare.org/article/qew-speaks-out-statements-minutes>) and get the latest edition of the shared statement on Climate Change from Quaker groups (<http://www.quakerearthcare.org/article/jan-2015-facing-challenge-climate-change-shared-statement-quaker-groups>).
- Download PDFs of all our issues of BeFriending Creation (including this one!) as well as Quaker Earthcare Bulletins (detailed reports about specific earthcare concerns) from our website, at <http://www.quakerearthcare.org/befriending-creation> and <http://www.quakerearthcare.org/quaker-eco-bulletin>, respectively.
- Looking for something to display about the environment at your Yearly Meeting? We have a number of resources available to help you with that. Go to the Take QEW to Your Yearly Meeting page (<http://www.quakerearthcare.org/article/take-qew-your-yearly-meeting>) to download everything you need to make tabletop display boards on Earth-related topics.
- Want to help bring your meeting up to speed on various earthcare issues? Request our Earthcare Witness Toolkit for Meetings. This toolkit includes a copy of *Earthcare for Friends* (a 264-page book), as well as a large collection of all of our latest pamphlets.



- Speaking of pamphlets, did you know that we've produced six new pamphlets in the last three years? You will find a complete listing of our available pamphlets online at <http://www.quakerearthcare.org/pamphlets>. You can download and share the pamphlets from the website or email Katherine to request printed copies to be sent through the mail.
- Getting educated about complicated earthcare topics can be a challenge, and for that reason we have a section on our website called Fossil Free Friends, where you can find (and share) everything you need to know about divesting from fossil fuels. Why does it matter, how does it fit Friends' testimonies, and how can you get started? These materials would make a great resource for an ecologically-focused First Day school session. You'll find Fossil Free Friends at <http://www.quakerearthcare.org/article/fossil-free-friends>.
- A picture's worth a thousand words. For the last several months, we've been preparing and sharing graphics on Facebook. We also post them on our website and hope Friends will download them and use them freely—in bulletins, newsletters, email messages, and more. You'll find the graphics here: <http://www.quakerearthcare.org/resource/graphical/get-qew-graphics-share>.

Send your requests to katherine@quakerearthcare.org or visit the Contact page on our website: <http://www.quakerearthcare.org/contact>. ✍

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and greenhouse gasses simultaneously gives us both an immediate response to the worst of the impacts of climate change we are seeing now (for example, melting glaciers) and buys us vital time to avoid some of the truly catastrophic impacts that runaway greenhouse gasses could cause (such as melting all of Greenland).

More good news and bad news: black carbon is responsible for many of the detrimental health impacts we see, such as respiratory problems and asthma. Reducing black carbon to mitigate climate change will at the same time improve our health.

Even more good news, much of the technology that could be used to reduce black carbon, such as efficient cook stoves and passive solar, will provide jobs and decentralize energy sources. In Ladakh, villagers are building homes with compressed earth bricks and passive solar instead of burning wood and dung in open fires to heat drafty houses. They are also electrifying with solar instead of using kerosene for lighting. In Kathmandu, efficient cook stoves are replacing open fires (both burn wood or dung with vastly different rates of efficiency and smoke). In rural India, solar micro-grids are replacing sooty (and dangerous) kerosene for lighting and phone charging. The biggest impediment to implementing these technologies is financing them.

Some policy folks are concerned that time spent on reducing black carbon is time taken away from limiting CO₂ emissions, the elephant in the room that requires

long-term radical reductions with a long lag-time to see results. Current thinking, however, is that the situation requires both happening simultaneously. Sonam Wangchuk, a Ladakhi inventor featured in this book, describes reducing black carbon as “win, win, win, win” because serious reductions will improve healthy air indoors and out, thus increasing longevity and well-being immediately; support the development of local technologies and micro-grids; and lessen climate change.

“Ice doesn’t care about politics or ideology—it just melts.”

This book left me challenges, but also with hope based on our creativity and our strength of community to surmount the challenge of climate change. ♡

Keep in Touch!

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Soot

by Shelley Tanenbaum, QEW General Secretary

CLEANING UP SOOT is the perfect counter example to the outdated concept that we have to choose between slowing climate change and economic development. Do you want to dump your despair about climate change along with getting rid of all that black smoke? The story is told with unusual wit and charm by Jonathan Mingle in his recent (2015) book about black carbon and the people of Ladakh, *Fire and Ice: Soot, Solidarity and Survival on the Roof of the World*.

Black carbon is formed when carbon-based fuels (wood, dung, coal, oil, and gas) are burned inefficiently. If the fire isn't hot enough or there isn't enough oxygen, there will be a plume of dark smoke filled with unburned particles. Even worse, open fires are extremely poor at delivering heat where it is needed, requiring more fuel and producing more smoke. The result is that current practices put harmful particles in our lungs and excess CO₂, methane, and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

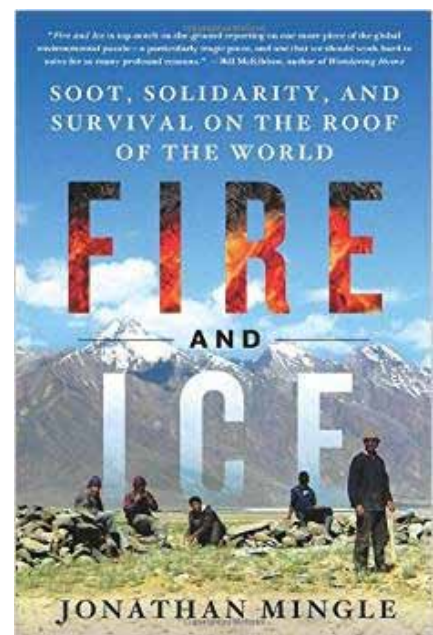
Mingle explains that black carbon has been underestimated as a contributor to climate change, which is bad news. The silver lining, however, is that unlike CO₂, which takes decades if not centuries to be removed from the atmosphere, when we reduce black carbon emissions, the effect is immediate and occurs



right in the same neighborhood where it originated. As an added benefit, cleaning up black carbon will have significant local health benefits.

By simultaneously reducing black carbon along with CO₂ and other greenhouse gas emissions, there will be an immediate effect from the black carbon reductions, buying us much-needed time to get our CO₂ emissions under control. Reducing CO₂ in the atmosphere has been compared to turning around an oil tanker—there is

significant lag time between making the changes and the atmospheric response. Reducing both black carbon



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