

BeFriending Creation

Newsletter of Quaker Earthcare Witness

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Talking with others about Earthcare may require better understanding of our differing worldviews

by Louis Cox

SHORTLY after the November 2004 U.S. election, I received an urgent appeal in the mail from a major environmental group: Since the Bush administration is poised to do even more environmental damage than it has done in its first term, the appeal said, *we need your financial support more than ever!*

I had a different reaction to this line of reasoning: If they and other organizations have not been very effective in countering the neo-conservative juggernaut, *perhaps we need new visions and strategies, rather than putting more effort into pursuing the old ones.*

One helpful perspective on the environmental movement's present quandary arrived in my e-mail in mid-December. (I ended up with multiple copies because so many people I know were moved to forward it to everyone on their mailing lists.) It was journalist Bill Moyers's dramatic (and some would say scary) speech to the Harvard Medical School in the fall of 2004, as he accepted the school's Global Environment Citizen Award.

His message implied that the Bush Administration's ruinous fiscal, military, and environmental policies can't be answered by something as straightforward as improved "strategies" or better arguments. That approach assumes an opponent that shares a compa-



Can we talk constructively with those who believe the Second Coming trumps caring for God's creation?

nable sense of reality—which apparently is not the case today. Although the neo-conservative movement's leaders are very "realistic" in the way they use the political process to their advantage, much of their public support seems to come from their success at linking a secular pro-corporation agenda with certain extreme religious beliefs that are virtually immune to rational examination.

"One of the biggest changes in politics in my lifetime is that the delusional is no longer marginal," Moyers told his audience. "It has come in from the fringe, to sit in the seat of power in the Oval Office and in Congress... For the first time in our history, ideology and theology hold a monopoly of power in Washington..."

Moyers described a national leadership whose public statements and policies are decidedly out of tune with "what is generally accepted as reality" He noted that a significant portion of Bush Administration supporters, known as the "Christian Right," tend to see the conflicts in the Middle East, as well as looming environmental disasters, as the fulfillment of biblical prophecies, which must be allowed to run their course. Human suffering and the destruction of the natural environment seem a small price to pay for victory in this cosmic struggle between the forces of Good and Evil, according to this worldview.

"Why care about the earth when the droughts, floods, famine, and pestilence brought by ecological collapse are signs of the apocalypse foretold in the Bible? ...And why care about converting from oil to solar when the same God who performed the miracle of the loaves and fishes can whip up a few billion barrels of light crude with a word?"

Moyers said he struggles against despair as he reads the news, connects the dots, and imagines where these developments are headed. It is clear that this government's policies are robbing our children and grandchildren of their future by despoiling their

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world, he said. However, there is a positive side to our dread-filled awareness of impending disaster, Moyers concluded: Facing the truth can set us free and empower us to fight for the future we want.

THIS brings to mind a little book that has been on a lot of people's must-read lists lately: George Lakoff's *Don't Think of An Elephant!—Know Your Values and Frame the Debate* (Chelsea Green Publishers, White River Jct., Vt., 2004) In this work, he traces the ways in which ultraconservative "think-tanks," radio talk show hosts, and others have managed to convince a large segment of the U.S. population that "liberal" values (including environmental protection) are dangerous and un-American—not with facts but by how they frame the issues, e.g. taxes as a "burden."

Having studied the way that language is being used in today's public life, Lakoff would say that Moyers's metaphor of "fighting for the future we want" can misdirect us: *What one person considers "winning" a debate only reinforces the convictions of someone who frames the issue differently.* A more productive response is one that respectfully reframes the issue in terms of one's own values and worldview, Lakoff says.

To restore civility to a political atmosphere that seems to be poisoned by lies and distortions, we need to understand the psychological and philosophical underpinnings of the classic conservative and liberal worldviews and train ourselves to interpret events in different terms that are as compelling. *Enough*—go read the book! (See also Lakoff's book, *Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think*, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1996.)

So, does this mean that environmental activists should be able to constructively engage someone who firmly believes that the Second Coming trumps care of God's creation? —In my opinion, no.

But I also believe that sincere people of faith can be taken in by extreme apocalyptic notions when those are the only tools for understanding the scary modern world that are offered to them. We can open doors to communication if we break ourselves of the habit of debate-style attacks and become models of seeking truth together.

As Quakers we have the advantage of a tradition of respectful engagement with those with differing views, similar to what Lakoff is talking about. We also have in our tradition an antidote to the despair Bill Moyers talked about: *If Truth lives in our hearts, even with all the bad news, how can we keep from singing?* ♦

Eco-tip from *Natural Home* magazine

ROUGHLY 1.5 MILLION TONS of clay are mined annual just to make kitty litter for the nation's 60 million felines (U.S. Bureau of Mines).

Much of the clay is strip-mined, which destroys land and habitat. Some experts claim kitty litter accounts for more waste in landfills than disposable diapers! In addition, the silica dust in clay clumping litters may cause health problems in cats.

Fortunately there are nontoxic, biodegradable, and renewable alternatives. Look for brands made from corn, wheat, nut shells, or recycled newspapers, including Swheat-Scoop, Feline Pine, and World's Best Cat Litter.

(Note: I have been using SwheatScoop for about a year now and am very impressed. A benefit is that I can compost it for use on our shrubs and flower beds.)

—Ruah Swennerfelt

Adoption flyer available from QEW!

This flyer by the Population Concerns interest group begins by explaining why adoption is a QEW concern. It then responds to the following questions:

- ♦ What is Earth-friendly about adoption?
- ♦ Will parenthood make me more loving?
- ♦ Are children available for adoption?
- ♦ Are children available from other countries?
- ♦ What if the birth parents change their minds?
- ♦ What does it cost to adopt?
- ♦ How can Friends Meetings help?

A number of resources are listed for those seeking additional information.

Free copies can be ordered from the QEW office. (Donations to defray printing costs are encouraged.)

Adoption: An Earth-Friendly Alternative

Do you want another child?
Do you have a lot of love to give to kids, but don't want to add to the earth's population?
Have you considered adoption?



Nancy Whitt with her daughter, Vassilka, whom she adopted from Bulgaria when she was 11 years old (Birmingham, Alabama, Friends Meeting).

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Where exactly do the poor fit into our concern for the earth?

by Barbara Williamson
QEW Steering Committee Clerk

As a board member of the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy, I was involved this fall with a project called the "Poverty Diet." Virginians on food stamps receive an average of \$2.55 a day in food stamps for each person in the household. Food stamps can be supplemented with the recipient's other income, but with the high costs of housing, utilities, and transportation in Virginia, this is often impossible. Abrahamic communities of faith across Virginia were encouraged to sponsor community projects to have community members live on a \$2.55-per-person diet for a three-day period in November.

On the three days of your personal "Poverty Diet" you couldn't eat out of your freezer or pantry. For my personal "Poverty Diet," I made a special trip to the grocery store. It wasn't long before I knew that fresh fruits and vegetables, particularly if organic, didn't fit in my three-day budget. Having just paid my share of dues for a local Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), I knew that someone on food stamps probably couldn't afford to belong to a CSA.

Two weeks later, while I was reviewing the final draft of the legislative priorities adopted by a collaborative of Virginia environmental organizations for the upcoming General Assembly session, I was reminded of the people I see with fishing poles and coolers

walking through my neighborhood on their way to the James River. Even though signs in the park along the river warn people not to eat fish caught in the river



because of the mercury contamination, I've watched people putting fish caught in the river into their coolers. Many of the people I see walking with their friends and family to the James River for a day of fishing, live in a neighborhood where most homes have lead contamination.

These events made me begin to wonder: *Where exactly do the poor fit into our concern for the Earth?* How can we ask them to select their food using sustainable practices when they may not know where their next meal is coming from? For me the answer is quite simply that we cannot ask them. But at the same time, we must spread the message to everyone—poor or rich, inner city or suburb, third, second or first world—that we cannot continue in our present mode of being and acting.

The poor and minorities, and those who work with them, are the very ones who should be in the vanguard of those making the connection between impoverished people and an impoverished Earth. It is the poor who are paying the higher price for our planet in peril. Mega-highways are dividing their communities and being paid for by their tax dollars but do not provide them transportation to jobs, health care, or education. It is their communities where landfills are being located, toxic wastes

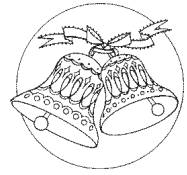
dumped, and incinerators built. It is the children of the poor who are being brain-damaged from eating lead paint and poisoned foods. It is billboards placed predominantly in their neighborhoods that encourage deadly habits with alcohol and tobacco. It is their homes that bear disproportionately high energy costs because they are not insulated or wired well. And it is not only poor people in this country but whole nations who now must destroy their resource base, their forests and soils, to repay debts to the rich industrialized world, debts not fairly acquired and long since repaid.

The injustices are blatant. The consequences of a threatened planet may be the same for all of us, but it is apparent how the poor experience it more cruelly and unfairly. Ultimately, it is they who bear the brunt of a mind-set, a worldview, an industrial way of life, a religious perception even, which is grossly out of sync with the ways of the earth.

We need to go into our Meetings and churches to broaden and deepen the traditional understanding of what we are being called to do. We need a spiritual renewal that will bring people home to the earth and a new perspective on the context in which the poor live. All the food we eat, clothing we wear, or buildings we live in have been supplied by the earth's largess—a largess being unfairly consumed and wasted by citizens of industrialized countries. It is the earth in all its expressions—the community of sea and sun, mountains and meadows, deserts and fields, plant and animal life—that has a claim on us.

My hope is that we grow skilled in "choosing life," for all Creation, including the poorest among us, and thus prove our faithfulness to the One who created all life. ❖

Quaker couple 'pull off' wedding that is both simple and light on the earth!



WE thought other readers might be interested in the story of our August 2004 wedding in Madison, Wisconsin, which combined the tradition of Quaker simplicity with the value of living lightly upon the earth.

It all began with considerable deliberation about whether to get married in the first place. The fundamental question for us was not whether we wanted to spend the rest of our lives together—we had already come to that understanding gradually over our four years together—but whether we could actually pull off a wedding that would reflect our shared values. We are both deeply troubled by weddings that involve conspicuous consumption of resources, as if “tradition” demanded it. Sadly, most weddings tend to be planned with little or no consideration for their ecological footprint or the couple’s relationship to the land. We decided that it would be worthwhile to try something different—to let our Light shine and to lead by example.

Here are some of the ways we tried to make our wedding a simple event with minimal environmental impact. In the end, many of these things also ensured that it was personally meaningful and highly participatory for our friends and family:

1. **Invitations and thank-you cards**—These were hand-made, using tree-free paper and potato-print decorations, and mailed in colorful envelopes we made from old calendars and magazines.
2. **Gifts**—We emphasized that this was a “buy-nothing” event and



JUSTIN MOG and AMANDA FULLER cap off their untraditional wedding by leading a colorful parade on a tandem bicycle, dragging aluminum cans behind them.

For us, it was simply another manifestation of the continuing revelation that lies at the heart of Quaker faith and practice

- urged guests who wished to give gifts to instead make donations to the American Friends Service Committee, the Freedom to Marry Foundation, or a local environmental group known as the Sauk Prairie Conservation Alliance.
3. **Wedding bands**—Knowing the full social and ecological costs of mining, we looked into buying rings made of recycled metal (www.greenkarat.com), but eventually settled on the lowest-impact option: a matched set of second-hand rings from a vintage jeweler.
4. **Long-distance transportation**—Guests were encouraged to get to Madison by train, bus, or

carpool, and to consider that their gift to us be the purchase of carbon offsets to reduce the climate-change impact of their travels. Invitations included information about the relative impact of various modes of travel and websites where guests could calculate the “carbon footprints” of their trips and purchase carbon offsets directly (www.carbonfund.org or www.climatecare.org). If they planned to fly, we suggested that tickets be bought through the Better World Club (www.betterworldclub.com; 866/304-7540).

5. **Guest accommodations**—Rather than stay at inconveniently located, impersonal hotels with hidden environmental costs, we helped connect out-of-town guests with local friends willing to host them for the weekend. Our visiting friends and family enjoyed the opportunity to get to know local friends in personal settings.
6. **Transportation**—We picked a lakeshore park near our home and on a bus line so that guests could walk, bike, paddle, or take public transit to our celebration; and so we could make human-powered deliveries to the park using bicycles with trailers attached. The park also featured stately oak trees and a Native American effigy mound to remind us of the region’s natural history.
7. **Food**—We announced the event as a “Picnic in the Park,” featuring a vegetarian potluck that emphasized local and or-

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ganic foods. Friends brought hundreds of delicious picnic offerings, including a beautiful vegan wedding cake decorated with organic flowers.

8. **Flowers**—Rather than buying flowers that had been imported thousands of miles, friends gathered local wildflowers into beautiful bouquets.
9. **Accessories**—Our event sent almost nothing to the landfill, thanks to friends who brought glasses, ceramic plates, silverware, cloth napkins and tablecloths. All recyclable beverage containers were collected and brought home to be recycled.
10. **Energy**—Having the wedding outdoors during the day meant no need for electricity to provide lighting, comfort, or entertainment. Friends brought instruments and played live music that filled our ears without amplification, while others played lawn games in the sun. Helpful guests washed dishes by hand.
11. **Pageantry**—Who needs a limousine? Our event culminated in a huge, colorful parade. Guests donned costumes assembled from festive second-hand clothing, and we led the way on a tandem bicycle, dragging aluminum cans behind us.

WE did all of this because we felt that a wedding should reflect the values of the couple, rather than the conventions of "tradition." For us, it was simply another manifestation of the continuing revelation that lies at the heart of Quaker faith and practice. We hope that our story may help inspire others to follow their own leadings with respect to living lightly upon the earth.

—Justin Mog and Amanda Fuller
Madison, Wisconsin

What canst *thou* resolve to care for Creation in 2005?

IT'S 2005, and I struggle to remain optimistic, post-election, and in the midst of such devastating news coming through the media each day. I'm sure many of you are feeling similarly, and one thing that gives me hope is all of you. I see and hear of the good work that you are doing. I know that we are building within the shell of the dominant culture a world that can possibly survive when (as Lester Brown predicted at last summer's FGC Gathering) dwindling fossil fuel and fresh water supplies cause food prices to soar and may trigger more wars. We at QEW will continue to speak clearly and forcefully for all Creation and against the overconsumption of material resources.

Right after the November election, Richard Nelson, author of *The Island Within* and *Hunters of the Northern Ice*, was asked by *Grist* magazine, along with other environmentalists, what we need to do now. His response was:

"When politicians work to deplete the forests and farmlands—*speak*. When they threaten the air and waters—*speak*. When they undermine the well-being of our neighborhoods—*speak*. When they disregard the rights of humankind—*speak*. When they disparage the principles of freedom and democracy—*speak*. When they ignore the responsibilities that accompany inordinate power—*speak*. When they imperil the possibilities for peace—*speak*. And above all, when they demand silence—*speak*. Never more than now, the hope and promise

of America rests on a rising, in-suppressible chorus of voices—whispering, shouting, proclaiming, protesting, advocating, resisting, singing, supporting, celebrating ... and persevering. *Speak!*"

ONE IMPORTANT thing we can all resolve to do in the coming year is to *keep informed*. Read about the issues, go to talks, listen to those we trust.

I am making the following resolutions for the coming year. (I'm keeping my list short so that I can look back at the end of the year and gauge my progress!)

1. Carpool more and bike or walk whenever possible. (Living in the country is our biggest challenge.)
2. Buy locally produced food with minimal packaging, and resist that delicious fruit from exotic places.
3. Eat what I've grown and not let it go to waste in the root cellar.
4. Continue my practice of daily outdoor thanksgiving, accompanied by a walk.
5. Write articles for Friends periodicals to share more with the wider Quaker family.
6. Write letters to the editor and my representatives and participate in speaking out at demonstrations.

What are your resolutions? What will you be doing to make a difference in 2005? I want to hear from you and share what you say with *BeFriending Creation* readers.

—Ruah Swennerfelt
QEW General Secretary

[See also the Suzuki Institute's "Nature Challenge" on page 12.]

'Thrifty Quakers' in Maryland give boost to QEW's outreach ministry

MIDLOTHIAN (Va.) Friends Meeting runs a thrift shop called "The Thrifty Quaker" in Midlothian, Va., that donates all its proceeds (after operating expenses) to charities. Each month they select a nonprofit organization or worthy cause to receive the next month's proceeds.

Imagine my surprise and delight when I received a phone call one morning, here in the Vermont office of QEW, that September was to be the *Quaker Earthcare Witness month!* They put out QEW literature to share with Thrifty Quaker customers something about the organization that was being sponsored that month. Recently they sent QEW a check for \$836.87, which will be especially helpful in our efforts to increase funding for QEW's expanded outreach ministry.

This is such a creative way to support local needs as well as supporting organizations doing good work in the world that I wanted to share this with you.

The Thrifty Quaker receives all its goods from donations; sorts, cleans, and organizes them; and then places them for sale in its shop, located in the Midlothian Station Shopping Center, in the historic Midlothian Village, across from Sycamore Square. The store has a small paid staff and relies heavily on volunteers. The charities that receive the profits from the Thrifty Quaker are selected based partly on suggestions from the community. The set of criteria used for selecting charities was established by Midlothian Friends Meeting, and can be obtained at the store.

The following is from their website, www.thriftyquaker.org.



Proceeds from the Thrifty Quaker are used to provide help to:

- ❖ Needy local individuals and families.
- ❖ Victims of war, violence, or disasters.
- ❖ Social and peace organizations
- ❖ Underprivileged and oppressed groups.

- ❖ Political organizations and charities established for the purpose of evangelizing or proselytizing are not eligible to receive funds from the Thrifty Quaker.

AS OF APRIL 2004, the Thrifty Quaker has contributed about \$1.375 million in goods and cash to charities. Recently they supported an area homeless shelter and a scholarship program for juvenile offenders.

We are pleased that Quaker Earthcare Witness was recognized as being a significant nonprofit organization and deemed worthy of this donation.

—Ruah Swennerfelt
QEW General Secretary

New Steering Committee member pursues right livelihood on northeast Minnesota farm

FOR THE PAST 17 YEARS, David Abazs, a new QEW Steering Committee member representing Northern Yearly Meeting, has been pursuing right (sustainable) livelihood in a Quaker framework on a farm in northeastern Minnesota.

The 40-acre property, located on the north shore of Lake Superior, is surrounded by wilderness. There David

and his wife Lise and their children, Colby, 13, and Tremayne, 10, have been pursuing a variety of trades to make a living in harmony with the land.

In addition to producing much of their own food, the family grows and sells Christmas trees and wreaths. David teaches conservation and stone



DAVID ABAZS of Finland, Minn., who recently joined the QEW Steering Committee, marvels at the tenacious roots of an invasive plant, during a natural area restoration project in connection with the fall QEW Annual Meeting in Burlington, N.J.

masonry at an area school and helps other rural homesteaders with solar installations. Lise works part-time at an environmental learning center. They are also active in a non-profit seed-savers program.

A member of Duluth-Superior Monthly Meeting, David became a QEW supporter three years ago.

Quaker utilities commissioner sees conservation as the first step in meeting future energy needs

by Ruah Swennerfelt
QEW General Secretary

RICK MORGAN of Bethesda (Md.) Friends Meeting has dedicated his adult life to working on energy issues from a Quaker perspective. During a workshop titled "Speaking Truth to Power Companies" that he presented at the QEW Annual Meeting & Gathering this fall in Burlington, N.J., he discussed ways that Quaker values are congruent with public policies that promote a cleaner environment.

As background, Rick said he was influenced in his early life by Quaker parents who were involved in peace and civil rights issues. They took their children camping to inspire an appreciation for nature. In fact, his mother, Emily Morgan, wrote the following in 1936, an excerpt from a paper titled, "The Need for Conservation."

Were the people of America to look down upon their country from a place such as Mount Olympus, they would no doubt be considerably startled to see the appalling waste which we, with such astonishing complacency, allow to go on each day, hour, and minute.

In the early 1970s Rick began to question why utility companies were promoting the use of more electricity while saying they needed to build more power plants. Thus began his journey of learning about energy issues from a variety of perspectives. During the 1970s Rick helped organize a national network of environmental consumer and labor groups. He worked for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for 12 years, encouraging use of renew-

able energy. He also worked on emissions-trading in the acid rain arena. (Emissions-trading is a system for rewarding power plants that have lowered their harmful emissions below current EPA



Rick Morgan

thresholds, while providing an economic incentive for others to do so.) He has authored numerous books, papers, and articles about electric utilities and energy policy. Over the years he has crossed paths with many Friends who were working in the same field.

He shared that when he started out in the field of energy, the utility companies were saying that nuclear power would be "too cheap to meter," that reducing air pollution would be too costly, and that renewable sources of energy were too costly and unreliable. Now we know that all those claims aren't true. Through years of citizen pressure we've helped to stop constructing ill-conceived nuclear power plants, we are gradually cleaning the air, and renewables are making inroads, he said.

After more than 30 years of telling energy policy makers what to do, last year he became a utility regulator. He is currently serving his first four-year term as a commissioner on the Public Service Commission of the District of Columbia. Public service commissions are quasi-judicial bodies that regulate electric, gas, and phone rates and set policies. These commissions are influential on energy policies such as renewable energy sources (green power), energy efficiency as a resource, and rate design.

In his present work as a utility regulator, he explained in the workshop, he has an influence on how much energy is used, since higher utility rates generally translate into lower use. Since a utility regulator implements policy rather than developing new policy, Rick is still adjusting to his new role.

Rick said that the challenges ahead are climate change (and the need for utilities to accept the fact of climate change) and growth in demand. Unfortunately, the currently projected growth in energy demand is likely to eclipse gains in reducing environmental impacts. An obvious partial solution, he said, is to practice conservation as part of our own Quaker testimony on simplicity.

Thanks to people like Rick Morgan, a former co-clerk of the Baltimore Yearly Meeting Unity with Nature Committee, there is still hope that we will stop the forces of human-induced climate change and that more "green" energy will make its way into the market as a major source of electrical needs. And if he has his way, conservation will be the focus of helping to meet our future energy needs. ♦

I pass along this e-mail from the Quaker Ecology Action Network (QEAN) list because I think this might be something we in Quaker Earthcare Witness can do for ourselves. If we must fly to a destination rather than ride a more ecological train or bus, we could donate a 10-percent flight tax to QEW! Maybe we could also do it when we drive. What do you all think?

—Ruah Swennerfelt
QEW General Secretary

Voluntary Air Transport Use Tax

I HAVE BEEN DOING THIS for five years now. I got the idea from Friends of the Earth (FOE) in Birmingham, England. They did a campaign on this, encouraging everyone who flew to pay a voluntary 10-percent tax on the airfare. FOE used the funds it received from this for two things: 1) tree planting to mitigate some of the damage done by the pollution and advocacy and 2) education to further the campaign around air fuel taxes, etc.

For the last few flights that I have taken I have chosen organizations related to ecology for my 10-percent voluntary "tax." For the flight on which I returned to Canada in July I made a contribution to a small NGO working in northern Scotland to re-establish the Caledonian forests. For my trip to Yearly Meeting I contributed to a project working with African villages to reforest areas. The benefits this would provide include protecting water supplies as well as supplying a renewable source of fuel.

My thinking behind the idea is: Canadian Friends (and others) are not immediately going to stop taking flights. This means that we will continue to damage the environment with our use of air transport. The least we can do is to pay a voluntary "tax" of 10 percent of the cost of the airfare as a mitigation action. This 10 percent is donated to an organization of the person's choice that is addressing in some way the direct environmental damage caused by the flight or some as-

pect of the wider environmental challenge. For example, with my flight to Canadian Friends Service Committee next weekend I will be making a donation to Fort Whyte, a local nature reserve that is doing sustainability education.

The purpose of this is two-fold:

1. It names and acknowledges our complicity in causing this damage to the environment. This is an important part of our testimony to truth.
2. It contributes a small step to mitigate the damage.

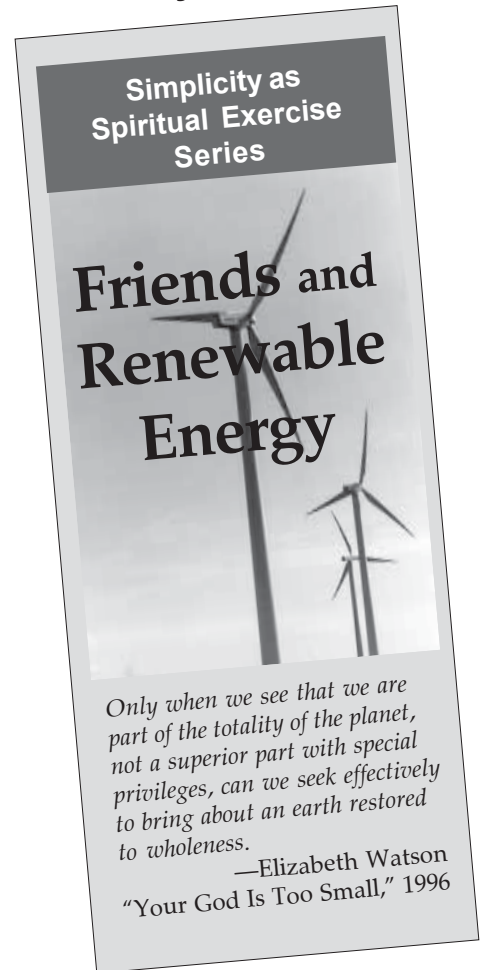
I would hope that, over time, the Canadian Yearly Meeting Travel Fund would accept that the voluntary tax is a right cost of CYM travel. I would not expect that immediately, knowing concerns that are expressed about the costs of travel. Yet lack of acknowledgment of the environmental cost of CYM travel also is not acceptable.

I think it important to see mitigation as an interim place. Ultimately we need to stop the damage. This can be a step on the way, along with the other ideas being discussed in various parts of the Yearly Meeting, such as regionalizing committees, changing meeting patterns of CYM, etc.

In the chats I have had with Joe [Ackerman] we have talked about the potential for QEAN to research appropriate organizations regionally and locally to help folk pick up on this idea.

—Elaine Bishop
860 Laxdal Road
Winnipeg, Canada MB R3R 0X1
204/783-2176

New flyer from QEW!



THIS NEW QUAD-FOLD by the QEW Sustainability—Support & Action interest group speaks frankly about the deadly effects of fossil-fuel induced global climate change and outlines ways we can more rapidly shift to various forms of non-polluting and renewable sources of energy. It talks about practical things we all can do to save energy, as well as changes in public energy policy we should support.

Free copies can be ordered from the QEW office. (Donations to defray printing costs are encouraged.)

Energy Saving Tip # 1

A microwave oven uses only one-third the energy used by a conventional oven. Because it heats the kitchen less, the kitchen will be cooler, and you will save on summer air conditioning costs.

Green energy is now more accessible than you think!

"BUT what can I do?" This question comes to mind the minute we imagine the sources of energy-related pollution and the ever more obvious impact these emissions have on the chemistry of our planet. The power for enormous incremental change *is* in our hands, however, in many ways.

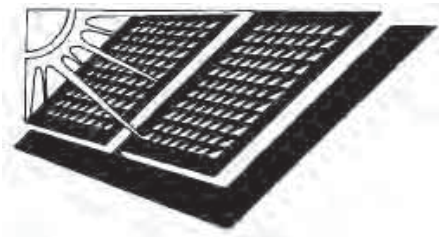
My organization, the Interreligious Eco-Justice Network, is one of 17 comprising the National Interfaith Power & Light movement. Alongside other religious and secular groups, the IP&Ls aim to be market drivers, to help well-intentioned people find ways to bring their values together with their purchasing power to create real change.

Solar and wind energy sources are generated in most parts of the country. These technologies are becoming cleaner, cheaper, and better integrated into our energy picture.

Not surprisingly, the cheaper electricity sources are the older, dirtier, more established generators, such as nuclear and coal. Newer technologies and cleaner sources do cost more now, partly because they are new! There is relatively little federal support for clean energy technologies. But groups like ours and a number of enlightened cities and states have garnered commitments to purchase clean energy, even at an increased cost.

Creating demand for clean energy is a critical market factor, and we in the faith community can be the driving force for this movement. Eighty percent of people in a survey said they would pay more for clean, renewable electricity. In many states, you can currently purchase "green" electricity right from the public utility. A couple of cents per kilowatt-hour is added on to the bill. In return,

the public utility agrees to buy your portion of its electric supply from a clean energy source. You are basically paying the utility the difference between the cheapest energy source they can find (coal, nuclear) and the kind you want them to buy (solar, wind).



For every 500 households which offer their 2-cent premium for all of their electric usage, one new 1.5-megawatt wind turbine can be put in the ground

This is called Green Up in Rhode Island, other names in other places. Efforts are underway to create a green pricing option in more states. Public education is still needed in states with a clean pricing option! Eighty percent of us want this, but the sales of clean electricity—when it is available through the utility—are not yet exceeding a few percentage points.

Some of us live in states where a green pricing option is not yet in place. We can do the same thing privately that the utilities are doing publicly. We can send that 2 cents per kilowatt-hour directly to a green generator. This income stream allows the clean energy generator to sell its electricity at a rate that competes well with dirtier sources.

This "2 cents per kilowatt-hour" is called variously a "green tag" or a Renewable Energy Credit (REC). The actual cost for a tag

varies between 1 and 4 cents per kilowatt-hour.

Renewable energy credits are an excellent way for us to walk our talk and bring our values to the marketplace.

Hopefully, I've done a good job of explaining to you what an REC is. Not everyone has the patience or motivation to become a "clean energy market driver." RECs aren't sexy, and they aren't easy to explain. So I encourage you and your communities to consider an Adopt-a-Windmill Campaign in your state if you do not yet have a green pricing option.

ADOPT-A-WINDMILL Campaign is a great way to envision how our small efforts can accumulate to big improvements. For every 500 households which offer their 2-cent premium for all of their electric usage, one new 1.5 megawatt wind turbine can be put in the ground.

Five hundred is a lot of households, and not all of our members can afford to pay the 10-percent or so premium on their electricity. But this is a doable, visually exciting goal, perhaps for a number of faith communities in a region or a town. Community Energy and Native Energy are two companies we have worked with to create this kind of campaign. There may be other good partners in your region. We'd be happy to share our research with you!

—Rabbi Andrea Cohen-Kiener
Interreligious Eco-Justice Network
P.O. Box 270147
West Hartford CT 06127
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For further information contact:
Mass Energy Consumers Alliance
670 Centre St.
Boston MA 02130
617/524-0776; www.massenergy.com

IT WAS A SPECIAL TREAT to pick up the October 2004 issue of *Friends Journal*, and find it devoted to the theme: Friends and the Environment. Articles by several QEW Friends, including Louis Cox, Ruah Swennerfelt, and Mac Given, among others, have made this a powerful testimony issue.

Thanks for everyone, and to *Friends Journal*, who made this the theme for its October issue. For those who do not have access to *FJ* by subscription or from a Meeting library, I urge you to write for a copy. It can be had for \$5 (including postage) from Friends Journal, 2A-1216 Arch Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107.

—Arnold Ranneris
Victoria, BC

FOLLOWING THE SHOWING of the film, *The End of Suburbia*, about the end of cheap, abundant oil—where they expected 50 people and had 200-plus—a group is forming in Bellingham, Wash., to plan for a sustainable local economy. There are already many local and county folks leading the way. It is hopeful and exciting.

There is so much going on that I can't begin to keep up with it all, so tonight I'm going to hear poet Gary Snyder and later this week environmentalist David Suzuki. Also, a new Creation Spirituality group has started here. Their first (monthly) meeting was, very appropriately, for mourning, after the election.

—Doris Ferm
Bellingham (Wash.) Friends Mtg.

AS I READ THROUGH the last *Friends Journal* I thought of you so often—not just in your article about the Earth Charter—I reveled in the fact that *Friends Journal* had done a whole issue—finally—on this vital subject.

As I've made choices over the years as to where to put my time, Quaker Earthcare Witness hasn't been my first choice—as you know—but my heart has been with you so often, and I have admired the long years of

work you all—the Phillipases, the Blissesses, the Howenstines, and more—have given to the Religious Society of Friends in this capacity. I guess the utter faithfulness of it—many years when it seemed not well rewarded—and now, finally, the attention you all deserve. My daughter Karen knows some of these folks better. For me, you, Ruah, were the standard bearer that just kept going and held things together. Maybe it's not even true—but in my eyes it has been! So whether or no, thank you very much!

—Barbara Greenler
Madison, Wis.

Donn Kesselheim of QEW's Population Concerns Interest Group sent the following response to Liz Hofmeister, Managing Editor for Publications for Friends Committee on National Legislation.

AFTER READING the September, 2004, issue of FCNL's *Washington Newsletter*, I write to express keen disappointment at the omission of environmental issues from your profiles of Senator Kerry and President Bush. It is in this vitally important sector that the contrast between the records of the two men is greatest. John Kerry's lifetime record of voting 92 percent with the League of Conservation Voters on environmental matters must be publicized. At the

same time, all Americans need to know that George W. Bush has compiled the worst environmental record in the history of our nation.

His administration's approach to the environment has demonstrated a clear bias toward the interests of corporate polluters and special interests. From Vice President's Cheney's secret energy task force to the appointment of industry lobbyists to rewarding campaign contributors with numerous policy paybacks, President Bush has put corporate interests first—and the public's interest in clean air, safe drinking water, and sound energy policy last. In the long run, this will have a disastrous impact on our health, our economy and our way of life.

What you have highlighted instead is a debate on the topic of who can make war smarter, more effectively, while ignoring the reality that "War Is Not the Answer." John Kerry's finest hour was when he provided courageous, imaginative leadership to "Vietnam Veterans against the Vietnam War." Why was there no reference to this part of his record?

Please consider publishing a special paper, comparing the two men on environmental issues.

—Donn Kesselheim
Lander, WY 82520

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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 QEW support. Forward this form to QEW to let us know that you have chosen to contribute through CYM.

Win a 2005 Toyota Prius!

THE WHITE HOUSE and Congress may refuse to address the growing threats from climate change, but consumers are helping to reduce carbon emissions right now by replacing gas-guzzling vehicles with hybrid electric cars.

The Center for a New American Dream

is generating thousands of letters to auto manufacturers urging them to deliver more hybrid electric vehicles to the U.S. market. Right now, there are waiting lists across the nation, and demand exceeds supply. *The Washington Post* recently reported that ice formations are rapidly melting in the Northern Hemisphere and that polar bears are likely to go extinct due to loss of habitat. Please help us put the pressure on by getting the word out.

Toyota has already agreed to ramp up production of hybrids but they can do much more, and so can Detroit. We have met with senior representatives of all of the hybrid manufacturers and are per-

suaded that they do listen to customers.

That's why the Center for a New American Dream has

launched a contest to

come up with a short, catchy slogan to convince automakers to bring more hybrids to market *now*.

The first prize for the contest is a brand new 2005 Toyota Prius!

We've created lots of different materials you can use to help spread the word about this contest—an e-mail message, newsletter blurbs, text links, banner ads, etc. You can view them all and find the materials that work best for you at our online media kit page: <http://www.newdream.org/prius/kit.php>.

—Kathryn DeLonga
 Outreach Associate

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BeFriending Creation

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We publish **BeFriending Creation** to promote the work of Quaker Earthcare Witness, stimulate discussion and action, share insights, practical ideas, and news of our actions, and encourage among Friends a sense of community and spiritual connection with all Creation. Opinions expressed are the authors' own and do not necessarily reflect those of Quaker Earthcare Witness, or of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). The editor is responsible for unsigned items. Submission deadlines are February 7, April 7, June 7, August 7, October 7, and December 7.

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VISION AND WITNESS

WE ARE CALLED to live in right relationship with all Creation, recognizing that the entire world is interconnected and is a manifestation of God. WE WORK to integrate into the beliefs and practices of the Religious Society of Friends the Truth that God's Creation is to be respected, protected, and held in reverence in its own right, and the Truth that human aspirations for peace and justice depend upon restoring the earth's ecological integrity. WE PROMOTE these truths by being patterns and examples, by communicating our message, and by providing spiritual and material support to those engaged in the compelling task of transforming our relationship to the earth.

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How involved are Friends in promoting a more sustainable world?

Follow Canadian Friends' example and take the Suzuki Institute's 'Nature Challenge'

"WHAT ARE WE DOING and working on to bear witness to our testimony on unity with nature?" Peggy Land of Canadian Yearly Meeting's Quaker Ecology Action Network (QEAN) asked in a recent posting to the QEAN list. She offered Canadian Friends "a way to find out and to help with the way forward to a more sustainable world."

She cited the Suzuki Institute of Canada, which has done research to determine which would be the top 10 most effective actions (right) when implemented by individuals.

Lets follow their example: Just post the list at home where you can refer to it often, as part of your own New Year's resolutions. Put (Xs) by the things you are *already doing*. Then, over the coming year, start putting (✓s) by the items you are *starting to work on* and (Os) around the ones you are *considering doing*. By December 1, 2005, send a copy of your list to us at QEW, and we will compile it with other readers' progress reports for the January-February 2006 issue of *BeFriending Creation*.



For helpful information, and to participate in the Suzuki Institute's Nature Challenge, the website is: www.davidsuzuki.org/WOL/Challenge/10steps.asp.

- 1. Reduce home energy use (heat, water, etc.) by 10 percent.
- 2. Choose an energy-efficient home and Energy Star appliances.
- 3. Replace dangerous pesticides with alternatives.
- 4. Eat meat-free meals at least one day a week.
- 5. Buy (or produce) locally grown and produced food.
- 6. Choose a fuel-efficient vehicle.
- 7. Walk, bike, carpool, or take public transit.
- 8. Choose a home close to work or school.
- 9. Support car-free alternatives.
- 10. Learn more about sustainability, strengthen local involvement.