

Quaker Earthcare Witness Continuing Counsel Committee
Minutes of Conference Call
2010 January 30

(Approved on 2010 February 23)

Present: Jack Bradin, David Ciscel, Dick Grossman, Mary Jo Klingel, Hollister Knowlton, Susan Swanstrom, Roy Taylor, Roy Treadway, Rod Zwirner, and Ruah Swennerfelt (*ex officio*).

Beginning of conference call

We started with a moment of silence as we joined the conference call. We reviewed the use of Skype by both computer and phone, where necessary. Dick began our sessions with a reading from Martin Luther: "God writes the gospel not in the Bible alone, but on trees and flowers and clouds and stars."

Approval of the agenda

The Continuing Counsel Committee approved the agenda.

Holding in the Light

We wished David Ciscel well when he takes his mother to the hospital later today. We are also holding Susannah McCandless and Bill Howenstine in the light as they recover from serious health challenges.

Approval of the Treasurer Serving on the Continuing Counsel Committee

Because we do not have a Clerk of the Finance Committee currently, CCC wants to have the Treasurer join CCC until a Clerk of Finance Committee is approved.

CCC Minute 2010.01.01 Continuing Counsel Committee approved the Treasurer serving on the Continuing Counsel Committee until a Clerk of the Finance Committee is nominated and approved.

Approval of the Clerk of the Personnel Committee Serving on the Continuing Counsel Committee

Because the Clerk of Personnel Committee is involved in important work for QEW, CCC felt he or she should be part of the CCC. This change also needs to be approved by the Steering Committee at our April Meeting, and our Bylaws would need to be changed in October. We might write the Bylaws to specify membership on CCC as the officers, select committee clerks, and others as CCC wishes. We welcomed Jack Bradin joining us on the CCC.

CCC Minute 2010.01.02 Continuing Counsel Committee approved the Clerk of the Personnel Committee serving on the Continuing Counsel Committee until the Steering Committee can consider adding the Clerk of the Personnel Committee to the Continuing Counsel Committee during its next meeting, 2010 April 22-25.

Approval of 2009 December Continuing Counsel Committee (CCC) Minutes

CCC Minute 2010.01.03 Continuing Counsel Committee approved the Minutes of our 2009 December 8 Continuing Counsel Committee Conference Call.

Clerk of the Finance Committee

According to Rod Zwirner, Clerk of Nominating Committee, we do not have a new Clerk of Finance Committee but hope to connect with new persons now serving on the committee. Steve McConnell is drafting a description of the position, and it will be shared with potential candidates.

Bank account signers

Ruah Swennerfelt and David Ciscel reported that **we need to change persons, currently including the Clerk and Recording Clerk, who can sign on checking and money market accounts for the Chittenden Bank, so that only the General Secretary and Treasurer need to sign. This change has been approved by the Finance Committee.** Signature papers are being circulated among the officers now. Many of our bills are being paid online. We suggested doing business with Friends Fiduciary, whose interest rates are attractive, but they have holdings in Exxon and organizations involved in mountain top mining. We also wondered how easy it would be able to take money out of Friends Fiduciary when we need funds. The advantage of using Chittenden Bank is that it is a local, environmentally responsible bank and we are considering short-term CDs. We are being very careful about our use of money right now. Finance Committee will report back to CCC at its next conference call. Hollister will confer with David about the issues involved.

CCC Minute 2010.01.04 Continuing Counsel Committee approved letting Finance Committee make the decisions about the use of money. We suggest that the Finance Committee consider how QEW invests its money, including investigating how Friends Fiduciary is investing money.

Financial update, including information on the end-of-year appeal and purchase of CDs

Ruah and David also reviewed the 2009 financial statements prepared by our auditors, Angolano and Company, Certified Public Auditors, against the first months of FY 2010. In the first two months of FY 2010, we have raised more than in first two months of each of FY 2006 through FY2009. For instance, in the first two months of the fiscal year, QEW received contributions of \$23,835 in FY 2010, \$17,904 in FY 2009, \$18,174 in FY 2008, \$22,287 in FY 2007, and \$20,230 in FY 2006. We are likely to get some of the \$20,000 we have requested from the New Visions Foundation. The review by the auditors gives a good picture of QEW finances.

We need to consider very carefully how much we are paying staff since Ruah and Louis did not receive a salary increase this fiscal year and they reduced the rent for QEW offices in their house. Thus, expenditures remain low, particularly because of cuts for staff support. **When we adopted our FY 2010 budget at our 2009 Fall Annual meeting, we agreed to consider seriously at our April Meeting raising their salaries, taking into consideration the value of the work they do for QEW. This is particularly important as we hire new staff and as we raise funds for the important accomplishments of QEW. By the April SC meeting, the Finance Committee will consider staff rent and salary increases, including retroactive increases.**

Update on the Ad Hoc Committee on Staff Transition

According to Dick Grossman, Jack Bradin has agreed to be the Clerk the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Staff Transition. Current members of the Committee are Jack Bradin, Dick Grossman, David Ciscel, Al Connor, and Ruah Swennerfelt. Judy Lumb, Ed Dreby, and Hollister Knowlton requested not to continue on the Committee.

Jack read his initial letter about the possible structuring the position of general secretary, including 1) continuing with the current arrangement or splitting the job into 2) program-administrator and bookkeeper responsibilities, 3) two field secretaries, one for the east and one for the west of North America, or 4) two field

secretaries, one for Friends United Meeting and one for Friends General Conference. Separate program-administration and bookkeeper job descriptions exist now and have been approved by the Personnel Committee; currently Ruah is doing both jobs as a combined job. The bookkeeping can be contracted out to an accounting firm to create financial statements and not be part of program-administration or field-secretary positions. Contracting out the bookkeeper responsibilities to an outside firm will be expensive. Somebody, not the bookkeeper, needs to be involved in renewals and follow up of contributions. We need to review how deposits and checks would be handled; currently the general secretary receives deposits and the treasurer pays bills separately.

Thus, the new position might include or might not include bookkeeping. Ruah might keep the bookkeeping for a year, depending on the interests and skills of the other person(s). Any new staff position needs to be considered in light of any new responsibilities with the UN that QEW might take on. Jack and Ruah can discuss these possibilities .

The CCC recognized that the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Staff Transition needs many conference calls before the April SC meeting to decide on the structure of the position (or positions), the amount of the salary and support funds, and the time line for making a decision. Additionally, QEW must decide how we are going to advertise and carry out our recruiting, including at Friends General Conference. Most crucially, these decisions will entail deciding whether QEW will continue as it has in the past or become more actively involved with the Society of Friends.

As an important part of our deliberations, CCC wondered whether we need a description of the steps the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Staff Transition will take in the process of recruiting new staff – essentially a job description for the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Staff Transition. This would help QEW coordinate our process for thinking through what QEW should be in the future with the process of deciding on the new position or positions of QEW. **Thus, we agreed that as a way of starting our thoughts, each member of CCC would prepare before our next conference call in February a short statement of what he or she sees as the direction of QEW and the role of the Ad Hoc Committee on Staff Transition in helping QEW see its way of moving forward. To help us do this, Ruah has sent a current job description of the general secretary's position. QEW needs to decide where it is going at the same time as we are making decisions to hire a new person or persons, given the challenges of the earth, UN, the north-south debate, climate change, and our calling to work with Friends.** We wondered whether we have time to work out these issues and come to unity before we need to hire. We will reconsider this process during our conference call in February.

Future Face-to-Face Meetings: Frequency and Location

Susan Swanstrom, Clerk of the Outreach Committee, reported on the Outreach Committee continuing discussion where and how often we should hold face-to-face meetings. We have already planned meetings for 2010 in the spring in Chicago and in the fall in Houston. We need to make a commitment to a place in 2011 by our 2010 April SC Meeting. If we have one meeting a year, the fall is important for our fiscal year (which ends at the end of October) since our bylaws require an annual meeting as a corporation to approve a formal budget. The Internal Revenue Service requirements limit how often we can change our fiscal year (which we have done recently). Changing our fiscal year can be done, but it is difficult. The fall, however, has more meetings by other organizations to conflict with a meeting. In addition, with new staff starting in the beginning of 2011, the value of a face-to-face meeting in first months the spring would be very desirable. In general, SC attendance is about even in Chicago and other sites (such as, Ghost Ranch, NM, Burlington, VT, Atlanta, GA, and Bellingham, WA).

The Outreach Committee recommends one meeting a year in Chicago at the Cenacle, with a intermix of program and business. Chicago is conveniently located to public transportation, although it lacks a natural setting near the conference site. Nevertheless, Chicago has many natural areas which we could access with help

from local Friends. Meeting for four days instead of three days would give us more time to conduct committee and plenary business and explore the many issues confronting us. We can certainly examine ways of “holding” the required annual meeting electronically. We have until the 2010 April meeting to make a decision about meeting at the Cenacle in Spring 2011. Ruah will explore the dates available at the Cenacle between late March and early May in 2011.

CCC Minute 2010.01.05 Continuing Counsel Committee approved proposing to the Steering Committee at our 2010 April meeting in Chicago that QEW hold only one meeting a year in Chicago on an experimental basis, starting in the Spring 2011. During that meeting, we would combine business and program, possibly extend the meeting to four days from three, find ways to explore nature in the Chicago area, help the new staff to plan this meeting, and investigate ways to make formal approvals required in the fall so that we would not have to meet in person. During its April 2010 meeting, Steering Committee would make the final decision on when and how often we meet.

CCC Minute 2010.01.06 Continuing Counsel Committee approved the Outreach Committee distributing a questionnaire to Steering Committee members and persons involved in QEW Committees about how often, when, and where QEW should meet face-to-face, particularly in 2011 as new staff starts involvement with QEW.

After a break, Dick Grossman reminded us of the words of Al Gore: “The struggle to save the global environment is in one way much more difficult than the struggle to vanquish Hitler, for this time the war is with ourselves. We are the enemy, just as we have only ourselves as allies.”

Planning for the 2010 April Chicago Steering Committee Meeting

Dick Grossman outlined some of the issues in planning the 2010 April SC Meeting in Chicago. Geoffrey Garver, one of the authors of the book *Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy*, will speak at the meeting. With discussion of *Right Relationship* and the future of QEW, the meeting will be full. We recommend that Friends coming to the Spring 2010 meetings having read the entire book before the meeting. **Ideas from the book might be used to consider QEW’s future. For instance, although the early chapters of the book examine the intersection of economics and ecology, the Conclusion gives “Four Steps to a “Whole Earth Economy”: 1) Grounding and clarification, 2) Design, 3) Witness, and 4) Nonviolent reform. Much of this focuses on a spiritual basis for action. Dick will send his notes on the book to Roy Treadway, Hollister, and Jack, who will draft a letter to be sent the Steering Committee concerning the important issues suggested by *Right Relationship* for QEW.**

We agreed to invite John Hackman’s friend Symone to attend the 2010 meetings and share her materials in advance; she might share her concerns with any who have time Sunday afternoon.

So that we can consider the entire agenda of the meeting, Ruah will send meeting agendas for the last four years.

After a break for lunch, Dick reminded us of the writings of John Muir: “When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe.”

Planning for the Houston Annual Meeting, 2010 October 28 to November 1

Ruah summarized current plans for the Annual Meeting in Houston, 2010 October 28 to November 1. **The planning committee, consisting of Hollister Knowlton, Bob First, Sally Merrill, Joe Morris, and Ruah**

Swennerfelt, has united on the following theme: "Activist Tools for a Planet in Peril: The Case of Water." Already invited is Lon Burnam, a Quaker Texas state legislator who serves on the FCNL General Committee. Staff from Food and Water Watch has also been invited to provide a lobbying workshop and opportunities to go into Houston to lobby at Representative Gene Green's office. Mr. Green is one of Food and Water Watch's main targets in a campaign to get more federal funding for clean infrastructure projects around the country. Another lobbying choice being considered is Shell Oil or a water bottling company. An alternative activity is thanking a wind power company. Partnering with the Houston and Austin Meetings is being explored. **Yet to be worked out is how many hours will be spent on business and program and how they will be mixed since we want to be sure we have plenty of committee and plenary time. Because we hope to approve hiring new staff at the meeting, we expect the candidate or candidates to be at the Houston Meeting. We need to support one another as activists.**

Starting the Chicago Spring 2010 Steering Committee meeting with a two-hour long worship-sharing on the topic: "What is the Purpose of Quaker Earthcare Witness?"

Dick Grossman and Mary Jo Klingel introduced the proposal of starting the Chicago 2010 Spring Steering Committee meetings with a two-hour worship sharing on the topic of "What is the Purpose of Quaker Earthcare Witness?" We might start in separate small groups first and then meet all together. CCC wondered whether we were seeking a purpose 1) for fund raising (as suggested by Dorothy Zug) or 2) for QEW's need to find a unified sense of who we are and what we are doing? We raised other questions. How can QEW speak to international Friends and all types of Friends? Are we encompassing all Friends or just the Steering Committee members? What brings us together, such as our deep spiritually-based concern for the earth? Many people know Quakers support social justice, peace, and simple living, but are not sure who QEW is. We wondered why do we get stuck on this discussion? Is it because people have come and gone in QEW and lack a historical perspective? **After further discussion, CCC tentatively agreed that at the Spring SC Meeting, we will have a two-hour threshing session on the goal and purpose of QEW for the next one or two years, with our revisiting these issues in two years. Before we make a final decision on whether to start the 2010 Spring SC meetings discerning our purpose, however, CCC will reconsider this during our February conference call.**

QEW News" every-other-monthly posts

Susan Swanstrom, Clerk of the Outreach Committee, noted that every other month David Millar will compile a summary of what we are doing, in coordination with Louis Cox and *BeFriending Creation*. It will be sent on the QEW News electronic post. Items should be sent to David Millar.

Personnel Committee

Jack Bradin, Clerk, emphasized the importance that we increase Ruah and Louis' compensation soon since they have worked frugally for us for many years and did not receive a pay increase this year. Jack will send a report on staff time to CCC soon.

Nominating Committee

Rod Zwirner, Clerk, reported that no Clerk for Finance Committee had been found yet. Because of health, Bill Howenstine has resigned as Clerk from the Ann Kriebel /San Luis Project, and needs to be replaced. Several other clerks will need to be replaced in 2010.

Outreach Committee

Susan Swanstrom, Clerk, reported that there were not enough funds for all the **mini-grants**. Some funds are available from travel offsets for QEW and private travel. Mary Jo Klingel and Ruth Hamilton are making bracelets as a fund raiser, and a line item might be added to the SC meeting reservation form to raise money for the mini-grants. We also agreed to give **Ambassadors** more time to submit their reports. The Outreach Committee will send to the earthcare e-list dates of yearly meetings to help persons wanting to be Ambassador know the times of yearly meetings. The **purpose of the Outreach Committee** is being reviewed and revised.

Publications Committee

Roy Taylor, Clerk, identified three major foci for the Publications Committee in 2010. 1) The **new QEW website is now on <www.quakerearthcare.org>** despite some problems in accessing it currently. CCC is encouraged to review the website to find problems and notify Louis. 2) **QEW publications** will be reviewed to be sure they are up to date and possibly combined to reduce total number of publications. All in QEW are encouraged to make suggestions. 3) A statement on **List Serv Etiquette** has been developed by Publication Committee and will be sent to the QEW list servs soon. The Publication Committee will decide how often to send such reminders.

Spiritual Nurturance Committee

Mary Jo Klingel, Clerk, reported that a conference call will be set up soon. **Seasoning of two minutes** on recognizing the light within and on recognizing eric joy's leading and ministry regarding spiritual unification is continuing by clarifying the purpose of these minutes. The Spiritual Nurturance Committee holds QEW spiritually, while other committees have more concrete tasks. The **proposed worship group for spiritual experience and thinking** is still being considered.

FCNL Support Working Group

Rod Zwirner informed us that **development of priorities by FCNL for the new Congress** is due before our April SC meetings. The worship group **will send out a questionnaire asking about QEW's priorities**, with our current statement included. It also wants all involved with QEW to be receiving Devon Helfrich's FCNL emails on Climate and Energy. **CCC encourages the FCNL Support Working Group to take actions they feel desirable with out clearing them with CCC.**

Sustainability Faith and Action Working Group

Donn Kesselheim, Clerk, is setting up a conference call for this working group.

UN Support Working Group

Phil Emmi, Clerk, is setting up a conference call for this working group.

Ann Krieble / San Luis Project

Bill Howenstine, Clerk, despite recent surgery, sent a report outlining the challenges of this QEW project. He asks that **a new clerk be found for the project**. The project in Monteverde, Costa Rico, has **encountered difficulties** because of 1) the illness of Miriam Vargas and 2) the disagreement over the use of two lots designated for community use. Hopefully an **agreement has been reached** between the members of the San Luis Project and

the Monteverde Institute. Bill suggests that **Carol Evans** might become an important contact with QEW for the project.

After an afternoon break, Dick reminded us, in the words of Richard Bach: “Civilization... wrecks the planet from sea floor to stratosphere.”

Sign-ons by QEW

Roy Treadway reviewed the background of developing a procedure for facilitating QEW signing on and supporting important earthcare related concerns. While doing this involves making decisions on policy – which the bylaws specify should be considered by the FCNL Support Working Group – the FCNL Support Working Group does not feel this is appropriate for them. Nevertheless, CCC feels it is important for QEW to be able to sign on to important issues. We discussed the process that we might undertake to approve sign-ons, including having two or three “elders” consider them. Following from our discussion, the following minute was suggested.

A small group of seasoned Friends will be selected to take on responsibility of discerning sign-ons. To clarify the process of deciding on sign-ons, the person requesting the sign-on should state succinctly the purpose, organization, time frame, and criteria of the sign-on, and send that information to the Clerk, Assistant Clerk, and Recording Clerk to process the request. The entire Steering Committee, using the earthcare list serve, will be given 48 hours to consider and approve the requested sign-on, with silence considered as approval.

The exact wording of this minute will be seasoned further during CCC’s February conference call. If CCC unites on a proposed policy on sign-ons, that policy will be considered for approval by the Steering Committee at its 2010 April meeting. If it is approved by the Steering Committee, the Bylaws will need to be changed at the 2010 October Steering Committee meeting

Accreditation with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

Ruah Swennerfelt and Jack Bradin discussed the issues of accreditation with ECOSOC. While filling out the accreditation form is long and involved, the value of being accredited is considerable. Being affiliated with ECOSOC will allow QEW to have a greater influence on changing the business-as-usual framework of the UN than we do now and will allow us to have more worldwide Quaker involvement with climate and other earthcare issues. Accreditation may change the nature of our relationship to the UN since we will be influencing or advocating policy, and not just being an observer.

CCC Minute 2010.01.07 Continuing Counsel Committee approved having Dick Grossman contact the UN Support Working Group, requesting them to fill out the necessary forms for accreditation of QEW with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). After favorable review by CCC, the Steering Committee would need to approve this change in role of QEW at its meeting in 2010 April.

Support for Meg Kidd

According to Rod Zwriner, Meg Kidd, who is a member of Keene Monthly Meeting in Keene, NH, has been physically translating among the Guarani in Brazil. She is asking for contact and collaboration as well as letter-writing campaigns to support equitable distribution of land and opposition to the building of the world’s third biggest dam. These events are a microcosm of many issues of concern for QEW. She requests that QEW support her in a public way. **CCC suggests as first step an article for *BeFriending Creation* be written by a Guarani and translated by Meg. Depending on this, CCC will consider a minute of its support for Meg’s work**

during a conference call. Rod will discuss this with Meg and keep QEW informed about what she is doing.

Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC)

David Millar and Mary Gilbert are interested in going to **the 2010 Annual Meeting of FWCC Section of the Americas near Baltimore** and Hollister lives near by in Philadelphia. To help with expenses, some of QEW's visitation budget could be used. Mary, Hollister, and David can sort out what support is needed and who should receive support. Who ever goes as QEW's representatives should report back to CCC and to the Steering Committee.

CCC Minute 2010.01.07 Continuing Counsel Committee approved sending QEW representatives to the FWCC Section of the Americas annual meeting, providing some financial support to them, and exploring a relationship with FWCC. Information on costs should be sent by QEW's representatives to the Outreach Committee, which would discern how financial assistance much might be used for representatives to FWCC.

Marge Abbot is chairing a Committee on **FWCC's Global Consultation on Climate Change** to explore the appropriate Quaker response to all that is going on with climate change; David Millar is also on the Planning Committee. Currently, queries are being prepared and regional meetings are being planned; QEW could help with planning a regional cluster. The direction of this effort, which has a lot of energy, is for more focus around the world and across branches of Quakers. **We suggested that information about the Global Consultation could be put on the QEW website and QEW could ask Marge to write an article for *BeFriending Creation*.**

Scheduling CCC's next conference call

By Doodle Ruah will schedule a two-hour CCC conference call for the end of February.

Evaluation of the meeting format

CCC expressed its appreciation to Dick for his careful planning for this long conference call. We felt using Skype was better than using a phone, despite some difficulty maintaining contact with Skype. Using electronic communication worked well enough despite our missing face-to-face relationships. Nevertheless some felt it was difficult to season deep issues electronically and others missed the lengthy worship we can have when we are together in person. We did do important things today. Knowing one another well helps us get nuances of meaning. While the pace was good, we might have used longer breaks.

We closed with thanks to all for sharing together in the important work of QEW.

Roy C. Treadway
Recording Clerk