



# BeFriending Creation

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

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## Reckoning the “Other”

By Shelley Tanenbaum, QEW General Secretary

TWO DYNAMIC AND CHALLENGING SPEAKERS stood out for me at the 2016 Friends General Conference (FGC) gathering in St. Joseph, Minnesota this July. Nekima Levy-Pounds, law professor and leader of the Black Lives Matter movement, came to us after sitting-in at the Governor’s mansion in the immediate hours after Philando Castilo, a young black man, was shot and killed by a police officer as he was reaching for his identification.

She described her trajectory as a young black southerner growing up poor, transported to an elite boarding school in the northeast with a generous scholarship, then University and law school. She had successfully gotten a law degree and a doctorate and was teaching at the university level when she received a calling from God to open a civil rights law clinic.

She resisted the calling for as long as she could—this would change her path away from a safe career as a law professor and into unknown territory. No sooner was the clinic established when her next calling came: Michael Brown had just been killed in Ferguson by the police, and she was drawn to be a witness there. This calling took much prayer on her part and with her family, yet she soon found herself not just being present as a witness, but being the first person arrested as the protests grew. Dr. Levy-Pounds has become one of the most prominent leaders of the Black Lives Matter movement.

She had two primary messages for the predominantly white FGC audience. She told us, unsparingly but with a welcome dose of humor, that we need to wake up about the extreme inequity that goes with white privilege. All Quakers—both white and Friends of color—were inspired by her example to be open to following spirit-led callings and taking bold action.



Sunday Night opening plenary “facing bench” just prior to the opening message. Photo credit: FGC

Peggy Senger Morrison followed Dr. Levy-Pounds on the final evening plenary with a bible story like no other you have ever heard. She is a founding member and the first minister of Freedom Friends Church in Salem, Oregon. She is also a long-distance motorcyclist with a passion for getting lost on the open road. Freedom Friends embraces both Christianity and diversity, and it is open to people of all sexual/gender persuasions.

She talked about two young teenage girls who bravely and faithfully changed the course of religious history, despite the first young girl having been abducted and sexually assaulted and the second young girl being betrothed and impregnated without consent. The first young girl, Esther, used her intelligence and beauty to save her people, the Jews of Persia, all the while risking her life. Instead of remaining a passive

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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

**August 30, 2016.** Deadline for article submissions for September-October 2016 *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 Friends,

I recently attended the QUIP conference and wanted to send along some information from organizations dealing with the issues of neonicotinoids or neonics killing bees and glyphosate (which is in Roundup) killing milkweed that Monarch butterflies depend on.

Friends of the Earth ([www.foe.org](http://www.foe.org), 1-866-217-8499) has sent an action letter to the Secretary of Agriculture urging him to investigate USDA repression and censorship of this information. Also they have convinced Home Depot and Lowes to eliminate bee-killing pesticides from their shelves and are now pressuring Ace and True Value Hardware stores to do the same.

The Environmental Defense Fund ([www.edf.org](http://www.edf.org), 1-800-684-3322) is working to restore millions of acres of milkweed to put Monarchs on a path to recovery. Other organizations working on these issues are Pesticide Action Network (PAN), which is researching and speaking on agroecology as an alternative to industrial agriculture and genetically engineered crops; Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), working to phase out neonic sales, and I believe Environmental Action is working on these issues as well.

Beekeepers have been complaining for more than a decade and finally the EPA ruled this year that one of the neonics, Imidacloprid, posed a significant risk to citrus and cotton—but not corn and leafy vegetables. However, one farmer watched bees die in neighboring cornfields after this chemical was used there. I hope this is helpful information; feel free to contact me for more information. I plan to set up a display on these issues in at our yearly meeting (Ohio Valley YM).

Jane Telfair Stowe

### Bees Attend Keeper's Funeral

ADAMS, Mass. (AP)—A strange tradition, from the forgotten rural years when almost every family kept bees, was startlingly recalled after the death of John Zepka.

Throughout his life, Zepka had raised, worked with and loved bees. He became widely known in the Berkshire Hills as a man who "had a way with them."

When the cortege reached the grave, mourners found the funeral tent swarming with bees—on the tent ceiling and clinging to floral sprays. They did not annoy the mourners—just remained immobile. Nothing like it had ever been seen here before.

Recalled was the tradition, "Telling the Bees," kept alive in the poetry of John Greenleaf Whittier and Eugene Field. It held that the bees must be told when a member of a family dies—and the hive draped with a shroud of black—lest the bees leave their hive.







# Transitioning Times

RUAH SWENNERFELT, QEW'S FORMER General Secretary, has just published a new book with Quaker Institute for the Future, entitled, *Rising to the Challenge: The Transition Movement and People of Faith* (QIF Focus Books, 2016). As part of the research for her book, she traveled to a number of Transition communities in various parts of the world and came back with some fascinating and hopeful stories. Recently Ruah participated in a Q&A interview with us to share some of the backstory and vision for her book.

1. *Your book does a great job of introducing readers to the Transition movement and showing how it arises organically from the needs and gifts of different groups in different regions. I found myself wondering whether folks who are part of Transition groups tend to live in the same small community (or shared communal space) or whether they come together around this vision but live in different areas. Do you have a sense of that?*

RS: I think for a Transition Initiative to be successful, people need to live in close proximity to one another. Otherwise folks are having to drive large distances to have the intimate experience of eating, laughing, and planning together. I see some of this same problem in our religious communities today. Long ago the church was the central hub of the community and everyone knew one another and could be there for each other in times of need. Today in our Friends' Meetings we are often so scattered that it's hard even to get people to come to a mid-week worship or to a mid-week event. The Meeting is no longer so central to our lives. We have many outside activities that feed our need for community.

On the other hand, the brilliance of the Transition Movement has been the evolving hub movement. We can have a Transition Town, Neighborhood, or even Street, and then connect to the wider Movement through hubs. I'm part of a New England Hub, New England Resilience and Transition (NERT), which hosts regional events, conference calls, and has an active online regular connection with one another, where we get inspired by other folks' successes.

2. *Was your perspective challenged or deepened by any of the Transition towns you visited?*

RS: Transition communities are large and small and some have been going for a good number of years



Ruah sharing at a "Transition Cafe" at Transition Tervuran, Belgium.

and others formed more recently. I was really drawn to the work of small Transition Communities, which often don't have the resources and support that the larger, well-connected ones have. Transition Turvuren, Belgium had a small number of active, involved, and hopeful people. They were well informed of their challenges, locally and nationally. They had a strong sense of commitment to the purposes of the Transition Movement. My host organized a "Transition Cafe" where people come together to share ideas and plan projects. It was an honor to be part of that discussion and I saw the value of hosting such events regularly in communities. Maybe small groups in homes, with a themed discussion. It builds intimacy.

Another community that was inspiring was in Kinsale, Ireland. Really that's the community that inspired the whole movement because Rob Hopkins was a permaculture teacher there and he began see how the ethics and principles of permaculture could inspire and guide communities, not just agriculture. He was British and returned to England, but the people who had learned from him were excited when they heard that Rob and others in Totnes, England began a Transition Totnes experiment. The Kinsale folks were quick to pick up on those beginnings and began Transition Kinsale. Though small in number, in five or six years they had completed a number of exciting projects and continued to be enthusiastic and loyal.

3. *How have Quakers been responding to the Transition movement?*

RS: There are a number of Quakers who are part of

Transition Initiatives. The numbers aren't overwhelming, but at the recent FGC Gathering in Minnesota, I met people in my workshop and others there who were involved. I think it's such a great match, since the ethics—People Care, Earth Care, Fair Share—fit right in with Friends Testimonies and fit so well with all the major religions of the world. As well, they fit in with those who consider themselves non-theists or atheists. It's an invitation to everyone to come to the table. That's what inspired me to write the book. It was an opportunity to introduce people of faith to Transitioners and vice versa.

4. *How do you feel spirit leading you personally in this work?*

RS: I've worked for many decades on the issues of peace, justice, and Earthcare and in the early years tried to show how our care of the earth was intimately related to peace and justice issues. We certainly see now how climate change has created droughts and floods and climate chaos, which has led to resource wars and the overwhelming rise in refugees. As a Friend I feel compelled to work for a peaceful and healthy world. Spirit constantly nudges me forward when I'm tired or discouraged. And Spirit shows up in all those marvelous people working so hard for the same goals. Then I feel hope in the face of disaster. And that hope is the spirit working in me.

5. *What is the vision you have for the book? Where will it go and what will it do?*

RS: Obviously I'm hoping that people will read the book, share it with others, and possibly be inspired to join or start a Transition Initiative. But at least I hope the readers are inspired to become more connected with their neighbors and form loving and caring communities of resilience. I hope I'm invited to share what I've learned with Quakers and to multi-faith audiences. Two different book tours are in the making right now. One in the northeast and one in the southeast. I'll make myself available wherever I go.

6. *What obstacles do you think the Transition movement faces overall?*

RS: This is an interesting question. If you look at the successes of the Transition Initiatives in Europe and then the slow growth of the movement in the U.S.,

you might wonder why. My theory is that Europeans grow up with a sense of the common good. I learn much of this from my Swedish cousins (I was born in Stockholm). I see how they care about universal access to healthcare, tuition-free higher education, good public transportation; they try to use less, and they care about their climate and environmental footprints. When there is already that sense of the importance of the common good, it's much easier to bring people together to act for that common good. We in the U.S. are inspired to be individuals. We learn to care about ourselves above all other issues. It's a big hurdle to jump over. But all of us who have been inspired by our faith can bring that sense of the common good to our community. And there still are plenty of people without a faith community who are ready and willing to do the work. We just have to find each other.

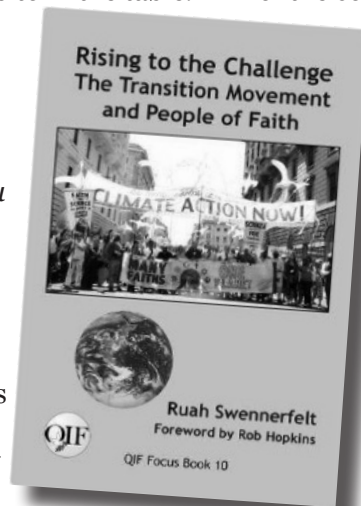
7. *Do you know whether there have been any studies done (like the "Blue Zones" research) that shows the social/health/environmental benefit of being part of a Transition group? (I think this would be a fascinating study.)*

RS: You know, it would be a fascinating study, but I don't know that it's been done. I do know that when I meet with other Transitioners, we share that sense of hope and psychological health.

8. *It sounds as though the Transition movement has been growing since its inception. If you project into the future, what do you see for Transition in 2020? 2030?*

RS: I think its growth has slowed down since it began. Maybe my book will help new initiative get started? There are trainers from Transition US who are ready and willing to do the weekend training to help begin an Initiative. It's called a "Transition Launch Training." Two excellent resources are [www.transitionus.org](http://www.transitionus.org) and [www.transitionnetwork.org](http://www.transitionnetwork.org). One can learn what is happening all around the world and here in the US. ☺

Ruah Swennerfelt, former General Secretary of QEW and author of *Rising to the Challenge: The Transition Movement and People of Faith*, is a member of Burlington, Vermont Monthly Meeting. She is on the board of Transition Town Charlotte and Vermont Interfaith Power and Light and serves as co-clerk of Ministry and Counsel in her Monthly Meeting a clerk of the New England Earthcare Ministry Committee.



## BOOK REVIEW

# Rising to the Challenge

## The Transition Movement and People of Faith

Review by Katherine Murray

Above all, Ruah Swennerfelt's book, *Rising to the Challenge: The Transition Movement and People of Faith*, is a hopeful book.

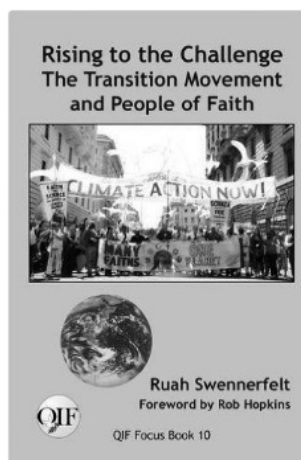
Filled with stories of people who feel moved to take action toward right relationship with nature, the book offers readers a close, engaging look at the unique nature of thriving Transition groups all over the world and makes the case for people of faith to let conscience and spirit lead them toward practices in support of the common good.

With uplifting prayers and poems from a rainbow of traditions, Ruah frames her introduction to the Transition movement with practical information about the movement's unfolding history and its foundational ideas, key personalities, and trajectory toward growth.

Her own story demonstrates how her inner stirring toward action led her through protest and engagement toward ideas that bring about the blossoming of a collaborative Transition community.

In one of my favorite chapters, Ruah gives readers snapshots of various Transition groups in different countries, sharing their challenges, their unique approaches, and ideas that help us understand how the Transition approach arises out of the unique needs and assets in individual landscapes and communities. The group we feel led to create will be uniquely ours, but it will share the common ideas and values at the heart of the Transition approach.

Along the way, there are resources available to



*Rising to the Challenge: The Transition Movement and People of Faith*

**Author:** Ruah Swennerfelt  
**Publisher:** Quaker Institute for the Future  
**Imprint:** QIF Focus Books  
**Copyright:** 2016

**Available for purchase:**  
 On Amazon.com  
 At [www.quakerinstitute.org](http://www.quakerinstitute.org)

help. In addition to writing her book, Ruah and Friend Steve Chase have developed Quakers in Transition (<http://quakersintransition.wordpress.com>), a blog that is an online project of the New England Yearly Meeting Earthcare Ministries Committee, where Friends can learn more about the Transition movement, find study aids, learn about workshops, and more.

You can purchase a print or Kindle copy of Ruah's book at Amazon.com: <https://www.amazon.com/Rising-Challenge-Transition-Movement-People/dp/9768142928> or purchase and/or download the book in PDF form from the Quaker Institute for the Future website at <http://www.quakerinstitute.org>. ☞

## Calling All Friends!

Whether you consider yourself a liberal Friend, a conservative Friend, an evangelical Friend, a Buddhist Friend, a non-theist Friend, or another kind of Friend altogether, we invite you to submit a 200-to-500-word, personal essay for our upcoming Special Edition of *BeFriending Creation*, "Friends on Earthcare."

We'd love to hear how the lens of your Quaker tradition helps you make choices for right action when it comes to our planet. You might write about how the testimonies, scripture, or your experience of the inner light call you to care more intentionally for the earth. Our hope is that all Friends will be blessed by the richness of our diversity and heartened by the sense of purpose and compassion we share.

Please send your essays to Katherine at [katherine@quakerearthcare.org](mailto:katherine@quakerearthcare.org) by August 30, 2016.





# Young Faith Leaders Rising during GreenFaith Convergence in New Orleans

By Sara Wolcott

MYSELF AND THE OTHER 60 young (aged 20-35) faith leaders from across Canada and the United States who were partaking in GreenFaith's 2016 North American Convergence eagerly peered out of our bus windows as it turned onto the road leading to Isle de Jean Charles, Louisiana.

We had been traveling for two hours south from our base camp at Tulane University in New Orleans to reach the Isle de Jean Charles. The island is disappearing so fast that it has become the site of the first official American climate refugees; inhabitants are to receive \$48 million from the federal government to support their movement off the island.

## Reality Check

Our leader into the bayou of Louisiana was David Gauche, the primary organizer of Bayou Interfaith Shared Community Organizing. He had been telling us stories of Louisiana's coastal erosion, damaging oil spills, and climate-worsened hurricanes for the past several hours. He pointed out the window toward a two-mile-wide body of water and said that 15 years ago, that was a 20-foot pond. Twenty minutes down the road, he said the same thing about another body of water. We all gasped and shook our heads. None of us were new to climate change; we'd heard stories from other localities of increased storms, strange weather, droughts, and the increasing damage done by development. Still, there is nothing like having a local person tell you that a body of water that looks perfectly normal to you is not.

And the dead cypress trees surrounding us? They weren't normal either. In Louisiana's wetlands, cypress

trees' broad roots hold the soil together, providing the stability the ecosystem needs to survive. But they can't take too much salt water. They were dying because the sea's waters were increasingly encroaching upon the land. The conditions had been impacting the local people, especially fishermen, for years.

It's one thing to watch the sea eating your livelihood; it's another to watch it consuming your land. Or rather, to watch the consumption of a growth-based globalized economy become so strong that even the sea becomes an over-consumer, eating the land that has fed and sheltered human beings in current-day Louisiana for thousands of years (earliest settlers arrived 10,000 years ago; evidence of people cultivating squash, beans, sunflowers, and maize dates back to 100 BCE).

Our first stop on the sweltering island was near a sign that read:

*We are not moving off this island. If some people want to move they can go. But leave us alone. The people have the right to live where they want, not where people tell them to go and live. They say the island is fading away. Soon we will not have the island left. If the island is not good, stay away. May God bless the Island.*

It was our first tangible indication that the people on the island were bitterly divided about whether they should stay or go. Since 1955, over 90 percent of the island has faded away due to a combination of hurricanes, sea level rise, and, primarily, channels cut by loggers and oil companies that contribute to coastal

erosion. The two Native American tribes on the island, most of whom were re-settled to this island a hundred years ago, do not agree on best next steps: at the moment, the official policy is voluntary leaving. A short, older man who lived across the one road that runs through the long and skinny island came to talk to us. He was born on the island: he planned to stay on it until he died.

Our next stop was to talk to the 90-something-year-old Father Roche who was born on the island and is now retired from his duties as a priest. He talked to us under his house, which he had raised on 11-foot stilts after a hurricane had flooded his home. He told us about growing up on the largely indigenous-populated island, where it took three years for the local school to get the 8th grade text book; about his own, nearly impossible journey to seminary and his life as one of the few Native American Catholic Priests in his region. We could never doubt how much he loved the land, the people, God, or Pope Francis.

Leaving him took longer than the organizers had planned: at the end of our talk, we put him in the center of our circle and laid our hands on him to bless him and the people of the island whom he serves as best he can. Afterwards, we all lined up to shake his hand, and he gave many of us, including non-Catholics like myself, a blessing on our work. For many in the group, meeting him was one of the week-long Convergence's highlights.

And that is saying a lot, considering how many highlights the week entailed. The rest of the day included visiting local shrimp and lobster processing plants—both of which were, unusually, run by women in a male-dominated industry—and a fish-fry bake at a local restaurant, complete with cajun music, dancing, and a local alligator sighting. Sitting by the bayou, watching the alligator, I talked with Buddhists about the actual and potential value of contemplative practices for climate action; compared the heat in India versus Louisiana with some Hindus; explored the Jewishness of Jesus with Baptists and Jews; and the greatness of the Pope's Encyclical, *Laudato Si*, with a Muslim.

On the night bus ride back to the beautiful campus of Tulane University, I wandered the aisle until I found some people who felt like singing. We shared some of our favorite songs from our traditions in beautiful four-part harmony, including a gathering song that has become popular in the youth-led climate justice movement. These songs became the basis for our shared final worship session which I coordinated.

Of the many conferences and gatherings that I have experienced as I've engaged with various dimensions of climate change work, especially with faith communities, over the past decade, this GreenFaith Convergence reminded me the most of the 2005 World Gathering of Young Friends in Lancaster, England. There, Young Friends from around the world's diverse Quaker traditions gathered to meet and share fellowship across our differences. We went on field trips to various critical parts of our shared religious heritage—the walk up Pendle Hill is still a strong memory—stayed up late talking, were amply curious about one another's diversity, sometimes disagreed, and made lasting friendships.

While GreenFaith is not the only one organizing spiritually orientated gatherings for young faith leaders involved with the ecological crises, I really enjoyed connecting with Fred Bahnson via the Regenerate Fellowship in North Carolina. The tours of various aspects of climate justice, including a policy-action protest outside of the local offices of the uber-conservative Representative Scily in New Orleans, strongly reminded me of the feeling of togetherness across differences that I felt in Lancaster, England.

Here we were, Muslim and Buddhist and Hindu and Christian and spiritual, not letting ourselves be defined by our parents and grandparents' activism, seeking the Spirit in the midst of our planet's crisis. This group of young people ardently believed that our planet's peril not only should but actively does cut across all faiths. The time to lay our differences aside is now. The time to once again become people of the land and the seas is now. We do so in circles.

The week started on the full moon Summer Solstice, with a Santa Clara Pueblo woman leading a women's Full Moon gathering. We stood in a circle at the edge

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## Seekers in Harmony



of the University's soccer field. She smudged each person with sage. She explained the importance of women, who are impacted most by climate change, of having their own circle under the moon. She then politely asked the men to leave. Without a word of protest, they picked up their bags and left us. We gathered close together, our water bottles in front of us, as she lit the candle to symbolize the sacred fire, and we told stories and prayers, made intentions, and asked Creator and one another for help. The honesty in the circle created, I believed, the foundation of honesty for the rest of the gathering. When we ended, we all—Muslim and Jewish and Catholic and Quaker—walked around the circle, just as women have done on these lands for thousands of years.

It was one of many moments when I looked around me and I thought, it is happening. Even as the waters are rising, so, too, is the Holy Spirit. Mama Earth is calling us. And those of us who listen to Jesus and to the Prophet(s) and a wide variety of guides are hearing the call. We too are rising. And we will keep moving. ♪



Louisiana map showing Isle de Jean Charles.

Sara J. Wolcott is a member of Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting in Berkeley California and is finishing her Masters of Divinity at Union Theological Seminary where she is closely involved with the Center for Earth Ethics. In the summer of 2016 she is learning, teaching, writing and consulting around climate justice, (inter) faith communities and the arts. To follow her journey, please connect via Facebook or on her website. Her attendance at the GreenFaith Climate Justice Youth Convergence was sponsored by Quaker Earthcare Witness.

## Share QEW with Your Facebook Friends!

Did you know that QEW is on Facebook? You can find our page by going to [https://www.facebook.com/Quaker-Earthcare-Witness-143510792334460/?ref=aymt\\_homepage\\_panel](https://www.facebook.com/Quaker-Earthcare-Witness-143510792334460/?ref=aymt_homepage_panel) or by simply typing Quaker Earthcare Witness in the Facebook search tool.

The more Friends share our posts, the bigger our audience grows, so please share freely as you feel so led! Some weeks we reach more than 2,000 folks with a single image. That's the power of social media!



Our number of Twitter followers has been growing too! You can follow us on Twitter by searching for our user name: @quakerearthcare. ♪



## Upcoming Events: Mark Your Calendars Now

<p>OCT 6-9 Come to the <b>QEW Fall 2016 Steering Committee</b>, Pendle Hill, Wallingford, PA</p>	<p>NOV 4 ESR Ministry of Writing Colloquium, "<b>Eye of the Beholder</b>," Earlham School of Religion, Richmond, IN</p>	<p>DEC 1-4 <b>Visioning and Creating a Moral Economy</b>, Pendle Hill, Wallingford, PA</p>	<p>DEC 2-4 <b>Waiting on God: An Interfaith Conversation</b>, Pendle Hill, Wallingford, PA</p>
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# Meeting for Worship on the Conduct of Research

By Shelley Tanenbaum

For a warm week in July, a roomful of Friends met at Regis University in Denver to mutually support research and projects on climate, social justice, eco-spirituality, energy, and economics. We met under the care of Quaker Institute for the Future's summer research seminar. At various points during the week, we ranged from 15-25 seekers, using Friends' practice of dialogue and worship to provide insights into our work.

From the QIF website ([www.quakerinstitute.org](http://www.quakerinstitute.org)):

*The Quaker Institute for the Future holds summer research seminars on a yearly basis. The location varies each year, but the purpose is always to encourage spirit-led research using Quaker methods of discernment and reflection. Daily activities include silent worship, group discussion, solo research time and a convivial atmosphere of shared effort.*

*Each morning begins with a time of silent centering worship after the manner of Friends, followed by the presentation of two research*

*projects on which participants are working. Each presentation includes a time for questions, clarification, and discussion, followed by a time of collaborative discernment conducted as a "meeting for worship for sharing."*

*The afternoons are open for participants to work on their research projects or meet with others for additional collaborative discussion and discernment.*

This year, topics included climate change and collapse, contemporary response to Friends' Indian boarding schools, eco-spirituality and the Doctrine of Discovery, growing a life-centered economy, SPICES from the environmental perspective, nuclear power and security, and an ethical use of artificial intelligence.

Do any of these topics interest you? Plan to attend the June 2017 QIF seminar in New York City, which will be held in collaboration with Union Seminary. Watch the QIF website for details. QIF will also be co-sponsoring a conference called "Visioning and Creating a Moral Economy" with Pendle Hill, December 1-4. Registration is available via Pendle Hill, at [www.pendlehill.org](http://www.pendlehill.org). ☞



## Eternal Journey

By Chris Roe

As the crimson flame of life  
Breaks slowly  
Above the horizon,  
The white, frosted meadows,  
With trees and hedgerows  
Of sculptured ice,  
Speak loudly  
Of your presence.

Once more  
Upon this journey,  
As another day begins,  
Without effort  
Or intrusion,  
Through the peace  
And tranquillity  
Of your silent voice,  
The moment becomes eternal,  
And the journey  
Begins again.

Summer, continued from page 12

city, my region, the world.

I did a little research and decided I would use the four colors of the directions according to Chief Seattle (white for north, red for east, yellow for south, and black for west), and I chose the prayer words "peace" for the west, "zhi-bde" for east (Tibetan), "asudai" for Iran/Pakistan/Afghanistan, and "shalom" for the middle east. Plus I included as many chakra colors as I had on hand, in order from root (at the base of the pole) to crown.

As I began the work of creating the vision, I soon learned it was an object lesson, rich in connections to my ideas about peace. For example, I'm not an artist, so I was tempted to give up several times when things got blobby and the paint went on unevenly.

But then I thought, "Well, peace isn't easy or perfect either, is it?"

And when the design didn't look exactly the way I'd envisioned it in my head, I realized that's the same

frustration I feel when I struggle with news of war and violence and exploitation of our planet.

After a little hesitation, I decided to go ahead put the pole up, imperfect as it was, and continue to work on it, add to it, and change it as I feel inspired. Kinda' like peace work. You use what you have at hand, do your best, and keep at it as long as you can.

The result? The peace pole stands quietly between the German thyme and rosemary in the herb garden outside my back door. I have fallen in love with it. I no longer want to change it or judge it or make it be something it isn't. It radiates good intention, which inspires my prayers and comforts my heart every time I see it. And that brings peace, even if only to one heart and mind at a time. ∞



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## What I Did with My Summer Vacation

By Katherine Murray

THE LAST WEEK OF JUNE, I took four days off with the intention of enjoying a quiet “staycation” full of gardening, hummingbirds, and long walks with my dogs. I envisioned this break as a time of silent retreat, with plenty of room for relaxing into the quiet and listening to the stirrings and nudges of spirit.

The morning of the third day, I awoke with a colorful idea that seemed to have a lot of energy attached to it, so after I had my coffee, I went to the hardware store, bought a single fence post (for \$5.99), and brought it home.

I spread a tarp out on my garage floor, gathered up all the colorful cans of paint I had (including some green paint with glitter) and I found brushes I had left over from other projects. I also got a piece of paper and a pen and sat down on the tarp, with all the tools for creativity organized around me.

Then, I let myself get quiet for a few minutes. Soon I saw in my mind’s eye colorful and creative designs for the project. The ideas filled my mind faster than I could write or sketch them. After just a few minutes, I had the plan: I was going to make a peace pole for my garden. This seemed to me to be a perfect, active



The peace pole in the herb garden by my back door.

prayer for the growing sense of alarm and sadness I was feeling because of what felt like growing unrest in the world, the violence and heartbreak of terrorist attacks, and the vitriol being spewed in the political arena.

The peace pole, I thought, could be at least one point on the globe consistently offering a visual prayer of peace for the world. And who knows? Maybe it would radiate outward and bless my neighborhood, my

*See Summer on page 11*