



BeFriending Creation

Newsletter of Quaker Earthcare Witness
Affirming our essential unity with nature

Volume 29, Number 6 • November-December 2016

The Clear Stream of Reverence

By Katherine Murray

WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL, I often sat beside my Great-Grandma Roos and listened to her stories of living in Chickasha, Oklahoma just before and after the Oklahoma Land Rush of 1893. This was Indian territory, and all those in and around the small settlement coexisted peaceably. She described watching the tribal leaders coming into town for “great pow-wows,” sitting close enough to the dignified procession that she could feel the puff of the air stirred up by the wagons rolling by.

She described with awe the majesty of the chiefs and the great sense of peace they embodied. As an animal lover herself, she cherished their reverent approach to everything living. She told me she felt the same way about animals and loved them all her life. As a child in Chickasha she had befriended a squirrel who would meet her on the way home from school each day, jump onto her shoulder, and scramble down to her pocket to get the bit of lunch she always saved for him.

Today, the headlines on social media tell the compelling and heartbreaking stories related to what’s unfolding at Standing Rock in North Dakota. Native Americans from a number of tribes and people of all ethnicities—as well as professional organizers, including the group from Black Lives Matter in Minnesota—have gathered peaceably at the site, trying to block construction on the Dakota Access pipeline that cuts through native lands. The pipeline runs the risk of damaging the reservation’s primary water source, but that is just one part of the larger issue. Not only does the river need to run clear, as the action points out; but people need to rediscover their source of reverence and seek a balance of right relationship with the earth.



Photo from my great-grandmother's photo album.
Chickasha, OK. 1895.

The tribes are calling for a spiritual deepening and an awareness of the current imbalance of justice; the action spotlights violations of early treaties and resource exploitation that has spanned many decades.

Quakers are participating in the peaceable protest at many levels, in terms of nonviolent protest training, daily support, prayerful consideration, or leading efforts in local meetings to raise awareness of the issue and contact elected officials with minutes of concern. This issue of *BeFriending Creation* is one of QEW’s responses in support of the effort toward right relationship that is unfolding at Standing Rock. In the coming weeks, several QEW members will also travel to Standing Rock, carrying a minute of support.

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BeFriending Creation

SPECIAL EDITION

Concern for Standing Rock

In this issue, we've asked several Friends to share their insights and reflections on the nonviolent action unfolding on the Standing Rock Sioux reservation in North Dakota. We welcome your thoughts.

BeFriending Creation, Vol. 29, No. 6, November-December 2016. Newsletter of **Quaker Earthcare Witness**. ISSN 1050-0332. Published bi-monthly.

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

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Membership is open to all who demonstrate commitment to support the work of Quaker Earthcare Witness and who support its work at the Monthly or Yearly Meeting levels, or through other Friends organizations. Quaker Earthcare Witness is a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation; contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

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Earthcare Calendar

December 20, 2016. Deadline for article submissions for January-February 2017 *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, and share your thoughts and leadings with Friends and caring others throughout North America. ♻

To Quaker Earthcare Witness,

I just received your September-October issue of *BeFriending Creation*, and I was kind of concerned and curious about the article on page 6, "Friendly Farmers & Earthcare." The article contradicts a number of statements I had read as fact for a long time and from many sources. One statement made was that the factory farming meat industry is not putting out a large amount of greenhouse gasses. I had heard it was one of the largest contributors, and I read that several places. Another statement was that not having cows on grazing land is ruining the land because wild horses come in and wreck it. The information we get from many responsible environmental groups is that often, there are many more cows on the land than it is permitted for, and that causes overgrazing, which takes the grass down to the ground. That's been a problem—it's been in courts and in many publications for years.

So I just wondered whether there's a special interest involved with this article that is trying to make the industry look better or whether all of the information I've been reading is incorrect, and the author has a better source. [In any case] it's kind of disturbing to see contradictory facts like that and not have a way of fact-checking.

Steve Willey, Sandpoint Friends Meeting, Idaho

Editor's note: We invited the author of the article mentioned above to respond to this writer's letter and will provide any response in a future *BeFriending Creation*.

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Hello Friends,

I am glad to share how Quaker Tradition helps me make choices for right action. The tradition has transformed my life in many ways, which I may not explain in words, but in action! My persuasion helps me to be content with life, also to discover that there's that of God in each of us. I also learned that you could also feel the spirit of God around you, talking to you through silence, helping you to make a right choice and right actions. I became friendly to all creation and my intentions are to help maintain our vegetation and to restore wrongfully destroyed vegetation. The tradition has helped me to learn to be tolerant and to focus in my daily life, both at home and at work.

Above all in the principles of Quaker tradition are the Simplicity, Equality, Nonviolence, and Truth at all times. The photo below shows how I and a friend from my meeting marked the World Quaker Day.

Shalom,

Johnson Kennedy Sokpoli
Ghana Friends Meeting



Continued from page 1

Quakers have a long history of advocating for justice among Native American issues. At the heart, I think of the kinship of spirit John Woolman related in his *Journal*, when the presence of divine love made it unnecessary for interpreters to translate his words for the tribal leader:



Native Americans arriving for council meetings.
Chickasha, OK. 1895.

“On the evening of the 18th I was at their meeting, where pure gospel love was felt, to the tendering of some of our hearts. The interpreters endeavored to acquaint the people with what I said, in short sentences, but found some difficulty, as none of them were quite perfect in the English and

Delaware tongues, so they helped one another, and we labored along, Divine love attending.

Afterwards, feeling my mind covered with the spirit of prayer, I told the interpreters that I found it in my heart to pray to God, and believed, if I prayed aright, he would hear me; and I expressed my willingness for them to omit interpreting; so our meeting ended with a degree of Divine love. Before the people went out, I observed Papunehang ... speaking to one of the interpreters, and I was afterwards told that he said in substance as follows: “I love to feel where words come from.” (Woolman, 1883)

Seeking the clarity of right order and standing with those who suffer oppression and injustice is a common leading among Friends. We resonate with the call for dignity and reverence of those at Standing Rock, and we share a deep concern that the continuing objectification and exploitation of our living planet be stopped.

As I pray for God’s light for all involved at Standing Rock, I feel the presence of my own ancestors—especially my Great-Grandma Roos—helping to hold the space for justice to arise. I’m also aware of the future impression of my descendants seven generations from now, when I deeply hope our beloved planet and all life she supports will be treated with the dignity and reverence they so greatly deserve. ☞

Mobilizing Quakers Everywhere:

“Eco-spirituality & Action” Webinar and Classroom Course

IN THE WORDS OF ECO-PHILOSOPHER JOANNA MACY, “Things are getting worse and worse and better and better, faster and faster!” The innumerable threats to the health, integrity, and diversity of life on our beautiful planet are intensifying, and at the same time, the world is awakening to this situation and humanity’s obligations and opportunity to protect and nurture our world into the future.

How are Friends called to respond to this superhuman challenge? What is the new understanding of humanity’s place and role in the unfolding of creation that can help us engage creatively in this unprecedented period of crisis and opportunity? What are the practices and principles of this new awareness?

“Eco-spirituality & Action,” the seven-week course that led to the 2007 NYYM Peace with Earth Minute (<http://www.nyyym.org/nurture/ewg/peacewithearth.html>), will be held as an interactive webinar and classroom course in 2017, taught by longtime QEW supporter and earthcare advocate Angela Manno.

The goal is nothing less than mobilizing the entire Quaker community throughout the world to take bold and concerted action. Through multimodal learning techniques and reference to established Friends witnesses and testimonies, we will gain a new sense of our identity within the cosmos and the Earth Community and learn and engage new powers for action as Friends and as a conscious mode of the living planet.

To allow the webinar to be free of charge, Quaker Earthcare Witness is accepting financial contributions from individuals and funding groups. Please send tax-deductible contributions to Quaker Earthcare Witness, earmarked for the “Eco-spirituality & Action Webinar Series,” to P.O. Box 6787, Albany, CA 94706.

Please stay tuned for dates and times. In the meantime, check this link for more information and updates: <http://www.schoolivingarts.com/o2.html>. ☞

Good Intentions to Good Outcomes: Reflections on Quaker Relations with the Standing Rock Sioux

By Elizabeth Janssen Koopman
York Monthly Meeting, Pennsylvania

MOST FRIENDS ARE AWARE of some of the early Quaker contacts with Indigenous Peoples on Turtle Island; for example, with William Penn and John Woolman. Many of us have erroneously linked Quaker “good intentions” with good outcomes for Indigenous Peoples when, in actuality, those linkages are far from the truth. As many Friends today seek to achieve good outcomes for Indigenous Peoples, including those witnessing with the Standing Rock Sioux, I believe it is good that we reexamine some of our history with American Indians, learn from the dark shadows of our ethnocentric beliefs and practices, and become transformed in mind, spirit, and practice into effective and respectful allies—in this case with the Standing Rock Sioux as they take yet another stand to protect Mother Earth, sacred places, water, and treaty rights.

I have been greatly helped on my journey as a “Quaker among the Indians” by the work of Clyde Milner in his book, *With Good Intentions: Quaker Work Among the Pawnees, Otos, and Omahas in the 1870's* (University of Nebraska Press, 1982). Although this book is largely a description of the practices and struggles of Quaker Indian agents after the Civil War, it also presents deeply important cultural Christian beliefs and societal contexts which undermined the so-called “good intentions” and which, I believe, may still subtly live in our minds and hearts today.

I present below some quotes from the final chapter, “Quaker Exit,” which illustrate the power of the Western views that continue for many of us today:

“What Dawes*, the Quakers, and other humanitarian reformers expected was an Indian ‘either/or’. Either the Indians would become successful farmers on individual homesteads, or they would pass away as outmoded relics of a ‘savage’ culture.” p. 197.

“The Hicksite Friends who worked with the Nebraska Indians wished the best for those natives, but only in terms of white cultural values. The Quakers wanted to end the influence of traditional native culture.” p. 198.

“Indeed, the Quakers’ good intentions merely demonstrated that they were part of the broader



humanitarian reform movement of the day. Although Friends proudly referred to their special heritage in Indian affairs, Quaker ideas of Indian progress in the 1870's were part of a general consensus shared by other well intentioned whites. This white consensus insisted on Indian assimilation to white ways and signaled an intolerance for Indian culture which, at least for Friends, seemed in stark contrast to the romantic, popular image of William Penn and the tradition of Quaker friendship towards America's Indians.” p. 199.

In my mind today, two truisms resonate: “Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it” **, and those of us who remember our roots can find our wings. We as Friends can reflect on the historic errors of our ways and not repeat them as we seek healing and justice today. We can also find inspiration in the words and aspirations of Friend John Woolman: “Love was the first motion, and then a concern arose to spend some time with the Indians, that I might feel and understand their life and the spirit they live in, if haply I might receive some instruction from them, or they be in any degree helped forward by my following the leadings of truth amongst them.”

The ramifications for my current faith and practice seem to be: (1) that I follow the leadership of the Standing Rock Sioux; for example, in giving financial help to them for maintenance of their witness; (2) that I continue to realize the continuing residues of my own ethnocentricity/Eurocentricity in my personal and spiritual thoughts and practices and seek to transform them; (3) that I continue to be in loving and respectful dialog with Indigenous and Quaker friends; and (4) that I give thanks each day for Mother Earth and All Our Relations. ☞

* The Dawes Act of 1887 authorized the President of the United States to survey American Indian tribal land and divide it into allotments for individual Indians.

** George Santayana



Fairbanks Climate Action Coalition's Next Step

By Cathy Walling
Chena Ridge Friends Meeting, Fairbanks, Alaska

"I LOVE TO FEEL WHERE WORDS COME FROM." I have long loved that quote from our Quaker heritage story of the indigenous man Papunehang hearing John Woolman preaching. He didn't know what Woolman was saying, but he knew it was coming from the right heart and Spirit.

I had a similar experience in September 2014 when attending a rally in Fairbanks, Alaska in solidarity with the New York City Climate march. Two Native women spoke out at different times during the rally, and when I heard them, I immediately heard that Woolman quote ringing in my ears. That's it! That's the right heart and Spirit from which our Climate Action efforts need to emanate!

Two years later, there is now a Fairbanks Climate Action Coalition (FCAC) with members from diverse sectors of our community. Not even a year old, our group has been enriched by Alaska Native wisdom, perspectives, and Spirit as we continue to take our next steps forward.

What began as a yearning to respond to, "What can we do locally to address climate change?" became the mission of FCAC: "Through education and advocacy Fairbanks Climate Action Coalition will mobilize Fairbanks and Interior Alaska communities toward action to mitigate and adapt to climate change. We seek to elevate climate solutions and foster a fair, equitable, and just transition to sustainable communities—locally, regionally and globally. We seek to build a renewed and respectful relationship between all beings and the earth."

As we continue to take our next steps forward, we continue to seek partnering with diverse sectors of our community.

Recently, in conjunction with the 50th Alaska Federation of Natives conference held in Fairbanks, Alaska, a small working group of the FCAC led by Native Alaska members of our coalition coordinated a lunchtime panel held at the IBEW building in town. The gathering was entitled, "Climate Change and the Need for a New Economy in Alaska".

Five panelists, mostly from the Native community, spoke of their connection to a way of life deeply connected to place.

Sam Alexander, University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) Economics Faculty and a Native business leader, recounted his father's words to him when he was eight years old, sitting on the banks of the Porcupine River in Northern Alaska during a moose hunt. "We are the richest people in the world." At the time he wondered about this. Several years later—which included three years serving in Iraq—he could affirm, "I come from very wealthy people. All I see other people in other countries and other cultures do is work toward living a life that we as Native people already live. We are extremely wealthy. I think about the amount of time you have to spend with your family members, being in the woods, and the healthy activities you do when you're out there, and the healthy food you eat. I recognized we are absolutely the richest people in the world, and that really is the starting point for economic development."

Jack Hebert from the Cold Climate Housing Research Center affirmed that the sharing of cultures

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could bring out the combination of Indigenous wisdom and 21st Century technologies as we live further into this time of changing climate. “What can we do together?” He continued with, “What do we really need versus want at the expense of others? We need each other. We need to work together, we need to love each other and we need to love this land.”

Jacqueline Qataliña Schaeffer, Senior Project Manager at ANTHC Division of Environmental Health and Engineering, shared that “we have the ability with creative minds and open arms to embrace each other in this challenge and see it as an opportunity to create and share and become better human beings. We have the ability to change our economy by changing the way we think.”

Esau Sinnok, Shishmaref Youth leader and UAF student implored the group, “We have to take action now!” He had just notified the group that his island village, Shishmaref on the northwest coast of Alaska,

voted in August to move their village to escape ocean erosion due to climate change.

Brian Cladoosby, president of the National Congress of American Indians and the president of the Association of Washington Tribes, began the panel stating,

“When we look to our partnerships, we need to not only look to our friends but to our perceived enemies, so we can make ‘frenemies’.”

Each of these panelists spoke to the WE of creating a sustainable economy for Alaska’s economic future; we must work together. Many political representatives were present as were VIP listeners from three or four different political parties. The sense in the room was of the need to continue to expand upon the conversation held that day.

We need each other, Native and non-Native, as we strive to take our collective steps forward in addressing global climate change in Alaska and in our world. ❧

Quakers’ Solar Canopy

By Don Vessey, San Diego Friends Meeting

AMERICA IS FAST REALIZING the importance of solar energy. Switching to solar power is not only an environmental necessity, but it makes financial sense as well. It reduces global warming not only by reducing the use of fossil fuels, but potentially in other ways too. San Diego Friends Meeting was intent on switching to solar power for its campus and in researching the options, discovered some interesting facts. In particular, research by the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory revealed that in most cities, 35 to 50 percent of the surface area is pavement made of asphalt and concrete that absorb the sun’s energy and retain the heat.

This contributes to the “urban heat island effect,” which accounts for the fact that cities are hotter than surrounding areas. Covering all this pavement with solar panels would not only generate electricity but also reduce surface warming. If these solar panels are elevated on canopies that form solar carports, cities achieve the additional benefit of providing shade for cars.

The Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Energy states that being able to park in the shade in the summer is actually a substantial contributor to increased vehicle fuel efficiency because people don’t have to cool their cars back down after a long period in the sun. Since it has been estimated that roughly 40 percent of the pavement in cities is due to parking lots, there is potential for significant reduction in surface warming.

For these reasons, the San Diego Friends Meeting decided to install a canopy solar system for a portion of their parking lot. Using funds bequeathed to them by a former member and a contribution from the Church of the Brethren with whom they share the campus, San Diego Friends recently finished the installation of the canopy solar system. It provides sufficient energy to power the entire campus, which also includes the American Friends Service Committee and Peace Resource Center; and parking in the shade is lovely. ❧



David Barrows, Clerk of the San Diego Friends Meeting, prepares to throw the switch turning on the new canopy solar system for their campus.



Reflections on Translating the Resistance in Brazil

By Meg Kidd

RECOGNITION BY QEW of the re-emergent sense of the Divine in light of the resistance at Standing Rock continues to breathe air into the indigenous struggle to share millennial wisdom of peoples throughout the world. Noted on October 3 is this struggle from Standing Rock to Bagua (<https://intercontinentalcry.org/resisting-pipelines-standing-rock-bagua/>). The situation of the Indigenous Peoples in Brazil (<http://unsr.vtaulicorpuz.org/site/index.php/en/statements/123-end-mission-brazil>) still receives little coverage, but concerns about socio-environmental devastation under agribusiness, the related land grabbing, deforestation, and damming of the Amazon are gaining broader recognition. There is a disturbing consistency in hydroelectric dams being accompanied by plans for major mining operations. On October 6, the illegal deforestation and land grabbing in Indigenous Lands was already triple that reported in December 2015. By October 16, the U.S. news site Common Dreams reported on one of the correlates: the most dangerous region in the world for land defenders and environmental activists (<http://www.commondreams.org/news/2016/10/16/environmental-official-shot-dead-brazil-attacks-land-defenders-rise-latin-america>).

In the course of people awakening worldwide to industrial decimation of biomes, documentation continues to be published revealing how dissociative the industry based definitions can be. The damming and deforestation of the Amazon are emblematic of this. As noted below, the “final agribusiness frontier” known as Matopiba, in the Cerrado biome, is situated on top of essential aquifer recharge networks and overlaps the southern edge of the Amazon. Scientific documentation of severe droughts, the collapsing “flying rivers” (<http://climatenewsnetwork.net/drought-bites-as-amazons-flying-rivers-dry-up/>), and the expansion of industrial deforestation for cattle and agribusiness

still struggle for media coverage. Notably, on October 10, the Peruvian government declared that large dams on the Amazon are not on its agenda (<https://www.internationalrivers.org/blogs/433/headwaters-of-the-amazon-protected>).

My own journey in relation to this has been a leading to serve as a volunteer human rights translator (Portuguese to English), which originated with the Guarani in Brazil in 2003. Friends in New England and New York provided grants, clearness committees, and a wide web of support in the first three years, enabling me to respond to a Guarani request to file their statement with the UN Center for Documentation at the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in 2008 and to provide services as official English translator in the early years for the Guarani Yvy Rupã Commission. A leading seven years ago to enter into solitude to translate emerged with realization that the timing in my life is now linked with peoples in need of human rights translation who have little if any control over the timing of that need.

Over the years the leading has included draft translations of indigenous rights reports, including some generated by the Indigenous Missionary Council. Known by its acronym, CIMI, the organization is a branch of the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil. Bridging countless gaps in existing on-the-ground support and documentation structures, CIMI collates a spectrum of information and faithfully publishes on an annual basis (http://www.cimi.org.br/pub/Relatorio%20Violencia%202014/_Relat.pdf). Formed during the military dictatorship (1964-1984), CIMI documentation is respected around the world. In August the organization obtained Special Consultative Status (http://www.cimi.org.br/site/pt-br/?system=news&conteudo_id=8843&action=read)

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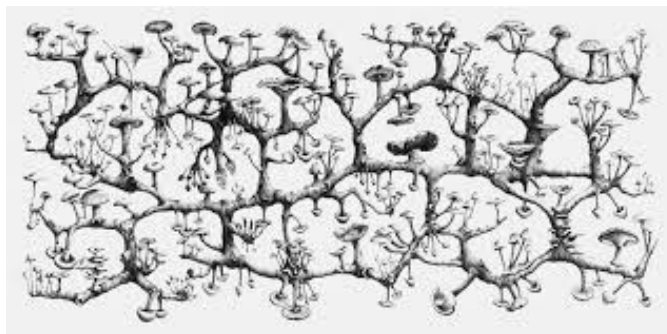
in the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Laws in Brazil recognizing indigenous rights face an unprecedented legislative onslaught from extractive, agribusiness, export and the plethora of related industries as noted in the report by UN Special Rapporteur Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, linked above. These are backed by the current Temer government, which also supports Brazil's "final" agribusiness frontier, Plan MaToPiBa (<http://www.farmlandgrab.org/post/view/25908-losing-our-land-like-losing-our-lives-brazil-activist-tells-world-bank>). This is being fiercely resisted by indigenous and traditional communities and an increasingly ecologically focused rights-based network of organizations.

The Guarani continue to face devastating genocidal conditions in Mato Grosso do Sul. In August of 2015, they issued a call to the international community to boycott agribusiness products from that state and have been in Europe this year to raise awareness of the necessity to address the human rights issues inherent to the imports (<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/may/18/brazils-guarani-indians-killing-themselves-over-loss-of-ancestral-land>). That an estimated 70 percent of the foods we eat are produced

by small scale farmers still challenges my sense of scale and priorities. Calls for recognition, conceptualization, and articulation of a diversity of methodologies free from those of the debilitating colonization historically embedded in capital-centered institutions continue to emerge.

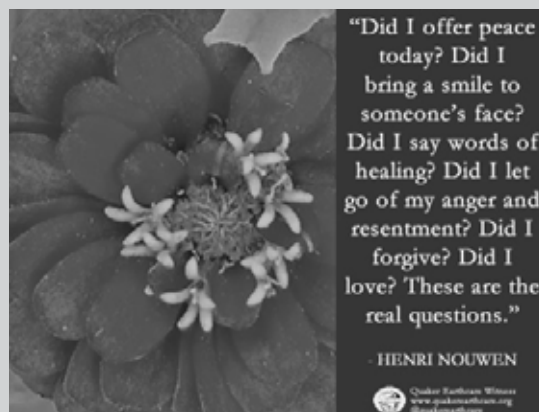
Over the past decade I have been witness to countless instances of the awakening of what Paul Hawken referred to as the planetary "immune system." I liken this spectrum to mycelia and find the analogy bringing a quiet sense of joy and offering profound incentive for faithful continued engagement, which in my life continues to be the leading to translate. ∞



Share QEW with Your Facebook Friends!

WE HOPE you've had a chance to visit the QEW Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/Quaker-Earthcare-Witness-143510792334460/?ref=aymt_homepage_panel or by simply typing Quaker Earthcare Witness in the Facebook search tool. You'll find lots of posts on current events and more.

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>NOV4 ESR Ministry of Writing Colloquium, "Eye of the Beholder," Earlham School of Religion, Richmond, IN</p>	<p>NOV 7 The Quaker Indian Boarding House, lecture with Paula Palmer, Pendle Hill, Wallingford, PA</p>	<p>DEC 1-4 Visioning and Creating a Moral Economy, Pendle Hill, Wallingford, PA</p>	<p>DEC 2-4 Waiting on God: An Interfaith Conversation, Pendle Hill, Wallingford, PA</p>
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By Alan Eccleston
Mount Toby Friends Meeting

IN MEETING FOR WORSHIP four years ago I was meditating on climate change and what I was called to do about it. Words rose up, “I live in possibility,” which I attribute to Emily Dickinson. I had a deep realization this is a choice for all of us—but the way we are living is limiting possibility. So what am I called to do? We have solar panels on our house and it is weather tight, but systemic action is needed and politicians are not responding to calls for a carbon tax and rebate. Then it came to me: I can do a voluntary carbon tax—anyone can. This clearly was an opening, a way to more fully live the Quaker testimony of Stewardship, and I embraced it.

I took this insight to our climate study group; all seven felt moved to join the witness. We agreed our witness would be public but the amount of one’s pledge would be confidential. A pledge could be a percent of a single carbon use or all of one’s carbon use; or it could be a fixed amount. It could be as small or large as one felt led and the contributed amount would be confidential (known only to the fund steward who receives the pledges and collects quarterly proceeds).

We sought and received our Meeting’s support. This directly connects our Meeting to the witness and allows grant recipients to receive a single check from the Meeting. Over time we have tripled the number in our Meeting participating in the witness and seven Friends Meetings that we know of are participating, as well as a Unitarian Universalist Church in Fairfax, Virginia and some secular groups that found us through our website voluntarycarbontax.org. I have been told

by some Evangelical Quakers that their meeting would not be drawn to a voluntary tax but might embrace a voluntary carbon tithe. That is a wonderful witness as well.

What makes the voluntary carbon tax (tithe) so effective is:

- (1) We are a team with a purpose and vision creating significant results and impact;
- (2) We are continually aware of our carbon usage and there is on-going discernment—how much does this matter to me?
- (3) We are bonding as a group as we decide where our money will go and all of us (now 21) have feelers out to see who we might support next;
- (4) It is uplifting, fun, and dynamic to see what we are supporting that can make a difference;
- (5) This witness goes on and on, whereas when you buy a Prius or change your electrical supplier it’s a one-time act.

In our complex, carbon-based economy, we are compromised in many ways beyond our control. This witness of stewardship is not a burden; it’s an invitation—an opportunity to “Live in possibility.” ♻

Note: For more information on the pledge form, grants, recipients, etc. see www.mounttobyfriends.org/action/voluntary-carbon-tax-witness/



QEW Statement of Support for Actions at Standing Rock



QUAKER EARTHCARE WITNESS is a North American-wide network of Friends (Quakers) and other like-minded people, who see the ecological and social crises of our times as matters of deep spiritual concern.

We are called to support the voices and actions of the more than 150 Tribal Nations at Sacred Stones Camp in North Dakota, and of others who have come forward to join them in peaceful protest, in protection of the water of the Missouri from the danger of contamination from a fossil fuel pipeline.

We see in the events at Sacred Stones Camp a clear example of how ecological and social concerns are blended in real life, when people take a stand to protect the Earth and themselves.

We are aware that the indigenous peoples of this continent have suffered greatly from the incursions of those bent on extracting resources, particularly fossil fuels, without regard for the life-ways and well-being

of those peoples. We see in this practice a directly connected disregard for the healthy functioning of the planetary systems on which we all depend.

We decry the use of violence against the protesters by private security forces, and we urge local civil authorities to protect the people from such violence, as they are sworn to do.

We endorse the August 30, 2016 minute of the Indian Affairs Committee of New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, appended below, and stand in solidarity with and gratitude to the Tribes and their supporters as they protest against the construction of the pipeline.

We encourage others to take non-violent action to oppose incursions on the lives and well-being of indigenous peoples and of our planet Earth, wherever they occur. ☞

QEW, Sept. 8, 2016

Minute of the Indian Affairs Committee of New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

Approved 8-30-16; approved by Earthcare Working Group of NYYM 8-31-2016

Our two Committees strongly support the Standing Rock Sioux in their actions opposing construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline. This 1100-mile pipeline would create the same dangers as other projects, such as the XL Keystone Pipeline, and should be rejected for the same reasons. The proposal should properly have been subjected to the same thorough review prior to approval as the XL Pipeline, so that the Standing Rock Sioux could have their voices heard and their historic rights respected, including the right of access to clean water, the foundation of all life, and the protection of their burial sites and other sacred sites as the

1978 Native American Religious Freedom Act guarantees. This includes honoring and respecting the promises of the United States to the Great Sioux Nation in the 1851, 1859, and 1868 Treaties of Fort Laramie which this project would violate.

All the others affected by the project are also entitled to be heard. Anything less, particularly for a project of this scope, is a failure of the democratic process and is a lack of transparency. It is a deliberate avoidance of the environmental review process and undermines the laws intended to ensure that all environmental effects are considered and properly weighed before approving an

undertaking of this magnitude.

As Friends, we bear witness to the equality and to the sacred nature of every person, since every person carries the same Spark of Divine Light. The principle of equality is also a fundamental principle of a democratic society. When we shut out voices and ignore the rights of the people of Native Nations within the U.S., we deny that principle.

Friends also have had a particular concern for the relations between the European settlers on this continent and its First Nations, beginning with our founder George Fox's encounters with Native inhabitants during his North American travels in the 1680s and the founding of Pennsylvania. New York Yearly Meeting has had a standing Indian Affairs Committee since the 1790s and maintains warm relations with Native Nations and Peoples of this region up to this day. Thus we stand beside our First Nation brothers and sisters in insisting that the legal and treaty rights of the Standing Rock Sioux must be honored and must not be violated by the construction of this pipeline. Too

often, Native Nations have paid the price for projects intended to benefit American society by actions that violate treaties and Native rights, such as taking land or constructing dams.

As Friends, we also hold sacred our responsibility, the responsibility of all humanity, to care for the Earth, our home, and preserve it for the future generations of humans and of all life. Our Native sisters and brothers have long led the way in showing the importance of taking into consideration not only our own desires, but also the needs of the future generations, before we act. Projects such as the Dakota Access Pipeline imperil the waters of the earth, vital to the Standing Rock Sioux and to all life. Pursuing the use of fossil fuel rather than finding renewable and sustainable alternatives imperils the atmosphere, the air we breathe and the climate necessary for the continued existence of humanity and of the many forms of life that we know and claim to cherish. We must move quickly to implement environmentally sound practices to preserve our Earth-home and all life on it. ✞

Sacred Stone from page 12

report you can read at <https://www.afsc.org/story/afsc-stands-solidarity-standing-rock>. In November, three QEW Friends will be traveling to Standing Rock. I will be bringing our QEW statement; Judy Lumb will be bringing a statement of solidarity and a flag from the Garifuna indigenous people of Belize; and Carol Barta will be bringing supplies. We will be careful not to stress resources by sleeping off-site and we will stay only a few days. We hope to join in worship with the gathering. We will bring Quaker "greetings" from all of you. ✞



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

Name _____ Email _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

I want to contribute \$100____; \$200____; \$500____; Other _____

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

____ I'd prefer to pay by my credit card: MC____; Visa ____; Amount _____

Name on Card: _____ Card # _____ Security Code _____ Exp Date: _____

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

Do You Have Something to Share?

If you write poetry, reflections, or meditations you'd like to share, we'd love to read them!

Send your inspiring work to Katherine at katherine@quakerearthcare.org, and we may use your submission in a future issue of *BeFriending Creation*!

Quaker Earthcare Witness
P.O. Box 6787
Albany, CA 94706 USA

Internal pages printed on 100% post-consumer
recycled paper, bleached without chlorine

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 9
McCordsville, In.

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Sacred Stone, Clean Water, Gathering People

By Shelley Tanenbaum, QEW General Secretary

THE GATHERING AT STANDING ROCK, with more than 280 indigenous tribes represented, is historic and has been an inspiration to all of us. The ongoing gathering is being held to block construction of the Dakota pipeline that threatens water resources for the Lakota Sioux and everyone else in the Missouri River basin of the Dakotas. Plans are to stay all winter, stopping the pipeline and protecting the waters nearby. For information and suggestions on how you can help, consult www.sacredstonecamp.org. This issue of *Befriending Creation* focuses on Friends' reflections and efforts to stop the Dakota Pipeline and support indigenous rights. Please continue to send us information and stories on these issues to help us spread the word.

There has been an ongoing discussion about the role of non-indigenous allies. In some cases, too many non-indigenous people are showing up, using resources, and causing problems. Many, however, have been present to serve as witnesses and allies/supporters, bringing supplies and helping out as needed. Recommendations for camping and doing service are listed on the sacredstonecamp.org website.

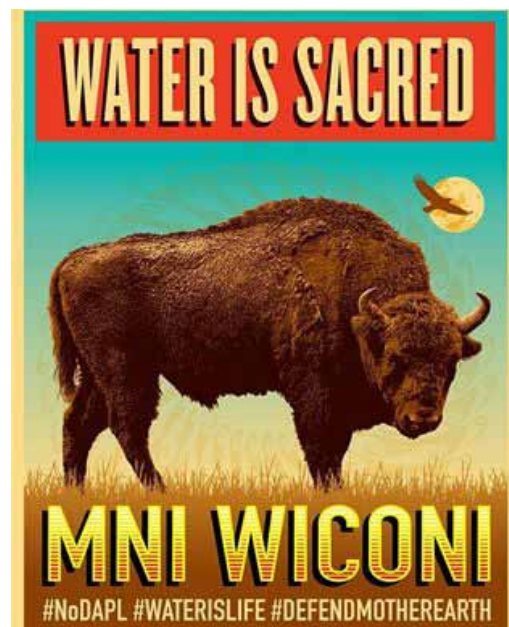


Illustration
by Ernesto
Yerena

Several Friends have been present at the Sacred Stone site, some for as long as a month. I felt it was important that, in addition to individual Friends witnessing and doing service, Quaker organizations also be present, especially given our long and mixed history with native Americans. QEW approved a statement of solidarity and support in September (reprinted on page 10); our sister organization, FCNL, joined an interfaith statement (<https://fcnl-production.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/123/9fa79558-3cof-4087-b757-357e1c04c1a4.pdf?1476899142>); and several Meetings have created their own statements and have sent supplies. AFSC has also just released a

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