

BeFriending Creation

Newsletter of Quaker Earthcare Witness

Volume 16, No. 3 ♦ May/June 2003

Meetings look homeward for seeds of this war

As the Iraq invasion began, FCUN members were asked what their meetings were doing to witness for true peace and security.

Chestnut Hill (Pa.) Mtg.

By Hollister Knowlton

CHESTNUT HILL Monthly Meeting launched its "CFLs for Peace" campaign on March 2, selling compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) as a way to raise consciousness about energy efficiency issues and the connections between our energy policy and war. Since CFLs use one-fourth the electricity and last up to nine times as long as incandescent bulbs, one 26-watt CFL, in its lifetime, will save almost \$100 in electricity and prevent almost 65 lbs of CO₂ from being emitted into the environment.

The meeting's goal was to bring CFLs into 100 households during the month of March. We offered four sizes 15-, 20-, 23-, and 26-watt for \$5 each (our cost was \$4, with the extra \$1 going to the meeting to pay for two programmable thermostats and to contribute toward costs of more insulation for the building). To date, we have sold 290 bulbs to/for 77 different homes (we've placed pins on a map of Philadelphia). These 290 bulbs will prevent 18,850 lbs of CO₂ emissions (the equivalent of 942.5 gallons of gasoline—enough to drive a Dodge Caravan/Honda



Bellingham (Wash.) F.U.N.

By Doris B. Ferm

THESE ARE some of the ways that Bellingham Friends in Unity with Nature tries to help Friends see the connection between the way we live our lives and peace in the world:

During this wartime, Bellingham Friends have been encouraged to make the connection between our use of oil and the Bush Administration wars in both Afghanistan and Iraq. One of our Friends in Unity with Nature members was part of a group of artists who made a larger-than-life puppet of G.W. Bush with gasoline delivery nozzles for arms. This puppet appears at community demonstrations and has traveled to other cities as well. This same F.U.N. member, who is not young, has sold her car and now travels by foot or public transportation, or rides with a Friend. We have urged the lowering of car speeds in order to use less oil and to decrease air pollution.

We have also made the connection between fossil fuel use and the failure to address air pollution by buying and giving away 20 small trees from the Arbor Day Founda-

Atlanta's Green Friends

By Judy Lumb

IN THE MIDST of the anti-war activities, Atlanta Friends Meeting's Green Friends are sponsoring an eight-week study group inspired by recent *Quaker Eco-Bulletin* articles and Keith Helmuth's *Friends Journal* article, "Why Simple Living Is Not Enough." We began with a guest speaker, Dr. Michael Farmer, an economist at Georgia Institute of Technology, speaking to the topic, "The Global Economy and the Environment: Discreet Steps to Paradigm Change."

The study group that emerged out of that initial seminar has been meeting every week. Beginning with "Spiritual Dimensions of the Environmental Crisis," we then moved on to "Personal Choices, Our Consumption and Relationship to Things."

We spent two sessions on "Living Simply Is Not Enough" and "Incorporation of Environmental Costs into Economic Systems." Our next session is on the "Global Rule of Law."

Using a process modified from Macro-Analysis Seminars from the Movement for a New Society, we have pooled our resources—read-



Chestnut Hill, from page 1

Odyssey/Ford Windstar (all rated at 18 mpg) for 16,965 miles—about 13 to 14 months of driving.

Many of us have been displaying signs in our yards and windows (FCNL's "War is not the Answer" and AFSC's "Peace is Patriotic") and the Meeting has continued its twice weekly vigils for peace—Sundays at 4 p.m. at the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia (started during the Kosovo bombing in 1999 and has continued every Sunday since), and Tuesday evenings from 6 to 7 p.m. in Chestnut Hill (started on September 11, 2001 and continued since). Now a third new location has sprung up, in addition, since the March 16 vigil called for by Desmond Tutu. These are interfaith gatherings.

Starting the Thursday night that Bush declared War on Iraq, we have been and will continue to have our meetinghouse open for evening worship.

At the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting sessions just concluded, a minute about the war was passed, and we have scheduled April 16 as an evening for our meeting members and attenders to meet to discuss their feelings about the peace testimony in this time of war.

1. We are forming a subgroup of our P&SC committee on environmental concerns at the meeting.

2. We use china and other reusable dishes/utensils etc and purchased a commercial dishwasher that has a 2-minute wash cycle, then a 2-minute rinse cycle and uses rinse water for the next wash.

3. We've installed compact fluorescent lamps throughout our meetinghouse (thanks to a generous meeting member who works in energy efficiency).

4. We just taught a five-week series for middle schoolers on ecological sustainability issues with a week each on: ecological footprint,

energy efficiency, recycling/composting, transportation, and, finally a solar energy demonstration.

5. We switched to our electrical supplier to 100-percent wind energy last December.❖

Bellingham, from page 1

tion to help counteract Friends' travel to New Zealand for the FWCC Triennial next January. In addition, we helped to move an unwanted tree from a Friend's yard to a park.

Although most of our electricity here in the Northwest is generated by hydropower, we try to make the connection between use of electricity, fossil fuels, and air pollution. Friends have been encouraged, through our "Ecological Suggestion of the Month," to phase out incandescent light bulbs in favor of compact fluorescents, which use a lot less electricity and last a lot longer. Friends are also encouraged to buy local and seasonal foods to reduce trucking and improve health!

Another F.U.N. Friend is planning to install solar panels on her roof this spring—yes, even in this drizzly climate they will reduce use of fossil fuel!

At present we are collecting dollar bills from Friends and others to help replace the \$34 million appropriated by Congress for the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, which President Bush refused to send.

In May we will hold a "Simplify Your Life" garage sale to benefit Right Sharing of World Resources. So as we try to reduce our ecological footprints, we can help those in less fortunate parts of the world to better their living situations. What better way to create the conditions for peace? As John Muir observed, when we look at anything closely we find that it is connected to everything else.❖

Atlanta, from page 1

ing material and videos. Each week we begin with a sharing time in which we describe something we are excited about, or a burden that is heavy on our hearts. Then we have two people report on readings relevant to that week's topic. Following that discussion, we focus on pulling out specific problems brought up, potential solutions, and actions that can be taken. We end with an evaluation—what went well and what we could do better. Each week a different person facilitates the discussion. The discussions have been very well focused on the topic, and participation has been quite balanced. We have made commitments to change some aspects of our behavior and asked the group to provide some support.

We watched an excellent video, "The Next Industrial Revolution" by William McDonough and Michael Braungart, narrated by Susan Sarandon. "Design is the first signal of human intention. Designers must become leaders and leaders must become designers. Regulation is a sign of design failure," said McDonough, whose company is devoted to redesigning the way we live in the U.S. with an emphasis on obeying nature's laws:

1. All products of consumption and materials used must be safe for biological organisms.
2. Waste from one process is food for another.
3. All systems are closed systems. All materials are reused and recycled.
4. Our economy must be sustainable, both economically and environmentally.
5. Rather than trying to be *less bad*, to reduce our polluting habits, we can be *good*. We can add nutritious materials instead of toxic ones.❖

Friends, Funds, and FCUN

AS most of you are aware, organizations that rely on contributions have been suffering hard times over the last year or so. Current events and the poor economy have reduced budgets in many organizations. Friends Committee on Unity with Nature, which has been running lean for years, has been especially hard hit.

My own feeling has been that, given the interconnectedness and interdependence of everything in God's Creation (including humans), now more than ever we need an organization—like FCUN—that raises consciousness in spiritual-ecological terms. Friends should recognize this need and provide the necessary spiritual, participatory, and financial support. But even some Friends who unite with our goals seem led to direct their contributory dollars elsewhere.

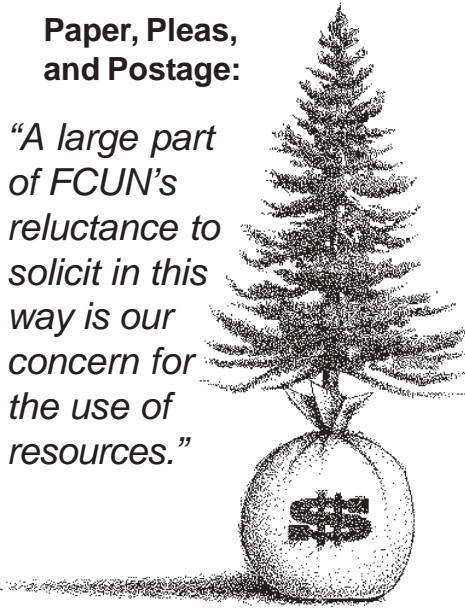
I'm sure there are plenty of reasons why we continue to operate on a shoestring budget. Some of the fault must lie with us. We may not be doing everything we can to work effectively toward our organizational goals. We may have made mistakes that detract from our organizational image. But we are taking steps to correct such problems. We are engaged in a long-range planning effort. We've sent questionnaires to Friends meetings and churches, the readership of *BeFriending Creation* (I hope you've taken the opportunity to respond), and our own Steering Committee. We'll study the responses and propose some changes.

Another reason may be that we have been a bit too reticent in communicating our needs to FCUN supporters. Other Friends organizations are very assertive in their solicitations. It seems that every mailing from some organizations

provides an opportunity to make a donation, including a return envelope. A large part of FCUN's reluctance to solicit in this way is our concern for the use of resources.

Paper, Pleas, and Postage:

"A large part of FCUN's reluctance to solicit in this way is our concern for the use of resources."



We use 100-percent post-consumer recycled paper, bleached without chlorine (which is more expensive), and we use it as infrequently as we can. Other organizations don't seem to be as conscious of their resource use. In fact, FCUN's total budget is about half what a certain other organization spends just on printing and photocopying!

But I have another theory that I believe has some bearing on how people choose to allocate their contribution dollars. It has a lot to do with human nature: Many other non-profits are doing very good things, such as providing disaster relief, sending folks overseas to create goodwill, advocating for sensible public policies, and so on. These organizations raise funds with little difficulty. Why? Because through our donations we are engaging *another person or agency* to do good work or to persuade those in power to do the "right" thing. We can feel good as soon as the check is written. We can say, "I've

done my part. I can go about my business as usual."

But Gandhi didn't say, "Throw money at the change you wish to see in the world."

George Fox didn't say, "Write checks, make contributions... then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world...."

Gandhi said, "*Be the change...*"; Fox said, "*Be patterns, be examples...*" In large part the challenge of FCUN's message is that it requires personal transformation, but this, I'm afraid, scares many people off. It is not easy to be mindful of the effects of our personal actions. It is not easy to make the changes. I struggle. FCUN staff and steering committee members struggle. But before we change the world, must we not first take care of the beam in our own eye?

My understanding is that John Woolman wasn't exactly popular when he carried a similar message: "*...try whether the seeds of war have any nourishment in these our possessions...*" My guess is that an appeal letter from him would not have set records for fund raising.

BUT to reiterate, this message, FCUN's message, is needed now more than ever. And a sad fact of life in today's world is that money, checks, and contributions are needed to enable the work. FCUN is considering increasing visitation to meetings to bring out the message. But such an effort will require additional funding. Where will the needed support come from? Is your monthly meeting a supporter? Your yearly meeting?

What sayest thou, Friend? Share your ideas *on Friends, Funds, and FCUN*. Please send your comments to *BeFriending Creation*.

—Kim Carlyle
FCUN Clerk

Awakening Universe, Emerging Personhood— The Power of Contemplation in an Evolving Universe

By Mary Coelho

© 2002 Wyndham Hill Press
www.awakeninguniverse.com
 ISBN 1-55605-354-1 \$28.00

Reviewed by Bill Cahalan

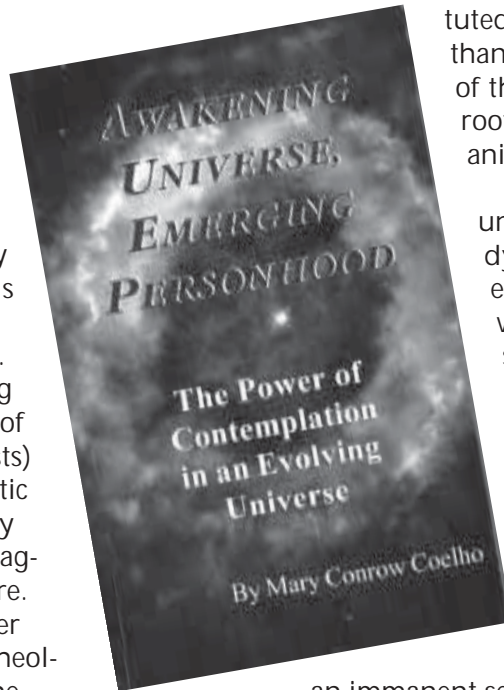
A central goal of FCUN is to deepen, and help others deepen, our sense of unity within Creation as we face the crisis of humanity out of balance with Earth's life, with the Way of things. One of the obstacles to approaching such unity is the fact that so many of us (and perhaps even most scientists) are still living within the mechanistic worldview of pre-twentieth century science, and thus find it hard to imagine divinity as present within nature.

Mary Coelho, an FCUN member with degrees in both biology and theology, asserts in her new book that the "universe story" now emerging from twentieth century science much more strongly supports a sense of being spiritually at home in the Cosmos. She introduces us to the new revelation of an expanding universe, much more immense than had been imagined. The universe is also newly revealed as having evolved in complexity ever since its birth in fire and light.

Mary explores the following additional discoveries from physics, evolutionary biology, ecology, and anthropology—revelations that I see as having the most profound implications for our sense of ultimate reality or divinity (Here I mingle my own terminology with the author's):

1. According to quantum physics, there are no basic "building blocks," no discrete parts that constitute atoms. And the smaller and smaller "particles" that have been found are in some sense also "waves" of energy in constant motion, which continuously both emanate from and recede into the quantum vacuum or "fertile emptiness" surrounding and permeating all "things."

2. The Universe is an "unbroken wholeness," more like a living body or organism than machine or computer. Each atom is in some mysterious way immediately present to every other atom in the universe. For 14 billion years the central activity of the universe has been the creation of self-organizing systems or "selves" on all scales, from atoms to humans to galaxies and beyond. The universe is thus consti-



tuted as a communion of selves, rather than as a collection of inert things. All of these selves, all "things," are thus rooted in a pervasive organizing and animating intelligence.

3. Within the Great Self that is the universe, the Earth is an evolving, dynamic self, and we humans are as embedded in this body of Earth within the universe as a wave in the sea, or a whirlpool in a river.

In her preface Mary tells how she has been personally transformed by her encounter with this new universe story. Having been reared by deeply grieving parents (she was born three days before the death of her four-year-old brother) led to alienation from her deeper self and from

an immanent sense of divine presence. Her lifelong search for a sense of meaning led to studies in biology and then in theology, neither of which integrated the other discipline. She eventually discovered the writings and videos of Brian Swimme, whose science-based cosmology provided the integration she was looking for. Her mission since then has been to show how the Western mystical tradition and the new cosmology complement each other and belong together.

In Section 1, "The Epic of Evolution," Mary's rich descriptions of the early universe and of the evolution of Earth's life are a lead-in for physicist David Bohm's profound, holistic view, which is basic to the rest of the book.

Section 2 introduces and surveys the Western contemplative or mystical tradition, focusing on aspects that Mary sees as especially congruent with the new cosmology. She draws on the third century Greek philosopher Plotinus in defining contemplation as "the moment of embrace by the totality of real existence that includes the immanent core, the One. It is a returning to the heart of oneself." She writes further, "Without responding to the allure of the One, without awakening to the eros of the One and returning to it, a person is isolated from the totality and fullness of reality." The views of Meister Eckhart, a thirteenth and fourteenth century mystic, are also prominent throughout the book.

Awakening, next page ○

ALTHOUGH a lifelong Quaker, Mary does not try to develop a specifically Quaker integration of spirituality and the new cosmology in this book, preferring to give a broader view of the Western mystical tradition of which Quaker mysticism is one expression. However, she does mention Rufus Jones briefly, and she devotes a page to John Woolman in the last chapter. (See her essay subtitled "Quakerism and the New Cosmology" on the Internet at www.thenewstory.org.)

Section 3, "The Foundations of Integration," for me is the heart of the book. Here Mary explores the aspects of the new story, summarized here earlier, which seem to have the deepest implications for spiritual belonging within the Creation. She journeys further here than any other spiritual writer I have encountered. Stretching beyond the dry language of mechanistic science, she also avoids pat words and phrases from religion. "Thus by not using the word God we underline the fact that the traditional worldview that nourished and sustained many of its meanings is gone. But this does not mean that the *reality* that people experienced is gone. A new vision of the whole is sought..." Throughout the book she offers many alternative terms such as Generative Matrix, Abyss/God, plenum, and All-Nourishing Abyss to point toward unspeakable mystery within the heart of reality.

Section 4, "The Divided Soul," explores patterns of child development that foster alienation from the fullness of ones' self within the divine. Although I find Mary's speculations here, drawn from many sources, to be valid, I am more interested in something more specific—how some people who grow up with solid self-esteem and human relationships, having had loving and attentive parents, still can be quite alienated from nature and from a spiritual sense of nature. I have found Paul Shepard's ideas to be the richest in this area, but Mary did not refer to his thinking.

Although Mary explores a wide range of scientific and mystical writers, I do think she might have focused more on those kinds of mysticism that are the most nature-centered. For example, she has more to say about Teresa of Avilla, who seems more people-oriented as well as inward in her focus, than she does about St. Francis of Assisi, whose mysticism included more emphasis on other-than-human nature. However, she does describe a variety of mystical encounters in nature, telling for example of Jacob Boehme's lucid vision of the inner reality of the world while gazing at a sunlit pewter plate. *"He believed it was only a fancy, and in order to banish it from his mind he went out upon the green. But here he remarked that he gazed*

into the very heart of things, the very herbs and grass, and that actual Nature harmonized with what he had inwardly seen."

I found Mary's book to be both inspiring and challenging. Its 20 chapters are not designed to be quickly digested, but rather to be returned to again and again. The book helped me to journey further in allowing the new universe story to illuminate my everyday experience. Brian Swimme has emphasized that simply knowing aspects of the new cosmology without full "embodiment" in everyday living doesn't mean much. We need to live in the numinous universe as it has been revealed, in order to escape from addictive consumerism and confinement within our exclusively human "echo chamber." I urge you to read and re-read Mary's book, letting it add fresh awareness and zest to your own unfolding within our awesome Earth and Cosmos. ♦

Bill Cahalan is Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting representative to FCUN. He has led retreats for Friends on the theme of rediscovering the spirit in nature. FCUN published his booklet Awakening to Earth: Natural Awareness as a Spiritual Practice (see page 7).

Natural awareness retreat at Woolman Hill



BILL CAHALAN, right, of Community Friends Meeting in Cincinnati, Ohio, led an "Awakening to Earth" retreat for members of New England Friends in Unity with Nature at Woolman Hill Quaker Conference Center in western Massachusetts in early April 2003. Friends were led on silent walking meditations in the woods to help them shed their civilized "armoring." They spoke in worship-sharing about experiences in nature that have deepened their communion with Spirit. With the aid of the Brian Swimme video, "The Hidden Heart of the Cosmos," Bill tied these activities to insights from the New Cosmology that are helping many to validate their experiences and to further appreciate their essential unity with nature. If your group would like to invite Bill to lead a retreat or workshop, you may contact him through the FCUN office. ♦

Goose Creek series focuses on peace *with* Earth

GOOSE CREEK (Va.) Friends Meeting has been holding a discussion series for the past year with the theme, "Peace-making and the Society of Friends." These discussions are usually held the second First-day of each month. So far in 2003, the discussions have concentrated on the Peace Testimony itself, under the care of the Peace & Social Concerns Committee. For April 13th the discussion was under the care of our Unity with Nature Committee, with the theme of "Peace on the Earth, Peace with the Earth." Our plan was for each person active with the Committee to come up with a very meaningful quotation. Each quotation gets put into a basket on Sunday morning. Next, someone pulled out one slip at a time, and the group considered and discussed each quote, until our morning hour was over. Following are most of the quotes we used:

Roger Wolff's quote: *Humans are now altering the planet on a scale that can be compared with the glacial periods in the influence that they are now having on the planet.*

—Thomas Berry, *The Great Work*

Mary Wolff's quote: *The 21st century will have to be mystical or not at all.*

—Andre Malraux

Tom Christ's quote: *Conservation is getting nowhere because it is incompatible with our Abrahamic concept of land. We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a commodity to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect. There is no other way for land to survive the impact of mechanized man, nor for us to reap from it the esthetic harvest it is capable, under science, of contributing to culture.*

—Aldo Leopold
A Sand County Almanac

Janney Wilson's quote: *We have begun to realize that the Earth is an awesome mystery, ultimately as fragile as we ourselves are fragile.*

—Thomas Berry, *The Great Work*

Mimi Westervelt's quote: *John Woolman saw the link between the production of superfluities, like dyed clothing, and warfare, and determined to wear undyed clothes. Being a tailor he could make them himself. He wore his undyed suit when he went to England, and he traveled steerage on the ship, not wanting to be better accommodated than the sailors. When the ship docked, he went directly to London Yearly Meeting, and presented such a strange appearance that people were put off and were quite rude to him. John Woolman said: 'I saw that a humble man with the blessing of the Lord might live on little, and that where the heart was set on greatness, success in business did not satisfy the craving, but that in common with an increase of wealth the desire of wealth increased. There was such a care on my mind to so pass my time as to things outward that nothing might hinder me from the most steady attention to the voice of the True Shepherd.*

—Elizabeth Watson

*The Channel of Universal Love:
John Woolman and Creation*

Martha Semmes's quote(s): *Recognize that peace is the wholeness created by right relationships with oneself, other persons, other cultures, other life, Earth, and the larger whole of which we all are a part.*

—*The Earth Charter*

Long before the systems of the planet buckle, democracy will disintegrate under the stress of ecological disasters and their social consequences... It is the poor, precarious nations of the developing world that would face the threat of totalitarianism first. In many of these countries, where democratic conditions are as fragile as the ecosys-

tem, a reversion to dictatorship will require only a few ecological states of emergency. Their governments will quickly find democracy to be too cumbersome for responding to disruption in food supplies, water sources, and human health—as well as to a flood-tide of environmental refugees from homelands that have become incapable of feeding and supporting them.

—Ross Gelbspan

The Heat is On

I believe that the Goose Creek Unity with Nature Committee (also Baltimore Yearly Meeting) is planning to discuss and consider endorsement of the Earth Charter later this year.

—Janney Wilson

Goose Creek Friends Mtg.
Purcellville, Va.

Cuba YM Rep. to FCUN to attend Steering Committee Meeting in N.C.

CRUZ CONCEPCIÓN, an environmental educator from Banes, Cuba, will take part in the May Steering Committee meeting in Greensboro, N.C., as Cuba Yearly Meeting's representative to FCUN.

"We've been looking forward to her visit for a long time," said FCUN General Secretary Ruah Swennerfelt after learning that Cruz's visa had finally made its way through the tortuous and often confusing Cuban and U. S. governments' approval processes.

Although Cruz is not fluent in English, she will be ably assisted by several bi-lingual Steering Committee members who have lived and worked in Central and South America—including Susannah McCandless, clerk of the Ann Kriebel-San Luis Committee. Ruah and Susannah got to know Cruz when they attended Cuba Yearly Meeting in early 2000. ♦

FCUN supporter stresses peace-environment connection at South Carolina Friends gathering

MY spiritual journey brought me to Quakerism last fall via a peace organization. I was so very pleased to discover FCUN in my learning about the Quakers. I had been looking for a faith that included and embraced the environment.

Alice Wald, a member of my meeting, asked me to do a short presentation on peace, war, and the environment at the fourteenth annual Palmetto Friends Gathering, March 28–30, 2003, where our theme was “Nurturing Peace.” John Andrew Gallery, author of *Reflection From a Prayer Vigil For Peace* and member of Chestnut Hill (Pa.) Friends Meeting, gave an inspiring talk and led us in group discussions.

In my presentation I pointed out the wars are often fought over the gifts of nature; one country has a resource another country wants. Much has been written about the future water wars. War games take a tremendous negative toll on nature. Once the war begins the environment is often destroyed to win the war. Often the environment is further destroyed to punish and humiliate the conquered. Environments are further destroyed to make one nation dependent upon another.

War has always negatively impacted the environment but modern weapons have made the effects of war far more devastating and long lasting than any time in history. Some weapons contain chemicals that take thousands of years to dissipate from the soil. The effects of war upon the environment often lead to more war.

And so a destructive and hideous cycle continues.

There is no question that working to preserve the environment is working to preserve and maintain peace.

To me, it is so obvious that it is all the same. People working for the environment are working for peace and, very much so, for people.

—Susan Siegel

I find myself perplexed that people tend to separate the environment out from themselves. I just don't get it. It is so crystal clear to me that we are all part of the same Life source and meshed together. People will comment that they are concerned about the envi-

ronment but they don't have time to put any energy into it since they are dealing with peace in the world or “people” issues. To me, it is so obvious that it is all the same. People working for the environment are working for peace and, very much so, for people.

People and the environment are intricately intertwined. We are greatly dependent on nature and we disregard this at great peril to our future. What happens to the environment powerfully affects people and what we do, every single day, affects the environment. The fact is, if all people were to disappear tomorrow, nature would go on. If nature were to disappear tomorrow, we would soon follow.

—Susan Siegel
Columbia (S.C.) Friends Mtg.

Awakening to Earth

Natural awareness as a spiritual practice

by Bill Cahalan

ISBN 1881083-07-1, 24 pp., \$4.00 + \$1.50 S&H

Bill Cahalan began leading weekend natural awareness retreats in the early 1980s as part of his practice as an ecopsychologist.

Today we are alarmed to learn that ecosystems are in decline everywhere on the planet, and we want to know how to stop these trends. Bill reminds us that first we must change ourselves, that we can be effective in our witness only when we become aware that *we are the Earth*.



Bill's suggestions for personal natural awareness practices help us become more aware of our civilized “armoring” and learn to be more attuned to Earth's own rhythms and processes.

This booklet shows not only how to gain more from outdoors experiences but also how to incorporate those lessons into our households and daily habits.

Copies may be ordered directly from the FCUN office.

Friends, computers, and global warming

THE FCUN pamphlet *Understanding Sustainability* encourages Friends to “ask the Spirit for the clarity to recognize the ways we may be nourishing the seeds of ecological destruction.” One way we attempt to walk more lightly on the Earth is by using less energy, in the form of gasoline, electricity, paper, and other manufactured goods.

Paper use and toxic e-waste

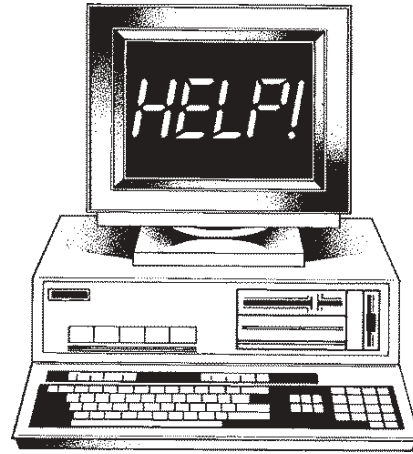
Many Friends have adopted the presently widespread practice of using computers for rapid communication and learning. *But there are indications that this may not be sustainable either.* We were told back in the 1980s that computers would lead to “the paperless office.” It is widely recognized now that paper consumption has increased several-fold. It is too easy, if a mistake is found, to toss the whole report and hit the print button again. Reports handed out at meetings are discarded an hour later.

Paper use, however, may not be the most damaging effect that computers are having. There are others, such as rapid obsolescence. When you upgrade, you may be able to give your old computer to someone who doesn't need the latest software or the greatest speed. Many, however, end up in landfills, where their toxic ingredients may find their way into groundwater and streams.

An article in *Yes!* Magazine, spring 2003, says that 80 percent of electronic or e-waste is now exported to Asia, poisoning groundwater, choking rivers with circuit boards, and increasing childhood leukemia through dioxin-generating burning of plastics. This trade is possible because the U.S. is the only developed nation that has not ratified the 1989 Basel Convention

banning hazardous waste exports to developing countries.

As seems to happen increasingly, the European Union is way ahead of the U.S., shedding light on the path. They now require producers to be responsible for the entire lifecycle of their products. E-



waste generated prior to enactment will be the responsibility of all existing companies in proportion to their market share. An incentive now exists to design products for easier dismantling and recycling, as no e-waste will be allowed in municipal waste streams. By 2006, most toxic materials, including heavy metals, are to be phased out. Japanese companies are said to be following suit.

In spite of resistance from the U.S. high-tech industry and its friends in D.C., a broad-based coalition, the Computer TakeBack Campaign, has formed to promote EU-type legislation in the U.S. Twenty states have already introduced legislation to address e-waste. So there is hope here for this part of the problem.

In Bellingham, Wash., in 2002, a local program helped Whatcom County residents and businesses to recycle more than four tons of computers, and they expect that number to double this year. This

recycling diverted about 1,500 pounds of lead and 2,468 pounds of electronic parts. By charging a fee that enables the recycling program to break even, they can ship the computers to Total Reclaim in Seattle, which fully recycles computers and TVs, keeping most components in the U.S.

Electricity-hogging servers

A couple of years ago, during the energy crisis in California, which impinged on at least five other western states interlinked in the electrical network, an article caught my eye on the front page of *Whatcom Watch* titled “Internet Servers, Desert Electricity Hogs and Clear-cutting Computers.” Some of the points they made:

The ABC Evening News on January 11, 2001 said, “In Seattle (Internet) server farms will soon use 50 percent of the power it takes to run the entire city.... And in ten years, the technology industry alone may be using 30 percent of the country's electricity.”

The manager of a Montana electric cooperative said, “It's an illusion that conservation will meet load growth needs.” For example, “...in 1995 about 20,000 Internet providers were operating in the U.S., with 75,000 domain websites, but by 2000 there were more than 1.5 billion domain websites and more than 5 million servers connected to 200 million personal computers in the U.S.”

The energy consumed by the Internet is not in the phone lines or optical fibers. It is consumed in large buildings jammed with computers, hard drives, servers, routers and air conditioning. The energy coming in through heavy power cables, as it goes through complex circuits, generates heat,

Computers, next page ○

which is removed by air conditioning equipment. Microsoft and other software companies are beginning to offer services over the Internet, so that all of a company's information would be saved on a server someplace else. Paying a monthly fee instead of owning and maintaining their own expensive local network equipment means each of the company's computers would be connected to the Internet independently. This kind of Internet use can lead to the 30 percent figure quoted above.

The *Wall Street Journal* (October 23, 2000) said, "Electricity accounts for almost 33 percent of U.S. energy consumption.... During the Clinton-Gore years, demand surged 30 percent, pushed by the enormous appetite of the Internet for electricity."

In the Northwest, electricity is generated largely by hydropower; but we know that elsewhere in the United States 56 percent is supplied by coal-fired power plants. According to the *Bellingham Herald* (November 11, 2000), "The U.S. released 13 percent more greenhouse gases last year than in 1990 as emissions grow at about 1 percent a year." Does the resultant global warming have something to do with the reduced snowpack in the Cascades? With the lowered rainfall in the Bellingham area?

When water resources are scarce, the impact is felt not only by the Bonneville Power Administration but also by salmon, agriculture, manufacturers, and people who want to water their lawns.

Once again we see that everything is connected, and that nothing is as simple as it may look. What is sustainable? What does our sense of spiritual oneness with Earth lead us to do? I do not have the answers, but I pray that we find them.

—Doris B. Ferm
Bellingham (Wash.) Friends Mtg.

La Bella Farm's endowment bolsters project's sustainability

A RECENT generous \$1,000 gift has enabled the La Bella Farm endowment to reach its immediate goal of \$10,500. Annual interest of some \$800 will fund joint monitoring to ensure that the terms of the farm's conservation easement are being met, said Susannah McCandless, clerk of the Ann Kriebel-San Luis Committee.

"The joint monitoring involves payment to those who regularly walk the land, talking to residents and neighbors to see that, for instance, the project is devoted primarily to farming and is not turning into a bedroom community. It also involves working with the *parceleros'* association to resolve disputes and ensure that trees are not being cut indiscriminately or without approval," Susannah explained.

In summer of 2001, FCUN entered into partnership with the *parcelero* association, the Monteverde Institute, Monteverde Friends Meeting, and other parties to bolster the long-term sustainability of the FCUN-supported project in Costa Rica, "FCUN's role was to do fund-raising, initially to form a land trust and conservation easement, to legally protect the conservation, agricultural, and social goals in perpetuity. A Costa Rican environmental law foundation is working on written agreements that will be circulated among all the parties for comment and ultimately approval," she said.

"Right now the Monteverde Institute holds the land temporarily in trust for the *parceleros*, but the institute's goal—and ours—is autonomy, not dependence. Ultimately we hope to work with other farmers in the area who want

to protect their forested lands and land uses, to create a regional land trust that won't depend on the institute. This process is spread over several years because we don't want to formalize something legally that would weaken the *parceleros'* position or go counter to the goals under which the project was established. The strength of the

land trust is that it will be legally binding and legally defensible. But we want to get it right first. We invite other FCUN supporters who have had experience with land trusts and conservation easements to send their suggestions and stories of their experiences, since

our format is very similar to many U.S. land trusts."

As part of her doctoral research in cultural geography, Susannah will spend some time at La Bella Farm in the spring of 2004, gathering data about the role of land trusts in people's livelihoods and nature conservation. She is also encouraging Friends to travel to Costa Rica in 2004 to take part in one- to two-week projects that she will try to set up, with North Americans and *parceleros* possibly working together at other farming sites in the region.

THE La Bella Farm endowment has other goals that could be pursued with additional gifts, Susannah noted. "There is strong interest in setting up a revolving loan fund for *parceleros* to make land improvements, develop infrastructure, and establish perennial crops. If you're chosen because you're poor then you don't have startup capital." ♦



Philadelphia YM adopts 'Minute of concern for energy stewardship in meeting facilities and households'

This Minute was adopted at Interim Meeting of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of Friends in January 2003.

WE AFFIRM that protecting God's earth and its fullness of life is of fundamental spiritual importance to the Society of Friends. Scientists are increasingly clear about prospects for calamitous future effects on climate unless greenhouse emissions are curtailed. Our nation's irresponsible uses of energy are unjust, contribute to anger and violence, and if not changed will result in greater violence.

At present, our nation's political process seems incapable of adopting policies appropriate to these realities. It is therefore incumbent upon us, as individuals and as meetings, to do whatever we reasonably can to reduce greenhouse emissions and promote conservation through our actions as consumers of energy, goods, and services.

An important way of doing this is to buy renewable electricity. Anyone, including those who live in an apartment, retirement community or other facility that provides electricity for its residents, can now do this by purchasing certificates. Most of the energy industry is resisting change, and governments are only requiring the industry to change very gradually. This means consumer demand is essential if investments in new generating capacity are to be directed toward less polluting, renewable sources. Every purchase of renewable electricity provides both an incentive for companies to invest in renewable energy and added support for more sustainable energy policies.

An equally important way of

reducing greenhouse emissions is to revisit and strengthen our commitment to energy conservation in our buildings. In many cases, reducing energy use by investing in greater efficiency provides a net economic benefit. But we must also recognize that the best available technologies to produce and use energy will not be sufficient to restore the Earth's ecological integrity. We must also adopt less energy intensive lifestyles. Other industrialized nations have already demonstrated that this is possible.

WE THEREFORE ask Friends to prayerfully consider what we, as individuals and as a faith community, can reasonably do:

- ◆ To pay more for electricity that is produced from less polluting renewable sources.
- ◆ To consider ways of reducing energy use by replacing less efficient equipment with more efficient equipment for lighting, heating and cooling, refrigeration, and other purposes.
- ◆ To use only the electricity and fuel we truly need.

Suggested Action Steps

We ask that Interim Meeting:

- ◆ Send the minute with a covering letter to monthly meetings.
- ◆ Ask the Standing Committee on General Services to bring Interim Meeting a recommendation for ways to reduce energy use in yearly meeting facilities and to buy renewable electricity.
- ◆ Encourage *PYM News* to include brief items about energy stewardship in each issue.

The PYM Environmental Working Group will:

- ◆ Send a mailing to all monthly meetings with information about energy conservation and buying renewable electricity, and ask each monthly meeting to consider its uses and sources of energy.
- ◆ Provide information about energy conservation and buying renewable electricity to the Standing Committee on General Services.
- ◆ Provide brief items on energy stewardship for each issue of *PYM News*.◆

Subscribe to

EARTHLight

The Magazine of Spiritual Ecology

"**EARTHLight** is the magazine to read if you are concerned about the fate of our planet, and have a sense that, at its root, this is a profoundly spiritual issue. With lively articles from a wide spectrum of thinkers in touch with the cutting edges of ecological consciousness, **EARTHLight** is an efficient way to keep one's thinking co-evolving with the best ideas of our time."

—Brian Swimme

My name _____

My Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Please enter my subscription for 1 year (4 issues) \$20. Sample \$6.
Mail with check to: **EARTHLight**, 111 Fairmount Ave., Oakland, CA 94611

www.earthlight.org

FCUN Order Form

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

Country _____

Phone _____

E-mail address _____

Home Mtg _____

Yearly Mtg _____

Interests _____

Please Check the Appropriate Boxes

- 1-year support for FCUN (includes subscription to **BFC**)
 \$500/US \$100/US \$50/US (avg) \$35/US Other \$____/US

- EarthLight**, the magazine of spiritual ecology.
 1-year subscription @ \$20 USA (\$40 Canada/Mexico; \$35 other)

Make checks payable to **FCUN**. Send with this form to
FCUN, 173-B N. Prospect St., Burlington, Vt. 05401-1607.

TOTAL \$ _____

Canadians may contribute through Canadian Yearly Meeting for a tax receipt, starting at \$45/Can. Please send check to Canadian Yearly Meeting, 91-A Fourth Ave., Ottawa, ON K1S 2L1. CYM needs to know that the money is for FCUN support. Forward this form to FCUN to let us know that you have chosen to contribute through CYM.

Opening the Book of Nature

A conference on discerning spiritual lessons in Creation

North Andover, Mass, June 13–15, 2003



THE SCRIPTURES, the saints, the reformers, and most Christians prior to the industrial era were unanimous about the ability of wild nature to provide potent spiritual instruction. In our day of science and technology this understanding has faded from the seminaries and pulpits and has largely been left in the past.

This Opening the Book of Nature (OBN) conference will help participants recover a practical ability to discern spiritual lessons in nature. The challenge of discovery will blend with discussions and presentations in such a way that you can enter into a deeper appreciation of wild nature and the depth of Christianity's ancient theology of Creation.

This conference is not about philosophy or theory. It is a practical exploration and rediscovery of a traditional spiritual system of non-linear knowledge, based upon early and medieval Christian theology, leading to an experiential

connection to the Holy Spirit in Creation.

There will be prayer time in nature and discussion and presentations that will challenge participants' capabilities, engage all of their talents and learning. This will provide a spiritually uplifting experience that for some can be life-transforming. It adapts the process that the ancient Greeks called *theoria physike* into a modern framework to fit contemporary culture and mentality.

The location is the United Methodist Church's Rolling Ridge Conference Center near North Andover, Mass., Friday evening June 13 through June 15, 2003. Meals and lodging are included in registration fee. Cost is \$125 per person for meals and lodging, plus a sliding-scale registration fee of \$35 to \$325 for program administration and materials.

For more information, contact: OBN, 409 Mendocino Ave., Suite A, Santa Rosa, CA 95401.

BeFriending Creation

BeFriending Creation, Vol. 16, No.3, May/June 2003. Newsletter of Friends Committee on Unity with Nature. ISSN 1050-0332. Published bi-monthly.

We publish **BFC** to promote FCUN's goals, 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 FCUN, 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.

Contents of **BeFriending Creation** copyright ©2003 FCUN, except as noted. Permission to reprint **BFC** material must be requested in advance from the editor.

Membership in FCUN is open to all who demonstrate commitment to support FCUN's goals and who support FCUN's work at the Monthly or Yearly Meeting levels, or through other Friends organizations. FCUN is a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation; contributions are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

FCUN goals:

1. To search for that Life which affirms the unity of divine Creation.
2. To apply Friends' practice to live in deep communion with all life spirit.
3. To be guided by the Light within us to participate in the healing of the Earth.
4. To be a deeply reflective forum within the Religious Society of Friends to strengthen and deepen our spiritual unity with nature.

FCUN Clerk: Kim Carlyle, P.O. Box 439, Barnardsville, NC 28709-0439. Phone: 828/626-2572; e-mail: kcarlyle@main.nc.us.

Address **subscription and membership correspondence** to: FCUN General Secretary Ruah Swennerfelt, 173-B N. Prospect St., Burlington, VT 05401-1607. Ph: 802/658-0308; e-mail: fcun@fcun.org
 Address **editorial correspondence only** to: **BFC** Editor: Louis Cox, 173-B N. Prospect St., Burlington, VT 05401-1607. Ph: 802/658-0308; e-mail: louis@fcun.org.

FCUN Website:
www.fcun.org

✓ Meetings look homeward for seeds of this war.	1
✓ Friends, Funds, and FCUN.	3
✓ Mary Coelho's <i>Awakening Universe, Emerging Personhood</i> .	4
✓ Friends, computers, and global warming.	6
✓ Meeting series focuses on peace with Earth.	8
✓ Philadelphia YM adopts minute on energy stewardship.	10

FCUN to spotlight 'peace bulbs' at 2003 Gathering

A "BRIGHT" IDEA came to Steering Committee member Dick Grossman of Durango, Colo., at the FCUN Annual Meeting last fall in Burlington, Vt.

He was fascinated by the story of the Burlington city government's successful promotion of energy-saving compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) by *renting* the bulbs to residential customers for a small fee added to their monthly bills. When a bulb burns out (after an average of 6,000 hours, or *six times* that of an energy-wasting incandescent bulb), a customer simply exchanges it for a new one. A truly win-win situation!

Realizing that the relatively high initial cost of CFLs (\$6 to \$10 for most models) often stands in the way of general acceptance, Dick came up with his own plan for getting more Quakers on the bandwagon of Earth-friendly energy habits—by directly subsidizing their initial investment. He bought several cases of 13-watt CFLs (the light equivalent of 60-watt incandescents) and donated them to FCUN to sell in four-packs for \$15 (that's less than \$4 a bulb). FCUN's plan is to take them to the FGC Gathering and promote them through the Gathering Bookstore.

CFLs have drawn increasing attention over the last ten years as one significant response that ordinary

citizens can make to the threat of global climate change. When we realize that dozens of electric generating plants that are belching greenhouse gases could be taken off line if most homes and businesses converted from incandescents to CFLs, there is

reason for hope. Also, as a symbol for the many small things that can make a big difference, CFLs have brought many people around to considering other changes in their lifestyles.

Since the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, CFLs have taken on added significance as "peace bulbs," as attention has been called to this country's increasing appetite for non-renewable energy and its reliance on imported oil, as factors in rising tensions in the Middle East. By drastically cutting total electrical demand, CFLs can buy the U.S. more time to develop alternative energy sources and signal to the rest of the world that we are open to creative and peaceful solutions instead of continuing to grab more than our share of the world's resources.

When considering a change to CFLs, let's remember that they don't just save us *money* in the long run. They can play a role in living in that life and power that *takes away the occasion of all wars*. —Louis Cox

