



BeFriending Creation

The Newsletter of

QUAKER EARTHCARE WITNESS

Affirming our essential unity with nature

Volume 30, Number 5 • Fall 2017

Potential Surprises

By Shelley Tanenbaum, General Secretary

A LARGE GULF EXISTS between those who understand the magnitude of the environmental crisis we are facing and those who, willfully or not, remain unaware and disengaged.

Just look around your community or your meetinghouse. Most people are not necessarily climate deniers or uncaring about the environment. Yet they are in denial. The crises we face—climate, over-population, and over-draft of resources, ocean acidification, collapse of global fisheries, species extinction—are overwhelming.

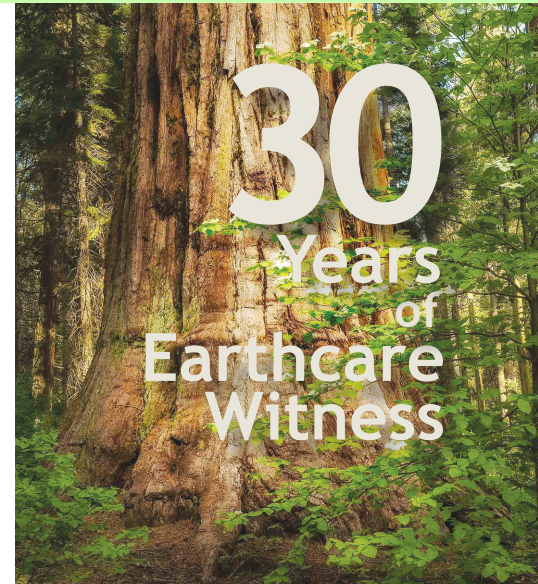
For the past few years, I have limited how much I talk about the crises, and instead, have tried to focus on solutions and good news (there are plenty of these stories to talk about). My reasoning has been that those of us who are engaged in actions and projects that support our human connection with the environment and eco-justice are already motivated, so more enviro-horror stories plunge us into despair, not forward movement. However, crises are mounting and solutions are piecemeal. More of us are needed to join the ranks of enviro-warriors if we have any hope of shifting society towards living in harmony with “our common home” as Pope Francis likes to call our Earth.

So, share this story and this issue of *Befriending Creation* with everyone you know and invite them to join you in your good work. We have time, but not much, to make a significant difference with our actions. The planet will be fine no matter what we do; Earth has experienced extremes in climate/weather and population of species. The big question for us in our time is how many humans and other species will be able to thrive on the planet, and who will bear the brunt of environmental/climate disruption. Timing is critical; the window to act is rapidly shrinking.

Two November 2017 publications are good summaries of the state of the environment. The *Fourth National Climate Assessment* describes the state of global climate disruption, likely impacts especially within the United States, and possible scenarios for limiting global warming. The report was released about a year ago in draft form and is now an official government document, clearly stating that the bulk of climate disruption that we are experiencing is caused by human activity.

The report documents a scientific consensus that we need to limit global warming to 2 degrees Celsius

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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.

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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.

Steering Committee Clerk:

Stan Becker, sbecker@jhsph.edu.

General Secretary:

Shelley Tanenbaum, P.O. Box 6787, Albany, CA 94706 510-542-9606;
shelley@quakerearthcare.org.

BFC Editor:

Hayley Hathaway,
144B Thomas Rd., Rindge, NH 03461
hayley@quakerearthcare.org.

Website: www.quakerearthcare.org

Twitter: @quakerearthcare

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/QuakerEarthcare

Earthcare Calendar

January 10, 2017. Deadline for article submissions for Winter 2018 *BeFriending Creation*

Dear Friends,

For 30 years, Quaker Earthcare Witness (previously Friends Committee on Unity with Nature) has worked to help Friends integrate Earthcare into their daily lives. As the earth gets hotter and our communities are being impacted more and more, we feel an even greater weight to share our witness.

We envision a world that takes as its guiding principles the ultimate value of clean, fresh water and healthy air for all beings; a world that sustains healthy ecosystems; a world that treasures our spiritual connection to the natural world; and a world that embraces environmental justice at its core. Join us in working together to call forth this shared vision of a better world. We create our vision with the light we shine and are grateful for your light!



QEW supporters share their vision for our future at Pendle Hill in October 2017

Many *BeFriending Creation* readers are also Quaker Earthcare Witness network members and show their commitment to Earthcare by making a regular financial contribution. Thank you to everyone who has generously given so far. Please consider making a donation by check payable to Quaker Earthcare Witness, P.O. Box 6787, Albany, CA, 94706 or donating online at quakerearthcare.org/donate. Thank you.

Toward a Better Future,

Stan Becker, Clerk, & Shelley Tanenbaum, General Secretary

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or the “risks of grave damage to ecosystems, and non-linear responses, are expected to increase rapidly.” Island nations and low-lying areas would add that the limit needs to be 1.5 degrees C to avoid grave damage in their areas.

The startling findings that I am taking away from the report are:

- To stay below a 2 degrees temperature rise, carbon emissions must peak by 2020, be cut 50 percent by 2040 and achieve net zero by 2080;
- The report does not seriously consider scenarios that would limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees C;
- Carbon emissions that are already in the atmosphere (emitted over more than the past century, beyond the natural carbon cycle) will remain in the carbon cycle for decades, with 15-40 percent sticking around for 1000 years unless we figure out a way to remove them;
- There are likely many interactions between all climate-change impacts (ie, drought, extreme weather, sea-level rise) that will magnify the chaos.

This last set of findings in the report is entitled “Potential Surprises.” It is chilling to hear scientists use the words “Potential Surprises” to describe our future. They have no idea how the effects of climate change will snowball, feedback-loop, escalate exponentially, or go beyond known extremes. They do know that all our current climate-prediction models underestimate results.

The second publication is a call to action issued from 16,000 (and growing) scientists to change our ways regarding environmental degradation, entitled *World Scientists’ Warning to Humanity: A Second Notice*. The “Warning to Humanity” was originally issued 25 years ago by 1700 scientists. The warning highlights scary statistics about fresh-water resources, dead zones in the ocean, forest declines, vertebrate species declines, human population and increases in carbon emissions and temperature.

From the nine environmental crises identified by scientists 25 years ago, only one crisis has been averted, but it can serve as a model for what we can achieve when we have the political will to do so. You might remember that we used to worry about the ‘ozone hole,’ a gap in



The cover of the *Climate Science Special Report* highlights one example of extreme weather. The storm pictured here dropped more rain in a single occasion than had fallen during the previous five months, ending California’s drought in February 2017.

“We have time, but not much, to make a significant difference with our actions.”

the ozone layer of the stratosphere that shields us from harmful ultra-violet solar rays. We have now successfully removed significant ozone-depleting pollutants, and the ‘hole’ is shrinking (ozone is a big problem in the lower atmosphere, but that is another story). We (meaning humanity) adopted the Montreal Protocol in 1987, that phased out ozone-depleting pollutants. It worked!

Your work is needed more than ever. You are not alone.

Shelley Tanenbaum is Quaker Earthcare Witness’ General Secretary and a member of Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting (Pacific Yearly Meeting and lives in Albany, California.

Responding to a Diseased Economy with Friends Testimonies

By Pamela Haines

Editor's Note: Read the first part of Pamela's article, *Money & Soul*, on our website.

OUR ECONOMY HAS STRAYED far from its divine vocation of organizing society to provide for livelihood and welfare, while protecting the earth on which it depends. As we seek a rightly ordered response, as investors and debtors and workers and citizens—as Friends—the framework of our Quaker testimonies can help.

INTEGRITY

We can't make much progress without acknowledging the importance of integrity. Clearly it is massively lacking in our current economy and, like the fish in the sea, we cannot exist outside of it. But while a goal of purity may be beyond our reach—and may lead us to spiritual dead ends if we try—that doesn't mean we need be immobilized or silenced.

One way to start is to take on the discipline of writing our own statements of conscience. What values do you claim in this area of money and economics? To what do you conscientiously object? On what basis? Even if there are things that you do not know or fully understand you can start by looking for a solid place on which to stand. This would be a productive exercise for Meetings to take on together.

SIMPLICITY

Simplicity is central. With an economic and monetary system that depends on continuous growth, more people need to be steadily convinced that they need more things. This requires people who are willing to be defined as consumers and vulnerable to being swayed by advertisers.

So living out our testimony on simplicity with all the intention and power we can muster—and sharing the joy of that choice with others—is part of calling the economy back to its divine vocation of providing for human welfare on a finite earth.

EQUALITY

Equality is endangered by an economy whose underlying dynamic tends to widen class differences. Added to this is the role of racism, and the great transfers of wealth from communities of color to the white world.

What might pull down the accumulation of excessive wealth? The city of Portland, Oregon, for example, has just passed an ordinance that adds a tax to corporations whose CEOs make more than 100 times the average of their workers. (In 1965, the average was 20 to 1. By 2013, this was almost 300 to 1.) Other tax policies could discourage making money from money without contributing anything to the real economy. Similarly we can put our weight behind policies to pull people up out of oppressive debt, such as payday lending, credit card fees, student debt, and underwater mortgages.

We can think even bigger, and support the idea of moving our whole money-creation system out of the for-profit banking sector, as it currently functions in the Federal Reserve.

We can support expansion of the kind of policies that helped create the post-war white middle class. (As this group's prospects have been eroded by the resurgence of laissez-faire neoliberalism, greater insecurity brings both more commonalities with the poor and oppressed, and more fears that end up targeting those groups.) This might include efforts to raise the minimum wage; support for college education like that of the GI Bill; a revised personal income tax structure; perhaps a guaranteed income, such as that proposed by both Franklin Roosevelt and Richard Nixon.

COMMUNITY

Since our economic system depends on getting people to act individually and on the basis of greed, community is critical to our salvation. Any efforts to retain parts of the economic system in community, or return them to community are part of the solution.

It's easier to think of community-based ways of managing production and services than community-based ways of managing money, yet credit unions are a wonderful community-owned institution where debt and interest stay in the same closed local system. If I borrow money there, I am borrowing from my neighbors. If I have money there in savings, it is being used to support my neighbors. We can all revisit our investment choices, moving from screening out negative investments, to actively choosing for positive investments, to investing locally, either in community investment funds or even in specific sectors or businesses.

Focusing even closer in, families or religious communities might choose to buy up student loans, credit-card debt, and mortgages from their members and set up loan repayment agreements with zero or minimal interest rates.

Finally, we can choose to invest in our common security by plain old sharing of wealth (our title to which tends to be pretty shaky) with groups like Right Sharing of World Resources, with their wonderful mission of relieving the burdens of both poverty and materialism.

STEWARDSHIP

With the concept of stewardship evoking separation and control, how can we shift from the idea of "mastery over" and work to understand our place within the ecosystems of which we are a part, and the role we can play as part of the whole that best enhances and maintains that whole? What can this perspective teach us about a healthy and sustainable financial eco-system?

A current practice in agriculture is to use deep and straight ditches to drain water off of fields as efficiently as possible. But it turns out that deep and straight

ditches are also efficient in washing away topsoil, eroding banks, and sending agricultural poisons directly into the adjacent water supplies. It turns out that, if you're thinking in terms of the health of the ecosystem, it's better to have a very slow and meandering stream that takes its time, replenishes the surroundings, and does a lot of self-cleaning in the process.

Similarly, I'm pretty sure that a healthy financial ecosystem would be slow. There would not be an efficient stream whose goal was to pour stuff out at the end. Rather, as its resources meandered and percolated through the local economy, the health of the local system would be steadily replenished.

It's the difference between a model that extracts and one that generates.

PEACE

Thinking about peace, I remember someone coming back from a demonstration against the war in Iraq and talking about a sign they saw: "What is our oil doing under their sand?" How much of war is fueled by inequality and the demands of a growth economy in a world of increasing scarcity? How much is it fueled by a desire to gain greater control over wealth or productive

assets or water? Removing economic injustice from that picture would certainly drain an enormous amount of conflict.

While we are entangled, we are not immobilized, and we need not be silenced. We have many roles—as debtors, investors, community members, citizens—and there are many steps we can take from where we are standing right now. With so many unknowns about the future, the energy we spend second-guessing or judging our choices, or those of others, is mostly wasted. We get to do the best we can, relying on the power of moving forward in faith, making the path by walking.

Pamela Haines is a member of Friends Economic Integrity Project and the Eco-Justice Collaborative of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

“Living out our testimony on simplicity with all the intention and power we can muster is part of calling the economy back to its divine vocation of providing for human welfare on a finite earth.”

Green in Sacramento

By Shelley Tanenbaum

I TOOK A DAY OFF from QEW work to join ‘Green Lobby Day’ in my state capital, Sacramento. I highly recommend that you do the same in your state. As much as we want to see strong national legislation, significant government action, at least in the near term, is much more likely to take place at state and local levels.

I learned a tremendous amount about State politics in my first day on the job! I attended a lobby day on behalf of Friends Committee on Legislation, a 65-year-old Quaker presence in California. My role on the FCLCA board is to support their work on environmental justice.

I learned that there is a plethora of environmentally friendly bills being considered in my state, so many that it is hard to become an expert. Lesson No. 1: Choose one or two pieces of legislation to focus on and study up on these. Let others handle the rest.

Lesson No. 2: Compromise is key at the state level. We may not always like the watered-down version of a bill as it emerges, but that is often what it takes to get a bill passed.

A good example of this is the compromise that was reached early in the legislative session. California’s cap-and-trade program was extended until 2030, with the support of both unions and oil companies. Environmentalists and environmental justice advocates held out support until a companion bill was introduced that would improve air quality in disadvantaged neighborhoods. In the end, many climate advocates are pleased with the results; however, many

others remain skeptical of both the effectiveness of cap and trade and whether neighborhood air quality will actually improve.

An example of where compromise was tried and failed is Senate Bill 100, which would have strengthened the state’s already impressive climate-change legislation by requiring a 50 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2016, a 60 percent reduction by 2030, and a 100 percent reduction by 2045.



The Capitol Building in Sacramento, California

I saw in action how some members of the Legislature would not support the bill without the compromise language that was added to the bill for the 2045 goal. However, even this compromise was not enough to save the bill, and it was withdrawn due to lack of labor support. It is expected to be re-introduced in 2018.

One of my favorite visits was with a state Senator who is at risk of recall due to his positive vote

STATES THAT HAVE LOBBY GROUPS include California (FCLCA), Massachusetts (MAQLAN), Washington (FCWPP) and Indiana (IFCL).

Other states may have informal Quaker groups or “green” coalitions.

Let us know what is going on in your state, and we will distribute the information to the QEW network.

for a gas tax. He is a Democrat in a traditionally Republican district, and narrowly defeated his opponent in 2016 (possibly the real reason for the recall attempt). He told us that if legislators were not willing to stand up for their principles, they didn’t belong in the Legislature.

I came away inspired by the possibilities for enacting meaningful legislation, inspired by my new colleagues, and inspired by those politicians who know how to make a deal on behalf of earthcare.

Legislating Light

By Scott Greenler & Emily Wirzba

AT THE FRIENDS COMMITTEE on National Legislation (FCNL), the Quaker testimony of stewardship underpins our climate work. We see human actions inflicting harm to the earth, and as caretakers, or stewards, we are compelled to act.

We watch with deep pain as the president and his administration roll back years of climate policy. Yet we firmly believe that now more than ever is the moment for Friends to call for moral leadership from our members of Congress to address climate change.

FCNL works to grow and advance the legislative work of the bipartisan House Climate Solutions Caucus, which was first formed in February 2016 by Reps. Carlos Curbelo (R, FL-26) and Ted Deutch (D, FL-22). The Caucus educates members on solutions to reduce climate risk and explores bipartisan policy options that address the impacts, causes, and challenges of our changing climate. Nicknamed the “Noah’s Ark” Caucus, because members have to join two-by-two with a partner from across the political aisle, this caucus is doing vital work to foster bipartisan relationships, dialogue, and trust between political parties.

As we work with members in the Climate Solutions Caucus, we are filled with hope. At the end of 2016, this caucus had only 20 members. Already, the caucus has tripled in size. As of December 5th, 62 members of Congress have joined.

The caucus members are contributing to important legislative victories. Their votes generated significant momentum to prevent the passage of the Congressional



Rep. Young and David Bantz with FCNL's Emily Wirzba

Review Act to overturn the Bureau of Land Management's Natural Gas Waste rule to capture methane emissions. Additionally, members in the Caucus were essential in protecting climate language in the National Defense Authorization Act this July.

While we may not always agree with members of Congress, Quaker teaching asks us to seek that of God

constituency of advocates. There are many ways you can contribute to this prophetic call to action. You can write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper. If you mention your member of Congress by name, the letter will probably be included in that legislator's press briefing. You can also make an impact by setting up an in-person lobby visit with your member

“Now more than ever is the moment for Friends to call for moral leadership from our members of Congress to address climate change.”

in each individual, members of Congress included. In this practice, we work to find areas where we can agree, ways in which we can build meaningful relationships and opportunities to encourage those in power to act with integrity and compassion.

Quakers from across the country empower these efforts. FCNL's message and strength come from our outspoken and engaged

of Congress' staff in their local district office. Many members of the Climate Solutions Caucus have joined because they received direct requests from constituents to do so.

Contact Scott Greenler at scott@fcnl.org for more information. Scott is the Program Assistant for Sustainable Energy and Environment and Emily Wirzba is the Legislative Representative for Sustainable Energy and Environment at FCNL.

LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD, LOOKING IN 30 YEARS OF QEW

"What is your news of the environment, of your religious concern for it, of your Meeting's concern? Is something going on in your bailiwick? If so, all of us want to hear about it. If not, all of us want to hear about that. You know, and I know that the earth is breaking apart and the sky is falling down. That if we are going to put it back together, we must re-form our own lives and agendas."

*Unity with Nature Newsletter
Friends in Unity With Nature Committee
of Pacific Yearly Meeting
October 15, 1985. Robert
Schutz, Editor.*

"Do you
revere all life and the
splendor of God's continuing
creation?

Do you try to protect the natural
environment and its creatures against
abuse and harmful exploitation?
Do you regard your possessions as given
to you in trust, and do you part with them
freely to meet the needs of others?
Are you frugal in your personal life and
committed to the just distribution of
the world's resources?"

*New England Yearly Meeting's Faith
and Practice 1985*



United with Nature

A Historic Reflection

By Judy Lumb

In 1987, I was sick in Belize, an isolated Friend. My Meeting for Worship was reading *Friends Journal* in my hammock. I learned to keep pen and paper handy because my version of speaking in Meeting was to write letters. When the notice of the creation of Friends Committee on Unity with Nature (FCUN) appeared in *Friends Journal*, I wrote the group a letter expressing my support and interest. I got a wonderful letter from Bill Howenstein, one of the founding members. I called myself a “corresponding member” because FCUN was kind enough to send me updates on their activities by international mail.

Then, in 1998, I was the recipient of a miracle healing at an indigenous ceremony in Belize, so I planned to go to Friends General Conference in 1999 and asked FCUN if I could attend their meeting just before. I immediately joined the Publications Committee and Population Working Group. By that time, the Internet had started so I could contribute by email.

At that meeting, I was concerned because there was talk of starting a new organization for Friends’ environmental activism, especially lobbying. Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) did not have the resources to devote to environmental legislation, and they didn’t have the staff or resources to expand their efforts. FCUN had considered their role as focusing on the spiritual transformation required for our future. They said they would leave the activism to the Sierra Club and other groups. However, for many Friends their spiritual work leads them to act, and some felt the need of an organization to fill the gap between FCNL and FCUN. I have been a long-term supporter of FCNL and did not want them to sacrifice any of their work to take on environmental work. I thought it was not wise to start a new organization for lobbying when FCNL had developed such an effective lobbying effort in the U.S. Congress. I wrote a letter to the Editor of *BeFriending Creation* expressing these concerns.

Little did I know that a perfect solution was underway. Led by Ed Dreby and others of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, a small group of Friends did the grassroots work of visiting Friends Monthly and Yearly Meetings asking for them to respond to FCNL’s next priority setting request. These visitors focused on the basic connection between environmental issues and the traditional Friends’ concerns of Peace and Justice. This effort was successful because Friends responded to the FCNL request for priorities by asking for lobbying on environmental issues. Ed Dreby also led an effort out of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to raise the funds necessary for FCNL to hire an additional staff person to handle the environmental work.

THE FIRST QEW

At the same time Ed led the effort to develop a Quaker Eco-Witness Committee within FCUN to respond to lobbying and other environmental activist work. We called it “QEW.” This work was funded by a group from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to avoid depleting FCUN’s resources. One thing these funds covered was the Quaker Eco-Bulletin (QEB), which was a four-page insert in each *BeFriending Creation*. The idea was to boil down the information needed for lobbying for a given bill in Congress to four pages. We also published some we called “thought pieces” concerning economics and environmental concerns. QEBs were published faithfully every two months for ten years (2001-2011).

By 2011, the two-month publication schedule was too long for urgent lobbying appeals and FCNL emails had taken over that purpose. Those 60-some QEBs are on the QEW website and continue to be relevant as background information <quakerearthcare.org/article/quaker-eco-bulletin-index>.

Continued from previous page

EXPANSION OF FCUN STEERING COMMITTEE

In 1999, FCUN was still a small committee and I suggested that FCUN get input from Yearly and Monthly Meetings about what they want from FCUN, as FCNL does. The next time I went to an FCUN Steering Committee meeting, I was very pleased to see Yearly Meeting Representatives, who serve as a connector between their local communities and the national network.

NAME CHANGE

For several years, Ruah Swennerfelt, the General Secretary for FCUN, had expressed her concern that, as she moved around among Friends, the name “Friends Committee on Unity with Nature” was a big impediment to some Friends for a variety of reasons. Some thought we were pagan “tree-huggers” instead of Friends who were concerned about the care of God’s Creation. The name gave the impression that we were a small insular committee rather than part of a growing “religion and ecology” movement within a broad spectrum of faith traditions.

After several years of work on the name issue, the Steering Committee reached unity in 2003 that Quaker Earthcare Witness was more accurate and welcoming to other Friends. Since then, Quaker Earthcare Witness has been received much more readily across the whole breadth of Friends organizations, although some Friends remain concerned that the name change might result in less focus on our spiritual connection to Earth.

Judy Lumb worships with the new Belize City Friends Meeting, but is still a member of Atlanta Friends Meeting. Thanks to Louis Cox for his input.



A Call to Commitment

Quotes from *BeFriending Creation*
Vol. 1 #1 August 15, 1987.

By Marshall Massey

There have been times in recent years when we Quakers have been wonderfully quick to spot... new evils and to fashion a response. Such has been the case with...the draft in Vietnam war, the needs of refugees from American wars, with our nation's possession of nuclear arms.

We are not so sensitized to environmental issues...We are now only slightly more awake to their significance than the average American is.

We have failed to see the overall magnitude and urgency of the environmental crisis, which are at least as great as that of the nuclear crisis... We have failed to see that the environmental crisis has a towering spiritual dimension, which must be addressed if the crisis is to be resolved.

I believe that even though we Quakers are in this world, the...environmental crises cannot be solved without our organizational help...that we are called by the Light within us, by the teachings and example of Jesus, and by the writings and examples of our Quaker predecessors, to work for the solution to these crisis, just as we are called to work for an end to war, cruelty, and hatred.

Marshall Massey inspired the creation of the Friends Committee on Unity with Nature in a 1987 plenary address to the Friends General Conference gathering.

40 Quakers with 30 Agendas

By Tom Small

“FORTY QUAKERS WITH 30 different agendas.” That’s how I characterized—only half-jokingly—the Quaker Earthcare Witness Steering Committee when I was its Clerk from 1996 to 1998.

The Friends Committee on Unity with Nature—that’s what we called ourselves back then. So where was the Unity in all those differences? Unity with Nature? And is it the same—or different—now, as we celebrate the 30th anniversary of FCUN/QEW?

Does it help to think of us as the leaves of a tree? All different, but all one tree, one recognizable pattern? Perhaps we are seekers, like Goethe, after the Urleaf, the pattern from which all parts of all flowering plants are generated. Thoreau, following Goethe’s insight, remarked, “The Maker of this earth but patented a leaf.” Modern molecular genetic research suggests that Goethe had it just about right. Could it be that Nature is also fond of Quakers as patterns for metamorphosis?

Perhaps “Unity with Nature” consists in the evolution or unfolding of difference, Nature’s method of changing in order to stay the same. That might help to explain what felt like chaos as I clerked the Steering Committee meeting in Old Chatham, New York back in 1997. Maybe Darwin offers some help: where there are no woodpeckers, the finch remains a finch by occupying the woodpecker’s vacant niche. Voilà! A different beak—a longer, sharper one. Still a Galàpagos finch, but with an essential difference. A new leaf. Same pattern.

Might it be well, as we struggle with each other’s differences, to ponder a conversation back in 1757 between the Delaware chief Teedyuscung and a weighty Philadelphia Quaker? The Delaware had spoken of the Pennsylvania governor’s words, at the previous day’s meeting with him, as coming only from “the outside of his teeth” and vowed, “I would speak so too.” As the two friends sat in silence, the Delaware thought about white men’s increasing claims of possession on the land. The Quaker broke the silence by recommending the Golden Rule as the model to follow. The Delaware rejected it vehemently: “impossible.”

If we think about the historical context, involving an unsuccessful negotiation about land, Teedyuscung’s response makes a lot of sense. The conflict, the “difference,” is between two radically opposed cultures. For the Native culture, the land is common; it belongs to no person. For the European culture, the land

is property, part and parcel of the advance of civilization, the proper study of mankind.

To ask the Delaware chief to “do unto the other as he would have the other do unto him” is equivalent to acknowledging that we are the same when we are not. We are different, asserted the Delaware. The native sense of relation to the land, which is life, and the water, which is life, and the earth, which is mother, is radically different from the European relation to the land as property to be claimed, bought, and sold.

The “Golden Rule” leads, in the colonial context, to dispossession of cultural identity and forced assimilation, the European-American answer to the Indian problem for more than 300 years. It justifies suppression of difference. Reduction of land and place from “thou” to “it,” and the same for the human spirit interdependent with land and place.

Okay, I figure that just about now you might be wondering how and when I’m going to get us out of 18th-century Philadelphia and back to the 30th anniversary. So here goes...

I ended my Clerk’s report to the Steering Committee in 1996, as we entered FCUN’s tenth year, by invoking the “new ferment and spirit, within us and around us. So, celebrate we shall,” I affirmed, “as we renew our commitment to witness together for transformation.”

Twenty years later, we’re still the same. And we’re still all different. In the late 18th century, Antoine Lavoisier, one of the founders of modern chemistry, wrote, “Nothing gets lost. Nothing is created. Everything transforms.” Isn’t that what generates difference? Isn’t that how Nature works? Unity, wholeness, fullness, through difference. Transformation in order to continue the same. Isn’t that what we celebrate?

I’ve come to FCUN and QEW meetings for 25 years. I come because of our differences. I come because we don’t require each other to change. Instead, we celebrate and support difference. We wait upon “That of God” in every thing, Nature’s power of transformation, in order to continue.

Tom Small, Kalamazoo Friends Meeting, is a member of the QEW Publications Committee and co-author of Using Native Plants to Restore Community.

SOURCES: J. W. von Goethe, *The Metamorphosis of Plants* (1790); David Lee, *Nature’s Fabric: Leaves in Science and Culture* (2017); Scott L. Pratt, *Native Pragmatism: Rethinking the Roots of American Philosophy* (2002).



Population

A Controversial Witness?

By Stan Becker

FRIENDS COMMITTEE on Unity with Nature (FCUN) was born in 1987 at the Friends General Conference gathering plenary. There, Marshall Massey outlined all the environmental threats we faced on planet earth. Except he missed one. He did not mention the rapid growth in numbers of our own species. We were about 1 billion persons on the planet in 1830; we reached 2 billion by 1930, 3 billion in 1960, and since then have added about a billion every ten years. Today our population is about 7.6 billion.

I went up to Marshall on the stage at the end and said very directly: “Marshall, you did not mention human population growth. You know that rapid population growth is related to almost all of the problems you mentioned, so why didn’t you mention it?” His response saddened me but also galvanized me to work on the concern. He simply said: “It is too controversial among Friends.”

Thankfully, the newly formed FCUN was more open to population concerns. Within a couple years, I had a traveling minute and minutes on population concerns approved by my monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings.

I drafted a trifold on population concerns published by FCUN, albeit with a disclaimer about its controversial nature. Soon an oversight committee in my Monthly Meeting was formed and that group worked on the first draft of most of the FCUN/QEW population pamphlets:

immigration, adoption, abortion, sexuality, and “Seeking clearness on childbearing in a crowded world.” It took much Friendly labor for the FCUN Steering Committee to approve each of these (the abortion one took three years), but it gives me pride to know that Friends can reach unity even on difficult matters by laboring in love with each other.

Since that time the committee (now a working group) has helped publish a book, *Population is People*, has developed a population-resources game, has provided speakers at monthly, quarterly and yearly meetings (as well as a plenary on population concerns at the FGC Gathering in 2001), and recently has revised and updated all of the original pamphlets on population concerns and added one on women’s empowerment.

We have been fortunate to have had three Friends who work in population and reproductive health participate actively in the committee/working group, Roy Treadway, Dick Grossman, and myself. Population is an area with many statistics and putting a human face on them is part of our work.

There are many more stories to tell, but we’ll save these for another time. In the meantime, please check out the population pamphlets under publications on the QEW website at <quakerearthcare.org/population>. The queries can be especially helpful.

Stan Becker is the Clerk of QEW. He is a professor at Johns Hopkins University and a member of Homewood (Baltimore) Friends Meeting.



Earthcare for Children An Updated Curriculum for First Day Schools

AS WE LOOK TOWARD the future, we see our children. Quaker Earthcare Witness has updated our *Earthcare for Children* curriculum to help children ages 5-12 walk gently over the Earth through interactive, fun and educational activities.

In these lessons, we will experience the Earth as our home, see how we share our home with God’s creatures, and learn how we can behave in caring ways for our world.

Each lesson offers different options to best respond to the diversity of our faith and the needs of our communities.

The curriculum is available as a digital download at <quakerearthcare.org/children>.

Please share and enjoy.



The Gift That Keeps on Giving

By Liz Hofmeister

ON SEPTEMBER 30TH, former campers, counselors, and others long associated with Baltimore Yearly Meeting's Catoctin Quaker Camp marked the 60th anniversary of the residential summer camp located some 50 miles west of Baltimore, MD. A highlight of the weekend celebration was the dedication of the camp's new environmentally-friendly bath house. Built in the past year and used over the summer by more than 100 campers, the structure includes a number of green features, most prominently 10 composting toilets.

To help retire the "Friendly loans" given as part of the campaign to finance the new building, BYM staff thought they would have some fun. The Yearly Meeting offered "naming rights" for a toilet to anyone who made a \$5,000 contribution. The word went out: "Are you looking for the perfect gift? Name a composting toilet at Catoctin in honor or in memory of someone special."

By the time of the dedication weekend, six of the ten toilets already had been named and will have tasteful, discrete plaques attached to them. During the anniversary celebration, there was a definite buzz about who else should be honored with this special memorial and who would contribute to make it possible.

In addition to being attractive, the new Catoctin bath house is a physical articulation of Baltimore Yearly Meeting's commitment to sustainability. Years of research and design have made it possible to have a safe and efficient means of disposing of waste and the new building is putting this technology to good use.

If relying on the typical septic field to dispose of waste, a residential camp like ours would need to be able to supply and dispose of 40 to 50 gallons of water daily for each individual on site. At that rate, Catoctin would use and dispose of enough water to fill a school bus in fewer than three days!

Employing Clivus Multrim composters installed in the basement of the building, the same waste is being composted and made into safe, useful products. After 18 to 24 months, the composters will begin generating about two to three bushels of rich, odorless compost each year. There also will be about 500 gallons of nitrogen-rich, odorless liquid waste generated annually that will be applied to the camp landscape, enriching the surrounding flora.

By using this technology, the new Catoctin bath house is saving precious water and enriching the land. But more importantly Baltimore Yearly Meeting is introducing hundreds

"Are you looking for the perfect gift? Name a composting toilet in honor of someone special."

of visitors to the possibility of a new way of treating waste and a sustainable way of living with creation. Additionally, the building will significantly reduce the camp's carbon footprint through the use of on-demand water heaters and LED lighting.

Other green features of the structure are rafter timbers sawn from trees removed from the site before construction and permeable crushed-gravel paths leading to the building.

Finally, the bath house offers staff of Baltimore Yearly Meeting's summer camping program an attractive tangible example in how to walk gently on the earth that they can incorporate into the program for the hundreds of youth ages 9 to 14 years who will be attending the camp each summer in the coming years.

Liz Hofmeister, of Bethesda Friends Meeting, is the Clerk of Baltimore Yearly Meeting's Development Committee. Thanks also to Ann Venable and David Hunter.

OUR COMMUNITY SPEAKS

Letters from Friends

Sweet Balance with Earth

By Ann Marie Klaus

I have to admit, I do not harbor a wish to save Earth or reverse the process she is undergoing. Nor do I worry for her.

Earth, in my mind, is a powerful, exquisite being, undergoing the same process of expansion that every bit of the universe engages in. I worry not for Earth's ability to restore herself to health and balance.

I do, however, realize that humans and life as we know it may very well not survive the process. I operate on a personal vision that we will experience a great spiritual and emotional darkness. But I think this is also our process, as Spirit unfolding through humanity. It is our time of rot, recycle, re-form.

I am driven to prepare a sanctuary in my home for when the structures do fall apart. I also seek to reduce and repurpose waste and to find ways to make, grow, and find everything my family might need to live without the current structures of society. And I seek to partner with Earth, finding the sweet center of balance where all that we need is already being provided for us, without need for grabbing, taking, ravishing, or piling.

This includes (1) growing enough organic and non-GMO food in

my back yard to feed my family and others around us the fruits and vegetables that we need, (2) growing and studying wellness herbs and plants to provide the original alternative to medicine, (3) establishing in-house energy-producing structures, and (4) learning how to live off the bounty of the wild forest for further nutrition and sheltering needs.

But my vision is not actually for my home and family. My vision is to come together with a community, to provide for each other and build

“My vision is to come together with a community, to provide for each other and build a place to hold the light amidst the darkness.”

a place to hold the light amidst the darkness—to offer spiritual and physical shelter to those overwhelmed by the turning of Earth.

I am part of Earthcare Friendly 8s in the hopes of sharing ideas for living in that sweet balance with Earth, and also with the intention of finding like-interested community builders.

“Ann Marie and I are attenders at Charlotte Friends Meeting. We realized we had a common passion for earthcare and decided to act on that leading. Our format is called Friendly 8s, people with a common interest. We had no idea whether even 8 folks from our meeting would respond. Now, there are 13 active or interested members.”

- Mary Jo Klingel, Charlotte Friends Meeting and Rising Clerk of QEW

Continued from back cover

The Grove of Life

The two of us have been involved in the Transition Town movement for a decade, after learning that our lifestyle decisions directly affect as much as two-thirds of our carbon footprint.

When we begin to bike more and fly less, plant gardens and eat less meat, bundle up in winter and turn down the thermostat, live with what we have and minimize waste, we take steps to embrace less energy-hungry lives.

Some actions are easy to talk about, but how can we talk tactfully about our individual and corporate need to buy less, waste less, travel less, use less, and burn less? How can we celebrate the steps others are taking, and begin to consider taking a step we ourselves have avoided?

We found that the Grove of Life invited this kind of conversation. We encourage you to replicate the idea.

“It is a long journey from the head to the heart, and an even longer journey from the heart to the hands,” says Patriarch Bartholomew.

Public art is one way to help people move from head, to heart, to hand.

Regula and Michael Russelle are members of Prospect Hill Friends Meeting in Saint Paul and Minneapolis. They are active in their neighborhood group, Transition Town All St. Anthony Park. Contact Regula for more info: regula@cedarfencepress.com.

Spiritual Ecology Center Opens in Mexican Cloud Forest

By Paula Kline

For more than a decade, my husband and I have hosted high school students for an annual Environmental Leadership Workcamp in the cloud forest of Veracruz, Mexico. A project of Westtown School's Quaker Leadership Program, students return home transformed by their hands-on experiences with sustainable agriculture, living on a solar budget, and learning how to protect our sacred soil and the cloud forest. This is a deeply spiritual awakening for many and an opportunity to slow down and experience simple living.

This summer, we collaborated with the Mexican Ecovillage, Tierra de Niebla, in founding a new Interfaith Spiritual Ecology Center aimed at adults. The new center, known as Ashram del Bosque, seeks to create a space for learning, growth, and healing

of ourselves and the planet. With the cloud forest as our teacher, we seek to establish a harmonious relationship with the natural world in a practical and light-hearted way, as well taking concrete action to reverse climate change.

The vision that guides us is nourished by Quaker values and the legacy of those who have sought a more humane, wise, and fraternal society. It is also nourished by science and art as ways of exploring our human nature and its expression in the world.

Paula Kline is a member of the Eco-Justice Collaborative and Westtown Monthly Meeting (Philadelphia Yearly Meeting). Email for more info at nextgenconference@gmail.com.



Co-founder Friend Alan Wright leading a workshop on the protection of an endangered oak, known as a "chicalaba."

Peace, Justice, and Ecology

By Eric Fuselier

Friends, we are happy to announce that we recently formed a Quaker Earthcare Committee within the monthly meeting in Fayetteville, Arkansas. Members of the committee have a lot of passion and knowledge about the environment and we're really excited about the projects we have going on here.

Our meetinghouse is located at the OMNI Center for Peace, Justice & Ecology. Friends from Fayetteville Monthly Meeting have already planted a native plant garden at the Center to provide ecological benefits to pollinators and wildlife, and we are currently working to replace a section of the lawn with native wildflowers. This is part of a larger project our committee is undertaking to have the grounds at the Center certified as a wildlife habitat by the National Wildlife Federation.

Our committee has also been organizing educational programs on Earthcare and various environmental issues for our meeting and the community at large. Friends and other knowledgeable community members conduct the meeting. In addition, a few Friends have been facilitating nature hikes for both our monthly and quarterly meetings for the past couple of years, and intend to continue to provide these opportunities to connect Friends with nature.

We are also providing support for other environmental

causes through signing letters and petitions. Recently the Fayetteville Monthly Meeting signed and sent two letters to Congress. One letter supports climate action and urges Congress to acknowledge the serious threat posed by climate change and to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions. The other letter endorses the Carbon Fee and Dividend policy advocated by the Citizens Climate Lobby.

We also have some members of our meeting who are actively involved with other environmental causes and organize a monthly Climate Change Book Forum at our local library to discuss new books and articles on the subject. A few of us also recently took part in a solar-panel-installation work day at the OMNI Center.

We hope that as we get more projects off the ground it will help attract the attention of members of the community at large and inspire others. We have a great deal of momentum and hope to make as much of a difference in our local environment as possible.

Eric Fuselier is a member of Fayetteville Monthly Meeting and is South Central Yearly Meeting's Representative to QEW.

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Neighbors gather for Grove of Life event Photo: Dan Norman, Northern Spark 2017

AN ALL-NIGHT, OUTDOOR EVENT. One thousand passersby publicly claim their practices and promises to reduce climate change. Each attaches a paper leaf with a personal, hand-written testimony like “bicycle everywhere,” “no food waste,” “share housing,” “travel by train” to a branch on a small grove of trees, the Grove of Life.

As Friends know experientially, testimonies speak through our words and our actions. This public art project was organized by artists involved in Twin Cities (Minnesota) Transition Groups, neighbors “coming together to create more resilient communities and a more sustainable future.” As part of this group, we invited others to step forward and testify. The response was deeply moving.

“It was a magical night.”

“Thank you so much for inspiring my generation to think about the future.”

“I’m intrigued about this as a tool for congregational organizing.”

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Adding Leaves to the Grove of Life

By Regula and Michael Russelle



Photo: Raven Miller