



BeFriending Creation

Newsletter of Quaker Earthcare Witness
Affirming our essential unity with nature

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A tribute to our home

by Noel Pavlovic

Dunelands (Ind.) Friends Meeting

PERHAPS FOREVER the earth may be the only world we will call "home," our birth planet where life and earth have evolved together.

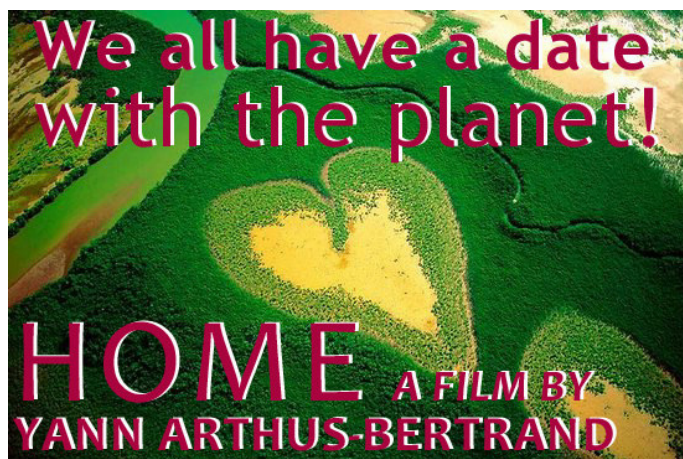
Last school year my wife Sarah and I hosted a French exchange student, who brought us a DVD of Yann Arthus-Bertrand's video *Home*. This first version was in French, and we strained our ears to listen to and reacquaint ourselves with the French language.

To put this video into perspective, I will first tell you a little bit about Yann. While on a trip to Kenya with his wife in 1991, he experienced a balloon ride above the African landscape. He was so taken by the beauty and wonder of the earth from above that he embarked on a five-year odyssey to photograph the six continents from the air.



Prismatic Spring, Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming

In 1996 he published the full sized *Earth from Above*, which was expanded and revised in 2002. This massive coffee table book contains his beautiful photographs with conservation essays by Lester Brown, Christian Bouchet, and Edward Goldsmith, to name a few. The essays address such topics as human population, water, biodiversity, changing climates, what do we do, and Earth by the numbers. In 2009, the video *Home* was released in France and later was released in English.



This video is a stunning documentary of the origin of our planet and the diversity of life, both human and nonhuman. It shows the beauty and majesty of our planet and the human dimension in the landscape. Views progress from far above to close in, to where we can see living animals and people. It also portrays the global impact of humanity on our home, a section that can be depressing. However, the program ends with a positive perspective on what we can do to save ourselves and the only home we have known.

Home will fill you with wonder, make you cry, and finally invigorate your spirit for the work to benefit humankind and all life in the struggle to reconcile our lives with nonhuman beings. For me the visual filming is the inspirational part of this video.

It is now available to be seen on the Internet at <www.homethemovie.org/>. I recommend seeing this documentary on a large screen to appreciate the full depth, color, and scale of the photography.

IN 2009 a small companion book, *Home: A Hymn to the Planet and Humanity*, was published. It includes many of Yann's photographs, short essays and text, and charts and figures putting the human/Earth relationship into quantitative perspective. While all three are inspiring, the DVD with compelling music, the narrative by Glenn Close, and the stunning photography is the best of the three.

I am grateful to have experienced this program. I have viewed it numerous times for inspiration. ❖

‘Climate Justice’—choosing the path of life

‘Cochabamba+1.’ draws U.S. & Canadian Quakers. Activists united under banner of ‘Climate Justice’ and the principle of ‘Rights of Mother Earth’

TWO CANADIAN Quakers and one American Quaker were among the 300 people who took part in a ground-breaking “Cochabamba+1” conference April 15-17, in Montreal, Quebec. Bolivia’s ambassador to the UN, Pablo Solón, denounced deceptive designs for a “green economy” as well as false promises of purely technological solutions to the climate crisis. The only way to restore balance, he said, is for social and environmental activists to mobilize under the banner of “Climate Justice” and lead the world to respect the rights of nature as responsible citizens in the community of life.

Solón was chosen to open the conference because he had stood alone in refusing to go along with the final Accord that was adopted at the end of the UN climate talks in Copenhagen in 2009. Many other countries shared Bolivia’s condemnation of this secretly negotiated deal, which favored wealthy industrialized countries and did not include a binding commitment to significantly reduce greenhouse gases. They reluctantly signed the undemocratic and unjust agreement, not only because of political and economic pressures but *because they assumed it was preferable to doing nothing and that there was no alternative.*

Meanwhile, thousands of climate activists in the streets and in alternative forums, representing countless social-justice and environmental groups, were kept out of the UN decision-making process. They left angry and frustrated because they had won all the intellectual battles but had lost the ideological battle. Only those well-financed and influential voices favoring business-friendly technologies and market mechanisms were heard. *Voices calling for systemic change, recognition of industrial nations’ climate debts, and accountability for polluters were lost in a discord of competing and sometimes conflicting messages.*

The reasons behind Bolivia’s refusal were generally unreported or misrepresented by the mainstream press. So Bolivia boldly announced its own international forum for alternatives in April 2010 in the city of Cochabamba, the site of a successful popular revolt against privatization of the nation’s water supply in 2001. Organizers were astonished when more than



Panelists in Montreal explain alternatives to industrial agriculture and fossil fuel extraction, in terms of climate change, access to water, biodiversity.

35,000 people from over a hundred countries showed up, demanding that international climate negotiations be taken back from the forces of greed, power, and wealth.

Bolivia’s president, Evo Morales, insisted that economic globalization, free-market capitalism, and profit-driven technologies were at the heart of today’s social,

economic, and ecological crises and could not be part of the solution. “The Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth” [September-October 2010 *BeFriending Creation*] offered more than an agenda that recognized the interests of less industrialized countries of the global South; it asserted a very different set of social and economic values, based on the “unbreakable link between respecting ourselves and respecting the planet on which we all live and depend.”

APART FROM the enlightening and inspiring speakers in Montreal, the fact of the conference itself showed that Bolivia had put its finger on what had been thwarting civil society’s attempts to usher in a workable, just, and effective climate agreement. The current system, based on violence, exploitation, and destruction of ecosystems, is killing the planet. Many “green” solutions being touted today are only extensions of business as usual and therefore will only intensify the crisis. *They do not require a fundamental transformation in thinking and living patterns.* They flout the rules by which life itself evolved and thrives.

The principle that all beings and natural systems have rights, often dismissed as fuzzy and sentimental, has become a rallying point for justice activists, scientists, indigenous peoples, environmentalists, unions, etc. It gives them a unified rationale for rejecting “false solutions,” such as nuclear power, climate engineering, genetic patents, biofuels, payment for ecological services, and cap-and-trade schemes.

Reckless engineering schemes such as deep-water drilling, oil-sands development, and hydraulic fracturing are seen as more than economic and ecological follies; as violations of natural law they must be crimes under international law. As one panelist said, as we mobilize for more UN talks in December in Durban, South Africa, *Solón must not stand alone again.*

—Louis Cox

It takes 'green' (MONEY) to run a green movement

Richard Grossman, M.D.
QEW Steering Committee Clerk

HELLO, FRIENDS. As clerk of the Steering Committee of Quaker Earthcare Witness, I want you to know how important your support is to us. If you have a concern for Earth as I do, please read this.

I enjoy writing articles about population and hedgehogs. I also like to read Mary Gilbert's articles about our work in the United Nations and the other fine articles in *BeFriending Creation*.

So why don't we write about money in these pages? Well, polite people aren't supposed to talk, or read, or write about it! Isn't (love of) money "the root of all evil"?

Maybe it is time to revisit that idea. *Money is how we fund the work that we love to do for the Earth.*

There are many fine organizations asking for scarce dollars. I am appreciative of all of their work and contribute to some of them. As Quakers we have always believed in diversity, and many different approaches are needed to help our environment. I would like to tell you why I think you might want to give some (or, some more) of your money to QEW.

1. We work for you. We are the Quaker environmental organization that seeks to bring a spiritual focus to work for Earth. Although there are many religious organizations that share our concern for our planet, we are the only Quaker voice for all of North America. Our meetings and publications are full of thrilling ideas from people of different backgrounds.

2. We speak for you. Please read the QEW Vision and Witness Statement on page 11. If it speaks to your heart as it does mine, help us get this word out. We travel nationally and internationally to share our Vision. For example, our new General Secretary is getting ready to travel to New York Yearly Meeting to be their plenary speaker this summer. Our United Nations representatives are in touch with Friends all over the world, and one will be traveling to Kenya for the FWCC meeting there.

3. We speak with other Quaker organizations. We have been working with Friends Committee on National Legislation for years. Do you know about the FCNL Green Team, headed by Marcia Cleveland? It was QEW that got FCNL to focus actively on the environment! More recently we have been working with FWCC in many ways, including participating in their Clusters to speak about global

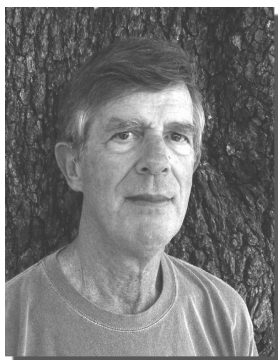
change. We have a presence with the Quaker Institute for the Future, and our articles appear in *Friends Journal*. In all these settings we speak for Earth and our love for her.

4. Be active! Friends have always been activists. Think of our early history, our part in ending slavery in the United States with the "Underground Railroad," our conscientious objectors, our current direct action against mountaintop removal. QEW has been active in many different ways. For instance, we educate people about the problems of our growing human population (have you heard about Quaker condoms?), we are working to end nuclear power, and we are cooperating with the UN and FCNL. We are eager to have more younger people involved in the organization, and we look forward to their energy and guidance.

5. Don't just donate—connect with QEW.

E-mail our General Secretary, Anne Mitchell: <anne@quakerearthcare.org>. You can also donate online at <www.quakerearthcare.org>. Tell Anne you want to talk about her work for Earth and about where your money will be working. She has a fabulous, musical Scottish accent and a wealth of information from years of activist work. She will call you, and she will almost certainly ask you what your hopes and dreams are for QEW. She will listen to what you say. Talk to or e-mail your QEW Yearly Meeting representative. Come to one of our meetings—you are very welcome.

We ask for your help and support. We are grateful for every one of you who support us. ❖



Mini-grants can be carbon offsets!

DID YOU either fly or take a bus or train in 2010? Have you considered purchasing a "carbon offset" for that travel?

One possible carbon offset you might consider is making a contribution to QEW's Mini-grant program.

As you've probably read in *BeFriending Creation*, many Friends Meetings are undertaking projects that will reduce their carbon emissions in a variety of ways, and your contribution will make possible future grants.

Interested? Either donate on-line and earmark the donation for the Mini-grant program, or send a check to QEW at 173-b N. Prospect St., Burlington, VT 05401-1607.

Parceleros still hoping for new farm tenure agreement

PARCEL-HOLDERS

(*parceleros*) of the QEW-supported *Finca la Bella* project in Costa Rica are wanting a new land-tenure agreement that will enable them to get loans for capital improvements and facilitate the passing of improvements to their children. But many of them are frustrated by the slow pace of the legal process, and they are hoping for some help from QEW, according to Bill Holcombe, the first QEW representative to visit the community in about five years.

There have been many changes in the cloud forest region of northern Costa Rica in the 18 or so years since QEW helped to purchase the 49-hectare (121-acre) coffee farm in the San Luis Valley near Monteverde, Bill said in his report at the April QEW Steering Committee meeting in Chicago.

"The region's eco-tourism industry has increased dramatically, especially in the once quiet village of Santa Elena. Now there are supermarkets, hotels, offices of non-profit organizations, coffee houses, etc. With these have come foreign money and foreign ownership of local business, along with tempting images of material plenty from the outside world.

"In many ways the *Finca la Bella* project has been a rousing success. Twenty-two families live on the land who might otherwise be landless. The land has been largely preserved. The community infrastructure has been sustained and for the most part *Finca la Bella* has not been at odds with the larger San Luis community.

"Oldémar Salazar and his wife Ercie have built a model business, home, and life from growing, roasting, and selling coffee. However, few *parceleros* grow significant amounts of coffee. Six or seven, around 30 percent, grow some, which is sold to Oldémar or the Santa Elena Coop, and very little is exported. The remaining *parceleros* grow vegetables, raise some chickens, sell a few eggs, perhaps find work outside the project, and get by as best they can."

"The Monteverde Institute (MVI) currently holds title to the land. The MVI board of directors, which describes itself as the 'custodian' of the QEW project, has its hands full running the Institute and has been eager to transfer *Finca la Bella's* title to another organization, such as Monteverde Friends Meeting, or a land trust. However, land trusts are not common in Costa Rica, and there is uncertainty about which



BILL HOLCOMBE, right, meets with MVI representatives and *parceleros*. From left: Katy Van Dusen, Jude Gladstone, Milton Brenes, Oldémar Salazar, Marco Marin, Jonathan Leiton, and Guillermo Vargas.

model among the few options would be appropriate in this situation, hence reluctance on the part of the *parceleros* to explore that possibility.

"A very different approach is advocated by the board of directors of the *Finca la Bella* Association—full ownership of the land that the *parceleros* occupy and have improved. They want title to the land because it would allow the government to grant funding for construction for a small,

simple house. Those *parceleros* with businesses would be able to secure bank loans to support their businesses. Without title, these types of loans become problematic.

"In resisting the granting of full ownership, MVI cites the example of *Buen Amigo*, a similar intentional community of small-holders in the neighborhood that fell apart a few decades back when financially pressed families started mortgaging or selling off their parcels.

"**IF THE PARCELEROS** gain title and even a couple sell off their land to the wrong interest/highest bidder, some think that *Finca La Bella* may begin to no longer serve as the home for *San Luiseños* without access to land. Pressures could be high due to growth in local real estate values, driven by ecotourism. The *Finca la Bella* Association's board of directors acknowledge this risk but insist this will not happen on their watch.

"The *parceleros* have been negotiating for years with a committee named by the Monteverde Institute Board that currently consists of Katy Van Dusen and Guillermo Vargas. But Katy and Guillermo have grown increasingly fatigued with the responsibility they have borne for ongoing management of various issues.

"Currently under negotiation is a letter of 'Poder,' or power of attorney, that would give the *Finca la Bella* Association legal authority for any legal action such as building permits, but not for selling, subdividing, or mortgaging the land. This could allow Costa Rican government agencies to make loans to *parcelero* applicants without requiring the land to be put up as collateral. And some community projects/improvements could be initiated with local governmental agencies, instead of having to follow the more complicated process of getting approval from the MVI Board.

Finca la Bella, page 5 >>

Sea Sick: Ocean Change and the Extinction of Life

by Alanna Mitchell

University of Chicago Press, 2010

Reviewed by Marshall Gibson
Indianapolis (Ind.) Friends Meeting

THIS BOOK is an urgent warning that the ecological tipping points toward which we are racing have a lot to do with the rapidly declining health of the ocean.

Alanna Mitchell, a science and environmental reporter with a broad grasp of the condition of our terrestrial home, visited researchers in many parts of the globe, from Australia's Great Barrier Reef to the Caribbean, and from Halifax, Nova Scotia, to Haikou City, China, where she was brought up to date on dying coral, depleted oxygen levels, sharply declining fish and other sea life, and other serious problems.

Half the oxygen we breathe comes from plankton making it at the bottom of the sea. Much of what kills sea life is of our own making. Industrial and urban waste, farm fertilizer and pesticide runoff lay waste to life in the ocean and its seas. The Caribbean was in trouble long before the BP debacle, and the rivers that feed it have been seriously fouled for a long time, Mitchell notes.

By 2050, ocean pH could be at its lowest (most acid) in 20 million years, as more and more CO₂ is absorbed from the atmosphere. Acidification has led, in the last 30 years, to some 80 percent of the corals

dying, killing also the symbiotic algae which nourish the corals, Mitchell reports.

Another assault on life in the ocean comes from the largely unregulated fishing industry, which, having fished out the rivers and continental shelves, has moved on to industrial deep-ocean fishing, which is but one symptom of oceanic sea life problems. The resulting depletion of fish populations has led to the use of increasingly sophisticated and expensive equipment, leaving fish fewer places to hide from predators and wreaking havoc on other sea life upon which fish

depend. Many species are being driven to the brink of extinction.

Scientists warn that we may be on the verge of a collapse of the entire ocean ecosystem, citing evidence of massive sea life die-offs during rapid warming periods in Earth's history. "Changes as vast as those now affecting the atmosphere and ocean are not linear. They feed on themselves exponentially, reaching a point at which the system switches abruptly to one that is dramatically different." Signs of this sort of rapid change are already evident.

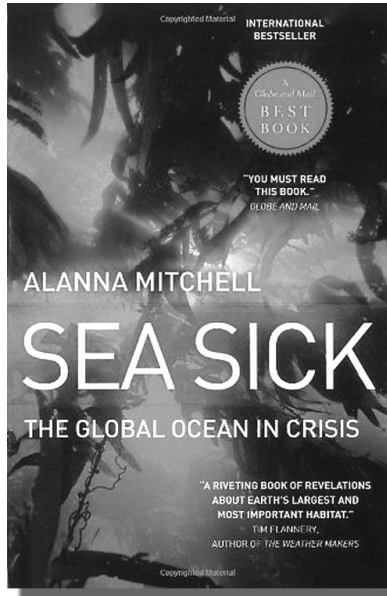
Plummeting stocks of sea life are already having an impact on nutrition in regions where fishing has supplied a large portion of people's diets.

In Zanzibar, for example, more than a third of the children are underweight, over 80 percent are stunted or anemic, and life expectancy is just 51 years. Increasingly barren seas have led to rapid expansion of aquaculture, such as the very small saltwater sea life farms from which hardworking, enterprising mothers feed their children and eke out a living.

MITCHELL'S WORK brings together research from many disciplines showing that much of what we confidently depend on for life is provided by or from the ocean. "We are reaching the carrying capacity of the planet's natural resources. We are at the stage of losing the ability of things to come back on their own.

"Many of the scientists I interviewed set the drop-dead point for effective action to halt the planet's slide toward chaos somewhere between 2015 and 2030. Others said emphatically that if the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere rises above 450 ppm by volume, that will represent a point of no return. Today it is 387 ppm and rising faster than at any time since humans appeared on the planet."

If you believe that this matters and that something can be done, the time to act is *right now*." ❖



>> **Finca la Bella**, from page 4

"Another way to settle requests for title to the land is to match the Costa Rican offer of granting funds for construction of small, simple homes; and to establish a fund for micro loans to these farmers. QEW is seen as a potential source of information on sources of long term financial assistance (as grants or loans)."

ALTHOUGH Finca la Bella serves only a handful of families out of millions worldwide who need similar help, QEW has viewed the project as a kind of living laboratory for testing ideals of global eco-justice and sustainability on a smaller scale. Bill sees one lesson: "Different groups have different visions of land use, and simple answers are hard to find." ❖

QEW weighs priorities, spiritual vs. ecological footprints

PRIORITIES for the future work of QEW, the need for more involvement of younger Friends, and limiting the ecological footprint of QEW business meetings were among the issues that 37 members of the QEW Steering Committee addressed during their spring business meeting, April 7-10 at the Cenacle Conference & Retreat Center in Chicago.

Friends also worked together to discern their common vision, as well as the significance of the Light within as a unifying force in the diverse roles we play in Earthcare.

Friends agreed that acute concerns over the ecological footprint of QEW meetings and events should be reconciled in terms of the size of our “spiritual footprint.” The Steering Committee will continue to hold two face-to-face meetings a years, but attempts will be made to connect one of them to other Quaker events, such national or regional Gatherings.

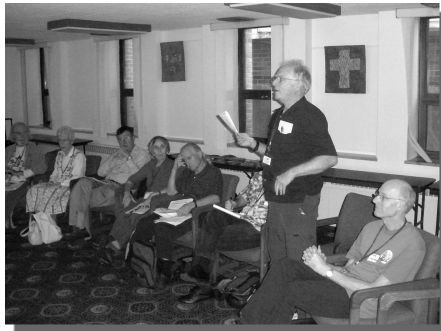
QEW committees also discussed proposals for hands-on projects to promote ecological sustainability, new publications on population and eco-spirituality, and ongoing support for Friends Committee on National Legislation and UN climate negotiations.

IN WORSHIP-SHARING on priorities-setting and envisioning our future work, a common theme was the need to maintain Quakers’ historic balance between contemplation and activism.

—We will, as a body, have specific goals and priorities that will provide direction and will us to assess how we are doing. At the same time we will be spiritually rooted and nurture the hopes and dreams that come from our hearts. —We will commit ourselves fully to the great work of an Earth restored in large and small tasks that fit our gifts and opportunities. —We will draw on the wisdom and spiritual energy of early Friends and indigenous peoples in addressing the tragedy of human separation from the natural world. —We will do more to involve younger Friends and join forces with the wider faith community.

—The way forward will be integral to who we are and not just a set of second-hand concepts; we will avoid falling into divisive categories as we discern the seamless connections among all of the great crises of our time.

—While we are empathizing with the great pain and suffering of the Earth community, we will not be paralyzed by gloom and doom. —We will share our vision of a Great Turning out of a sense of joy, which will draw oth-



ROD ZWIRNER, clerk of the Nominating Committee, reports on openings for QEW committees and offices.

ers to our work. —We will strive to help the Religious Society of Friends to see that Earthcare is vital to our spiritual mission, by showing how it connects with everything that Friends care about.

WHAT SUSTAINS US as individuals in our work toward care of Earth? Has working for Earth in the manner of Friends been a source of support for you? What is the meaning of the Light within for you? For the Light within all Creation?

How might we as Friends make space for both our unity and our diversity? What is it that Friends have to offer? How do we make our contribution, that is, let our Light shine? How can we best be patterns and examples?

A common theme in Friends’ responses to these queries was sustaining ourselves spiritually in order to work effectively for sustainability in the world.

—We need to support one another, to listen deeply to one another, and be tender with one another. —We need to cultivate the inner peace that leads to wholeness and oneness. —We need to find touchpoints of agreement and draw on the experiences of others to broaden our outlooks and understandings. —We need to nurture a sense of community that will sustain us in dark times. —We need to realize that the diversity of styles and worldviews within our community creates the resilience that we need to withstand outward stresses. —We need to honor the sense of mystery and complexity in the world and not presume that we have all the answers. —We need to emphasize the distinct methods and message that Quakerism has to offer.

IN OTHER BUSINESS, the QEW Steering Committee approved Minutes on recent conflicts in north Africa and the nuclear disaster in Japan (page 7). Our treasurer said that income from donations is comparable to that of previous years. But plans for expanded activities for QEW as well as increased costs for staff and general operations mean that fund-raising efforts need to be expanded as well. This is the responsibility of everyone who is part of QEW, not just the Finance & Development Committee. Friends agreed to work on boosting budgeted contributions from their Monthly Meetings and Yearly Meetings. Current financial supporters will be encouraged to make automatic monthly contributions. In addition, there will be more emphasis on fund-raising in QEW’s newsletter, website, and social networks. ❖

QEW Minute on nuclear fission in light of 2011 disasters in Japan

WE ARE HORRIFIED AND SADDENED by the staggering physical, human, and environmental damage that has been suffered by Japan following recent major earthquakes and major tsunamis. We are deeply concerned about ongoing radioactive releases—with potentially severe global impact—from several disabled nuclear fission reactors, and we pray that authorities will spare no effort in containing the leaks, providing humanitarian relief, and restoring disrupted communities and ecosystems.

Looking beyond immediate safety concerns raised by the crisis in Japan, we affirm our opposition to all use of nuclear fission to generate electricity, because we find this technology to be incompatible with our vision of a just and ecologically sustainable world. Along with industrial agriculture and genetic engineering, nuclear-fission engineering emerges from a narrow, human-centered technological worldview that does not recognize the ecological principles that govern all life on Earth. It is a relic of Cold War-era thinking, which is biased toward large-scale, centrally controlled systems, even though most electrical power uses are relatively small-scale and widely dispersed. As part of a powerful military-industrial complex, nuclear fission tends to further concentrate power and wealth at the expense of democratic values, community well-being, economic justice, ecological balance, and personal freedom.

Proponents of nuclear fission and other advanced technological systems typically cite pressures to keep up with ever-expanding consumption and population growth. They do not acknowledge that on a finite planet, growth inevitably comes to an end, often tragically, and that the current economic model is based on endless growth. They tend to underestimate human fallibility and the limitations inherent in the laws of nature, including the law of unintended consequences.

The disaster in Japan has exposed the vulnerability of many older plants to disruption of vital reactor cooling systems and breaching of containment structures. We join others in calling for the orderly shut-down of all nuclear plants of any age that, due to design flaws, careless site selection, and inadequate means for preventing and responding to such emergencies, pose unacceptable risks to the public, to the non-human environment, and to future generations. We also oppose relicensing of facilities that are nearing the end of the period for which they were designed to operate safely.

We oppose as well the construction of new nuclear power plants, both in Japan and around the globe, for a host of practical and economic reasons that are commonly brought up in debates about fission-powered

generation and the nuclear waste-disposal dilemma and which have been well documented in independent publications and websites.

We call attention to a number of scientific studies that dispute the claim that fission-powered plants are “carbon free” and therefore can play a significant role in controlling climate change, as well as the claim that radioactive releases during routine activities of the nuclear industry do not pose significant health or environmental risks.

We encourage governments and nonprofit organizations to give priority to public education about the greenhouse gas emissions and radiation hazards associated with the entire nuclear fuel cycle.

We urge Friends to reduce their personal consumption of electricity that comes from nuclear fission and fossil fuels and to obtain the electricity that they do use from truly renewable sources as much as possible.

We urge all concerned citizens, including Friends around the world, to work individually and collectively with legislators and lobbying groups to encourage the development of appropriately scaled renewable energy systems and to eliminate subsidies for nuclear fission, coal, oil, natural gas, and other industries that are environmentally disruptive and ecologically unsustainable.

—Approved by the QEW Steering Committee,
Chicago, Illinois, April 10, 2011

QEW Minute on north Africa

FOR OVER 350 YEARS Quakers have worked for peace with justice worldwide. We have studied the causes of war and found that war often is based on competition for scarce resources. Our religion teaches us that more equitable sharing of the world's resources and more effective use of all of these resources, is crucial if we are to reduce wars.

Quaker Earthcare Witness is made up of Quakers in North America who strive to live in right relationship with the Earth. We see war as a major contributor to the destruction of the planet we call home and therefore intrinsically wrong. Those with power use their control to ensure the continued supply of increasingly scarce resources.

We support the nonviolent efforts made by the United Nations to reach a solution to the satisfaction of all parties in the region of north Africa. Any solution to be effective will have to address social justice including fair access for all to resources necessary for the sustenance of life.

We offer prayers for all of those in positions of responsibility. We will continue to witness against the destruction of communities and the depletion of resources and species on the planet caused in part by war.

—Approved by the QEW Steering Committee
Chicago, Illinois, April 8, 2011

NB Friends ask province to use 'precautionary principle'

TO THE GOVERNMENT OF NEW BRUNSWICK:

Over the past 350 years the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) has grown more fully into the understanding that all life is deeply involved in the reality of the Divine. The whole Earth is the nurturing home of the commonwealth of life and should, therefore, be treated with deep respect and great care. We are supported in this conviction by scientific findings on the interdependence of all life within Earth's ecosystems. We agree with the wisdom of Indigenous Peoples that what we do to the earth we do to ourselves. Spiritual insight and scientific knowledge agree on this understanding.

New Brunswick Monthly Meeting has thus come to acknowledge that the way we acquire and use energy is a matter of spiritual concern. Our witness is based on the ethics of right relationship and respect for all life, including the collective life of Earth's ecosystems and human communities. ...

Energy acquisition and use is a domain of activity in which human communities are in direct and especially critical relationship with Earth's ecosystems. These relationships can be mindful of Earth's integrity and respectful of life, or they can disregard the integrity of Earth and disrespect life. We always have a choice. Respect for, and protection of, the commonwealth of life must be placed before human self-interest that damages the environment. ...

Hydro-fracturing and large-scale wind

In this spirit, and with regard for the long-term common good, we urge the Government of New Brunswick to undertake an examination of the environmental and community impacts of two energy technologies that have recently come to the forefront of development in our Province: natural gas extraction that requires hydro-fracturing, and large-scale wind power installations. Our faith community has become especially concerned about the way these energy technologies are being employed in New Brunswick.

We are especially concerned about the practice of hydro-fracturing deep layers of certain rock formations in New Brunswick in order to access natural gas. The use of this technology requires the high-pressure pumping of large amounts of fresh water mixed with toxic chemicals into underground rock strata. The use of fresh water on the scale required is itself a serious public concern. The use of toxic chemicals greatly increases this concern.

Much of the contaminated water returns to the surface and presents a serious disposal problem. Some of the toxic water remains underground. The history of



this practice elsewhere shows that it can endanger the groundwater resources of communities in the area of drilling and fracturing. Hydro-fracturing is a contaminating and high-risk intrusion into the underlying structure of Earth's surface, with unpredictable and damaging environmental consequences.

We are also concerned about the development and placement of large-scale wind power installations.

Serious questions are emerging about the health effects of these installations when placed near homes and settlements, and about the overall environmental and energy-system effect of their construction and operation.

Out of respect for the integrity of Earth's ecosystems and the security and well-being of human communities, we ask the Government of New Brunswick to apply the precautionary principle to the technology of hydro-fracturing, and to the development and placement of large-scale wind power installations.

We ask that all such energy resource projects be subject to well-defined and continuously improved assessments that determine their relationship to ecosystem integrity and the well-being of human communities, and that these assessments determine development decisions. We ask that a well-defined regulatory structure and enforcement process be in place for projects prior to approval for development.

From exploitation to stewardship

We need to recognize the disruptive and often destructive impact on Earth's ecosystems, and on human communities, of the quest for more and more energy resources. We need to change our quest for energy from an exploitive system that encourages excessive and unwise use, to a stewardship system that promotes conservation, efficiency, and protection of the environment. We see the need for well-informed leadership in New Brunswick that will move rapidly to renewable energy development and make this change.

From within the most fully developed understanding of our religious principles, the commonwealth of life is seen as our sacred community. From within the most fully developed understanding of earth sciences, we see that human flourishing depends on flourishing of the commonwealth of life. It is, therefore, our ethical and human responsibility to handle all resources, including energy resources, in a way that protects and advances Earth's capacity to support life. Earth's capacity to support life is a gift; it is our source of sustainable energy security and the only true wealth we have.

—New Brunswick Monthly Meeting
Fredericton, NB, 21 November 2010

Canadian Friends use eco-networks

THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT does not have a good record on climate change—signing the Kyoto Accord, and then doing nothing to implement it. There is a general malaise about climate policy. For the fourth year in a row, Canada won the “Colossal Fossil” award given by the Climate Action Network to the nation doing the most to detract from progress at the talks. There are of course many reasons, as Canada has vastly different resources and provincial governments: Alberta with its tar sands development; the Far North sitting on huge gas reserves; a prosperous oil drilling off the coast of the Atlantic Provinces; and Quebec and BC with vast hydroelectric reserves.

We hope for greater clarity and witness by government in Canada during and after the May 2 federal election (the non-governmental sector is doing quite well).

CANADIAN FRIENDS are fortunate to be part of a concerned ecumenical movement called KAIROS, a network of some eleven churches in Canada that has an active social justice and environmental program. We also have several well-versed Friends, including Dana Bush, David Millar, Keith Helmuth, Anne Mitchell, and Bill Currie. A Young Adult Friend, Maggie Knight, was part of the Canadian Youth Delegation to the Cancun Climate Conference. She learned a great deal, and I am sure her input was valued. In our Vancouver Island newsletter, she wrote:

“It was a challenging discernment process from the start to decide to go to the negotiations. While I feel good about the work I contributed to—particularly in my communications, advocacy, and team coordination efforts for the Canadian Youth Delegation, I was very conscious that I used up a lot of resources (financial and ecological) to attend.

“Attending the negotiations also made me think of the balance between idealism and pragmatism and how to discern the best path of action as a Friend.... I left with the overarching question of what is the role of Friends in these negotiations? Is it simply to support individual Friends should they have leadings to bear witness by attending and reporting back, or should we be working to increase our capacity—through organizations such as Quaker Earthcare Witness, Canadian Friends Service Committee, and/or the Quaker Ecology Action network—to conduct advocacy, education, and solidarity work at an organizational level? And is there a specific a role for Quaker youth, given the profound impacts o climate change that we will likely witness during our lifetimes?”

—Arnold Ranneris
Victoria (B.C.) Friends Meeting

What you can do about e-waste

1. **Return to sender.** Many computer makers will take back their own monitors, CPUs, mice, keyboards, printers, and speakers at no extra charge to be recycled into new products or donated. Dell, for example, will pay the shipping on all of its computer products and will schedule a pickup time to take them off your hands—for free.
2. **Find a responsible recycler.** The Basel Action Network (BAN) partners with “e-cyclers” that have signed the Electronic Recycler’s Pledge of True Stewardship, which outlines the most rigorous criteria for recycling electronics in a socially and environmentally responsible way. BAN offers a list of recyclers by region <www.ban.org/pledge/Locations.html>, some of which accept mailed-in electronics.
3. **Trade in.** Some businesses offer a program through EZtradein.com that allows you to send in your computers, phones, camcorders, game systems, cameras, and even car audio equipment. You’ll receive a gift card based on the value of the used parts (cc.eztradein.com/cc).
4. **Trade up.** Many cell phone providers will give you the option to recycle your old phone when you purchase a fancy new one with a camera and better ringtones. The unwanted phones are then donated or safely recycled.
5. **Drop it off.** Staples, Best Buy, Office Depot, and select FedEx offices all have areas within their stores to drop off cell phones and ink cartridges. AT&T, Sprint, Verizon, and T-Mobile will take back their phones, batteries, and accessories—no strings attached.
6. **For additional resources,** go to Earth911.org, the EPA’s “Plug –in to eCycling” partners website <www.EPA.gov/rcc/plugin/Index.htm>, or the Electronic Industries Alliance (EIA.org).

From Audubon May–June 2008

Precycling can cut down on waste

ONE-THIRD of all garbage is packaging. In fact, each American throws away about 60 pounds of plastic packaging each year.

Try looking for ways to practice *precycling*.

This means buying things that come minimally packaged and in packages that can be recycled or are made of materials that already have been recycled.

For example, buy eggs in cardboard, not Styrofoam cartons.

—Environmental Defenders

QEW supports nuclear phase-out

QEW's Continuing Counsel has signed on to the following letter, which the Sustainable Energy Network recently sent to President Obama, the U.S. Dept. of Energy, and the leadership of the U.S. Congress.*

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED safe energy advocates, have been speaking out about the risks and dangers posed by nuclear power for years—many since before the 1986 Chernobyl and 1979 Three Mile Island accidents, as well as the hundreds of other radioactive releases, unplanned shut-downs, and other mishaps that have continuously plagued both the U.S. and the international nuclear industries since their founding.

While nuclear power's unacceptable safety, environmental, public health, economic, and national security risks should have been self-evident long before now, the latest unfolding nuclear disaster in Japan once again underscores the following:

- ❖ Nuclear plants can never be designed to withstand all potential "acts of God."
- ❖ Nuclear plants can never be designed to withstand all instances of "human error."
- ❖ Nuclear plants can never be designed to withstand all types of "mechanical malfunction."
- ❖ Nuclear plants can never be designed to withstand all forms of "terrorist attack."
- ❖ There is no such thing as "safe" nuclear power.
- ❖ There is no such thing as "clean" nuclear power.
- ❖ There is no such thing as "cheap" nuclear power.

Consequently, the Price-Anderson cap on liability in the event of an accident should be repealed, all proposed governmental financial and regulatory incentives for new nuclear plant construction—including loan guarantees, accelerated licensing, and inclusion in a "clean energy standard"—should be rejected, and no new reactors should be built.

Existing nuclear reactors should be phased out as rapidly as possible, beginning with the oldest and/or most unsafe, and no presently-licensed reactors should have their operating lives extended.

Safety standards for existing reactors should be substantially tightened while they continue to operate and federal nuclear funding should be redirected to the orderly phase-out of those reactors as well as the safe decommissioning of closed reactors and disposal of radioactive waste.

National energy policy and funding should be refocused on greatly improved energy efficiency and the rapid deployment of renewable energy sources which are far cleaner, safer, and cheaper than nuclear power. ❖

* 8606 Carroll Ave., #2; Takoma Park, MD 20912;
301/588-4741; <sustainable-energy-network@hotmail.com>

'Peace with Earth— Transforming Our Communities' Theme of New York YM Summer Sessions Silver Bay, N.Y., July 17–23, 2011 Keynote speaker will be QEW General Secretary Anne Mitchell

Quakers have long held that world peace is dependent on economic and social justice. Now we are being led to widen our witness to work for peace between humanity and our sacred earth community. Our culture has considered the earth our property to be exploited, and we have all been complicit in this violent appropriation of world resources. We must now search for the seeds of this war in our possessions and our lives, and work to nurture a new, mutual relationship with the earth in all of our actions. The spirit is calling us to hold in reverence this miracle that God has given us, and that we are fully dependent on.

— from NYYM Earthcare Minute, 2007

Since 2007, a huge groundswell of grassroots concern has emerged worldwide, including active involvement by several dozen Quaker organizations, committed to transforming our society and creating a sustainable world. Now as individuals and as a religious society, we are challenged to transform our economic system and institutions (corporations, government, education, and religion), to visualize and create a society that can sustain itself on a single planet. American lifestyles and consumerism demand use of resources at a rate that will require five Earths to sustain us. Even many Quakers live far above the carrying capacity of a single planet. We all have a role to play as individuals, as models and teachers for coming generations, and as citizens of our communities and the global society. To be relevant to youth today, we must work cooperatively toward the Peaceable Kingdom, with prayer, vision, teaching, simplification, ministry, and non-violent advocacy and activism.

During the week of Summer Sessions 2011 we will have opportunities to experience the power of our faith, exploring from their source the Quaker testimonies and ways of being in right relationship. Whether in special talks and exercises or in our usual formats of worship, interest groups and other parts of the program, Friends will be able to share and become empowered to give voice and witness for the Earth in our individual lives and in our home communities.

— 2011 NYYM Sessions Committee

Yahara Monthly Meeting's Minute on Climate Change

The produce of the earth is a gift from our precious creator to the inhabitants, and to impoverish the earth now to support outward greatness appears to be an injury to the succeeding age.

—John Woolman, 1772

OUR SOCIETY HAS FAILED to adequately address the crisis caused by increasing CO₂ in the atmosphere. This increase causes, among other things, rising sea levels, acidification of sea water, climate change, increased incidence of extreme weather events, and loss of habitat for animals, plants, and humans. These impacts are happening now and will continue to worsen.

The responsibility for this situation belongs to all sectors of society, but the failure of our elected officials to adequately respond is truly unacceptable. Economic constraints and political feasibility are cited as excuses, but that doesn't change the reality of climate change. Priorities must be rearranged. We must act now to minimize the negative impacts.

We call on our elected officials at all levels of government to act decisively. The Environmental Protection Agency must be supported in its efforts to control CO₂ emissions. A tax on carbon should be considered. More efficient transportation and power generation systems should be supported. Government action can help give concerned individuals the tools to make their own changes. We have been given a wonderful, remarkable planet to live on. Let's ensure that coming generations can enjoy it as well.

—Yahara Friends Meeting
Madison, Wis., April 3, 2011
(Submitted by Ken Lawrence)

QIF Summer Research Seminar at Bar Harbor

THE QUAKER INSTITUTE FOR THE FUTURE (QIF) will be hosting its next Summer Research Seminar on June 18–26, 2011 at the College of the Atlantic in Bar Harbor, Maine. As always, the seminar is meant to encourage spirit-led research using Quaker methods of discernment and reflection. Researchers will participate in silent worship, group discussion, and solo research time, all in an atmosphere conducive to joyful work.

Accommodations will be in local Friends' homes or low-cost dormitory housing. To inquire about participating in the seminar, please contact Shelley Tanenbaum, <sheltan@pacbell.net>.

KNOWING LITTLE about economics, apart from household economy and what I pick up from the likes of Naomi Klein, I found "The Growth Dilemma" by Ed Dreby (March-April 2011 *Quaker Eco-bulletin*) very interesting. It fit well with a book I recently read aloud to my husband:

Too Smart for Our Own Good: the Ecological Predicament of Humankind by Craig Dilworth (Cambridge University Press, 2010)... meticulously documents and covers all the bases, protecting his argument from facile objections, so it would take a brave person to refute his thesis.

Friends, already concerned about the issue, would be especially interested in Dilworth's discussion on the dynamics of population growth.

It's a fat soft-cover volume of some 450 pages, not an altogether easy read, but highly worth the effort. I'd love to have Friends' feedback on it.

—Helen Brink
Hamilton (Ont.) Friends Meeting

BeFriending Creation

BeFriending Creation, Vol. 24, No. 3, May-June 2011. 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 7, April 7, June 7, August 7, October 7, and December 7.

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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.

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 Richard Grossman, <richard@population-matters.org>.

Gen. Secretary Anne Mitchell, 173-b N. Prospect St., Burlington, VT 05401. 802/658-0308; e-mail: <Anne@QuakerEarthcare.org>.

BFC Editor Louis Cox, 360 Toad Rd., Charlotte, VT 05445. 802/425-3377; e-mail: <Louis@QuakerEarthcare.org>

Website: <www.QuakerEarthcare.org>

Earthcare Calendar

May 2, 2011. Deadline for applications for 2011 QEW Mini-grants.

June 7, 2011. Deadline for article submissions for July-August 2011 *BeFriending Creation*.

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Vancouver Friends step up for 'StopCoal BC' action

ON 9 APRIL 2011, four Vancouver, B.C., Friends— Fred Bass, Brad Hornick, Tim Bartoo, and Ruth Walmsley—took part in a direct-action “pledge taking,” along with special guest Bill McKibben, at the Port of Vancouver head offices in downtown Vancouver.

The action was organized by StopCoal.ca. While the media looked on, each participant stepped up to the microphone to publicly take a pledge to do as much as we can to pressure governments to reduce emissions. What I was surprised to learn through this action is that British Columbia is a major exporter of coal, and that the Port of Vancouver

is the largest exporter of coal in North America! British Columbia also exports huge amounts of U.S. coal.

Also of concern are plans to export up to 24 million metric tons of coal a year through the proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal near Bellingham, Wash., which has yet to be built.

It really made my day to personally meet Bill McKibben, who in addition to this event was in Vancouver to give a guest lecture at the University of British Columbia on his latest book, *Eaarth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet*. I was inspired by Bill's words at the StopCoal BC event. He commented that each generation has had their own particular battle to fight. For our grandparents it was fascism. For our parents it was racial segregation. For us it is global warming. This really is the crisis of our times and it



Ruth Walmsley meets Bill McKibben at StopCoal BC event in April.

demands that each of us do as much as we can to pressure governments to reduce emissions. Bill alerted us to 350.org's plans for a big global mobilization on September 24 called “Moving Planet: A day to move beyond fossil fuels,” designed to get people out in the streets in large numbers, on foot and on bicycle, to bring strong calls to our leaders that we need to get off fossil fuels and move to 350 ppm.

—Ruth Walmsley

Vancouver (B.C.) Friends Meeting

SPEAKING TO REPORTER for a Vancouver, B.C., newspaper, Bill McKibben had a message for Canada in particular: “Although he lived in

Toronto as a child and has a deep fondness for Canadian culture, he believes that without a change of direction deadly carbon emissions will be Canada's largest legacy to the world. There is no way to balance the books until Canada stops the tar sands [project in Alberta]. The natural gas fracking in BC that fuels the tar sands which produce oil that gets shipped to Asia is, by itself, one of the primary sources of global warming in the world. Enormous coal reserves from Montana and Wyoming, as well as BC, come through BC. to be shipped to Asia.

“Canada has become the drug dealer for a very addictive substance with very little discussion,” McKibben said. “Don't worry about the Middle East. If you guys take care of Alberta, others can take care of the rest.” ❖