



BeFriending Creation

Newsletter of Quaker Earthcare Witness

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Has the balance shifted?

by Lynne Heritage

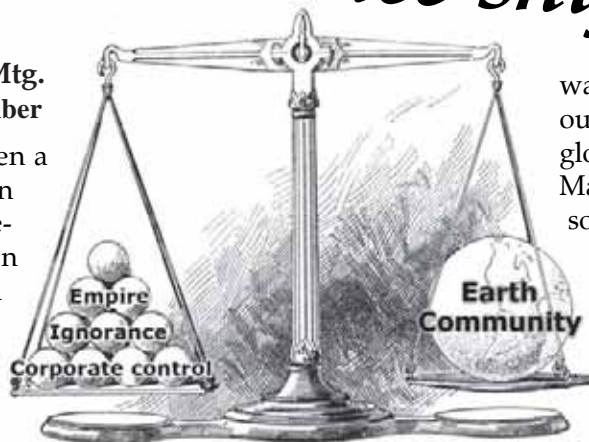
State College (Pa.) Friends Mtg.
QEW Steering Committee member

FOR some time there has been a gradual, encouraging shift in public awareness and values regarding the future of this nation and the planet. Recent national and state elections, generally calling for new policies and priorities, only confirmed what I and others had already been noticing.

◆ In Pennsylvania, a citizens lobby, PennFuture, believes every environmental victory grows the economy. Two years ago, they helped pass legislation requiring electric utilities to have 18 percent of their generated power come from sources like solar, wind, and biomass by 2020.

◆ Gamesa, a Spanish wind turbine manufacturer, announced plans for a new facility here in Pennsylvania. Last month, Pennsylvania leaders celebrated plans by the world's largest solar manufacturer, German-based Conergy AG, to create a plant here.

◆ The solar and wind industries have proven profitable, despite the lack of federal subsidies. Unfortunately, costs of solar remain high as demand for equipment outpaces supply. Globally, wind is the fastest growing energy form. Its cost is already below electricity from fossil fuels.



◆ Elsewhere, the Weather Channel's weekly program on climate change encourages carbon neutrality. The financial impact of global warming is mentioned numerous times a day on CNBC. In October, a CBS morning program featured a Green Festival at the Washington Convention Center.

◆ On December 1, 2006, in response to climate change, Goldman Sachs became the first global investment bank to use ecosystem criteria. They are investing \$1 billion in renewable energy and efficiency projects. JP Morgan evaluates the impact of carbon risks of loans it makes to polluting industries. It's interesting how the implications of climate change have caught the attention of the financial sector.

◆ The British government hired former Vice President Al Gore (author of *An Inconvenient Truth*) to help them address global

warming. *Time*, *Parade*, and numerous other magazines have featured global warming articles. Even Wal-Mart is putting solar panels on some of its roofs. *How mainstream is that?*

It's out there. People are talking about it. It seems the whole world acknowledges that our planet is warming—except those inside the Washington, D.C., Beltway. To acknowledge global warming would indicate failure of the Empire, as David Korten, in his *The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community*, calls the material-based, corporate-dominated system.

To keep control, those in power have had to lie, cheat, steal, conceal, twist the facts, and even initiate wars.

—Why does the entire fossil fuel industry continue to get tax subsidies? *It's related to their financial support of legislators.* Drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is off the table again. So why is off-shore drilling now the focus instead of energy-efficiency and conservation? *Again, it's money politics speaking!*

—Why does our food travel an average 2,000 miles to our tables? And why are petroleum-based fertilizers and pesticides added to crops? *Because they benefit corporations, not consumers!*

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—Why have the Clean Air and Clean Water acts been under attack? *Whose profits do they threaten?*

—Consider how energy-efficient cars and buildings would be now if technology were applied to them in the same way it has been to computers. What kept that from happening? A cartoon from 20 years ago explained why solar and wind power couldn't work: *Because no one could send a monthly bill for it!*

THE U.S. has “the best democracy money can buy.” The presidential elections of 2000 and 2004 illustrate that. But let's face it—the Empire does not work anymore! Every biological system on Earth is collapsing, and most social systems are floundering.

The current system feeds corporate profit, provoking military buildup, which in turn feeds corporate profit. Remember Halliburton's no-bid contracts for services in Iraq?

This system isn't concerned about life after all the cheap fossil fuels are burned. It has taken us away from our roots, away from our connection to Earth.

Our leaders have chosen not to really lead us, so now people are choosing to lead. This is the heart of the current shift that many of us are seeing. *We are saying no to many injustices and paving a new path.*

◆ Citizens are being transformed into activists, standing up for our beliefs. Countless organizations are impacting the political process by mobilizing e-mail communication to legislators.

◆ Voter turnout this year was higher than recent years. Pennsylvania retired a strong Bush supporter from the U.S. Senate. Three weeks after the general election, when all the absentee and provisional ballots were counted in

Chester County, the last of Pennsylvania's state house seats was won by *23 votes*. That seat gave Democrats the majority for the first time in 12 years. *Who thinks their vote doesn't count?*

◆ People are realizing their quality of life has decreased, leaving less time for things that really

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matter. The trend has been to work harder to afford more things. Many are deeper in debt. *Yet, some are making different choices.*

◆ Demand has grown for organic food, which makes more efficient use of land and energy than conventional production. Community supported agriculture and farmers markets are flourishing.

◆ Car-maker Toyota has the largest market share with its durable selection including hybrids, while U.S. car manufacturers have laid off workers. Has the loophole exempting SUVs from fuel economy standards really paid off?

◆ The building industry has been assimilating green materials and practices more quickly than any other industry adding to builders' profits nationwide. LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards guide builders. Green renovations to the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) office in Washington were completed in 2005, and the Friends Center of Philadelphia has begun work on a “Quaker green” vegetative roof.

◆ A coalition of college and university presidents recently committed to greening their campuses and teaching future generations about renewable energy. *Investing*

in renewable energy walks the talk.

◆ A recent James Carville poll showed people more concerned about energy independence than either terrorism or the war in Iraq.

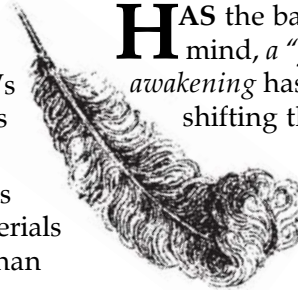
How we spend money speaks our minds. It indicates the direction we want to move. Rather than sit back and be silent, communities have prevented box stores from moving in. A local, living economy creates more jobs than multinational corporations and keeps money at home.

Returning home from the Green Festival in Washington this fall, I saw a sign, “Screw the Caribou, Drill Alaska.” Yet, I had just heard the voices of the Earth Policy Institute, Democracy Now, the Positive Futures Network, Global Exchange, and Co-op America, who spoke of moving away from the Empire where that oil is needed. Every day, more people realize that pursuing every last drop of oil is flawed thinking.

HAS the balance shifted? In my mind, a “feather” of spiritual awakening has already dropped, shifting the balance of our cultural focus from material values to life values.

We are learning to redefine wealth, not in terms of money, but in terms of knowledge and wisdom. We are selecting leaders who put true well-being above profits. We are showing how renewable energy is homeland security. Businesses are adopting the “triple bottom line,” which treats environmental quality and social equity as equal to profitability.

Whether that shift continues away from Empire toward Earth Community depends a lot on our acting in faith that it *will*. As Gandhi said, “*We must be the change we wish to see in the world.*” ◆



The balance of power has changed—Now let's get involved and hold our leaders accountable

by Barbara Williamson
QEW Steering Committee Clerk

ON the first day of the 2006 annual meeting of Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), we talked about Virginia's new senator-elect. As a Virginian, I was excited, but no more excited than other Friends at the annual meeting. Across the U.S. we had changed the balance of power in the Congress to favor an end to the war in Iraq and improve the chances of Congress enacting legislation to protect the environment and reduce America's contribution to global climate change.

Voters and political activists were successful in sending a message to Congress, but we have only begun our work. Now is the time to hold Senators and Representatives accountable. We need to visit our elected officials, write them letters and write letters to our local papers. **We cannot allow the people we elected to forget their campaign promises for a change in the status quo.**

In addition, we can't forget our state elected representatives. No matter where we live, our state is probably facing issues such as energy, air quality, transportation, smart growth and land conservation.

Global warming is a serious threat to our communities, wildlife, natural resources, and the economy. It is clear that we in the U.S. must change the way we meet our energy demands in order to reduce the amount of green-

house gases released into our atmosphere. **In the absence of federal leadership, individual states have begun to lead the way**, moving forward to develop sustainable energy solutions.

Many states have major coal-fired power plants, the oldest of which have remained largely unchanged for half a century. Many more new coal-fired plants have been proposed. Regulations to **require coal-fired power plants to meet modern pollution control standards** are necessary. At a minimum, states should create a



significant public health set-aside for mercury—a percentage of mercury allowances not given to any source. States need to implement clean air agendas that will protect our health, our valuable natural resources, and our long-term economic vitality.

Wind energy is a renewable energy option of great potential in many states. Wind energy projects are increasing in number around the country, in part because of tax incentives and other subsidies provided for wind energy projects in the Energy Policy Act of 2004.

In many parts of the country, states are grappling with **sprawling land use** that spreads new development farther and farther from existing communities and consumes more land than ever before. This type of development is costly to taxpayers and is leading to rapid loss of rural lands; loss of natural, historic, and cultural resources; and a deteriorating quality of life for many.

State officials increasingly acknowledge the need to **reform**

state transportation planning and to better link land use and transportation to reduce the rising costs of transportation and to provide more transportation options. Goals for state transportation systems should include using resources more efficiently by implementing requirements such as focusing on repairing existing transportation systems before spending on new roads.

States are also facing issues such the **health threats to children** of diesel-powered school buses, **wetlands protection**, conflicting interests and rules regarding land-disturbing **forestry practices**, sustainable forest management, and the **protection of free speech** and public participation.

WHAT are the top environmental/conservation issues facing your state?

Public participation in government decision-making is essential to the success of any democracy. Most government environmental/conservation decisions involve delineating rights and responsibilities between users of common natural resources. The best environmental/conservation laws require substantial public participation in all decision-making processes in order to improve the quality of decisions and provide necessary checks and balances.

Most states have statewide organizations such as the Audubon Society, the Sierra Club, and the League of Conservation Voters. In many states, there are organizations unique to that state. Find these organizations and join in their lobbying efforts. Become a member of a local or state citizens board. *Get involved in local politics!* ♦

Changing our relationship to the earth includes what we eat

by Ruah Swennerfelt
QEW General Secretary

FOR the last year I have become more and more aware about my relationship to food—where it comes from, how it is grown or produced, and how it gets to my table. In addition to caring how natural systems, animals, and farm workers are treated, I have been concerned about how much fossil fuel energy is expended and how many pounds of greenhouse gases are released in the process.

But when I read the following quote by Peter Singer in the September 11, 2007 issue of the *Nation*, (which was dedicated to food issues), I really took notice:

Most Americans think the best thing they could do to cut their personal contributions to global warming is to swap their family car for a fuel-efficient hybrid like the Toyota Prius. Gidon Eshel and Pamela Martin of the University of Chicago have calculated that typical meat-eating Americans would reduce their emissions even more if they switched to a vegan diet....

That's because the raising and processing of meat animals, particularly cattle, is very inefficient and resource-intensive, compared to the raising of grains and vegetables, simply in terms of caloric inputs and outputs. In her 1971 book, *Diet for a Small Planet*, Frances Moore Lappé explained that the grains and water fed to meat animals could be used to feed and quench many more people if consumed directly. And

fossil fuels are used to grow the grains and transport irrigation water from underground sources that are being rapidly depleted, such as the Ogallala Aquifer in the U.S. Midwest.

Now, I'm not suggesting that we all switch to vegan diets, but notice the phrase, "typical meat-eating Americans," and you might ask yourself if you fall into this category. Most Americans eat meat at least twice a day, and



meat is central to their evening meal. I am suggesting that we discover the pleasures and health advantages of meatless meal options. If we do include some meat in our diets, we can seek out producers that allow

the animals to naturally graze (look for the term "grass-fed" in the supermarkets) and do not employ the prophylactic use of antibiotics and other artificial measures.

I am also suggesting that we all find ways to minimize the amount of miles it takes to get the food to us. One way that Louis and I have found to minimize that factor is to become "localvores," or people who eat mostly locally-grown and produced food. Our journey into this has given us many unexpected pleasures. We've come to personally know local farmers, and we've met many new people in our greater community who are on the same journey.

Over the past ten years there has been more and more interest in organic foods. But Michael Pollan, in doing research for his

2005 book, *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, discovered that organic isn't always the most ecologically sustainable choice. Many of the corporate organic farms are using large amounts of water and fossil fuels to grow, package, and transport their goods. They are growing monocrops, (one type of crop in many acres) which is not best for the soils. There was a recent *e-coli* outbreak from a large-scale organic spinach farm, traced to contaminated irrigation water. Many food experts are now suggesting that buying locally grown foods may be better in the long range for the future of our planet. It's also possible for organized local consumers to exert more pressure on growers and processors to adopt more environmentally friendly materials and methods.

Writer Wendell Berry suggests that communities should not be exporting food before local needs are met and should not be importing foods that can be readily produced locally. There are many approaches to changing our relationship with food. If you live in the city and can't grow your own, there are often plenty of farmers markets. Also many conventional supermarkets are attempting to provide local and organic foods. If your market isn't offering this, why not talk with the manager? If you have a small patch of land you can grow some greens, tomatoes, and scallions. Even if all you have is a balcony that gets some sun, you can grow tomatoes and lettuce in planters. I have found there is a spiritual side to growing my food. I feel closer to the land where I live and am in constant awe of the ability of that little seed to produce a plant.

But even if we don't have the time or means to grow some of our own food, we can all make

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food choices that are healthy for people and the planet. It's about becoming informed and then informing others of the impact of our food choices. It's about creating relationships and strengthening bonds between consumers and producers. And above all, it's about remembering that food is a great gift to be cherished and appreciated.

Many excellent books, articles, and documentaries have been pointing to the concerns of what we eat. I've listed a few books below:

Eat Here: Reclaiming Homegrown Pleasures in a Global Supermarket, Brian Halweil, World Watch, 2004.

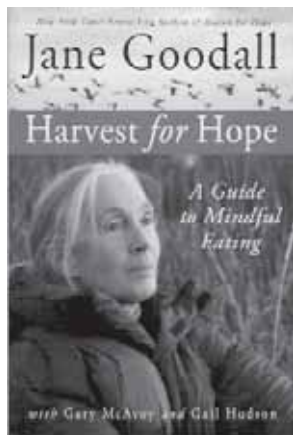
"This is a book about why eating local—securing your food from nearby farms and shops rather than distant agribusinesses—is better for your health, for farmers, and for the planet." These are Halweil's opening words in the preface. This book has been referenced by so many others writing about food issues because it is so thorough and engaging.

Full Moon Feast: Food and the Hunger for Connection, Jessica Prentice, Chelsea Green, 2006.

Jessica Prentice has identified the 13 full moons that occur during the year, calling them by indigenous names from around the world. In each chapter she has engaging essays about foods that are plentiful and eaten at that time of year. I especially appreciated her recipes at the end of the chapters. I can't wait to try the roasted root vegetables! It's not always easy being a localvore living in northern Vermont, and I'm always looking for ways to use the summer's

bounty in January. Louis dries apples in front of our woodstove and we home-can and freeze a lot. But how do you make the turnips and rutabagas really tasty? I once made a rutabaga pie for a Meeting potluck and after one taste most people left the rest on their plates!

Harvest for Hope: A Guide to Mindful Eating, Jane Goodall, Warner Books, 2005.



Having read Jane Goodall's *Reason for Hope* last year, I was looking forward to her newest book. If you are at Square One about our food system and the issues worldwide, then this is a great book for you. Goodall carefully covers all the nutrition facts about food, as well as the way farm

animals are treated up through slaughter. It's not surprising that she concludes that being a vegetarian is the most caring diet to choose, but she suggests that if you are not a vegetarian, you should only eat meat you know has been humanely cared for.

Lunch Lessons: Changing the Way We Feed Our Children, Ann Cooper and Lisa M. Holmes, Harper Collins, 2006.

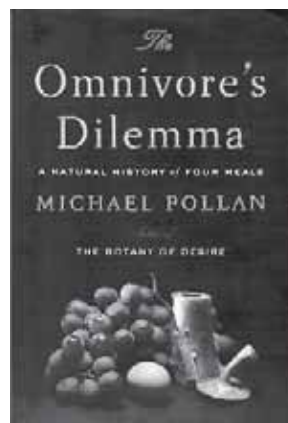
Ann Cooper was a master chef at the Putney Inn in Vermont. When she responded to an invitation to run a school lunch program in New York, it changed her life. She now is in charge of the food program for Berkeley, Calif., City Schools, which has 10,000 students! Her success is bringing locally produced, healthy foods into the schools. The book is filled with interesting facts about health and

nutrition for children and includes many wonderful recipes. So it's part cook-book and part primer.

Much Depends on Dinner: The Extraordinary History and Mythology, Allure and Obsessions, Perils and Taboos, of an Ordinary Meal, Margaret Visser, Grove Press, 1986.

Whew, just getting through that title is enough to peak your interest, eh? Well, this book is very similar to *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, but written 20 years earlier! Visser divides her topics into ingredients of a dinner. The chapters are: Corn, Salt, Butter, Chicken, Rice, Lettuce, Olive Oil, Lemon Juice, and Ice Cream. I appreciated her research and interesting presentation of each topic.

The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals, Michael Pollan, Penguin Press, 2006.



If you only have time to read one book about current food issues, this is the one to read. Michael Pollan is a great writer, funny, poignant, honest, and earnest. He takes us on his own exploration of the United States' food system and food policies. He travels to large and small farms,

some organic and some not. He purchases a calf directly from a rancher in South Dakota and then visits the calf in a feedlot in Kansas. He interviews farmers, ranchers, food processors, and consumers to reach some amazing insights and conclusions. I couldn't put the book down. It was as though I were reading an intriguing novel. I can't give away the ending. You must read it for yourself! *Warning:* Your relationship to what you eat may be changed forever.

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U.S., Canada, and others deny indigenous rights worldwide

by Mary Gilbert

QEW Steering Committee member

THIS is not the article I planned to write. I expected to be telling you about the achievement of Indigenous Peoples in developing from small, scattered, isolated groups to a strong, interconnected network that can speak with one voice on issues affecting them, and their success at the UN in having their rights declared. Now I can only tell part of that story.

On November 28, 2006, a decades-long effort to formally establish the rights of the world's indigenous peoples by means of a UN Declaration was defeated, perhaps for all time. The United States, Canada, Australia, and a few other nation states prevented the Declaration from being sent to the General Assembly for adoption, by means of a procedural loophole.

In the Third Committee, the

body that would have to vote on the Declaration before it went to the GA, there were more than enough votes in favor of the Declaration to have it pass. However, Namibia was maneuvered by the U.S. and its friends into putting forward a "no action" resolution, which procedurally had to be voted on before the Declaration itself could be considered. The African nations have a "unity" agreement to vote in a bloc, and they followed Namibia's lead. Other nations that had planned to vote for the Declaration abstained, the "no action" resolution passed, and the Declaration never even came up for a vote. Technically, the vote has been postponed, but people close to the negotiations believe the Declaration has been done in.



Indigenous peoples around the world are feeling betrayed and bitter. Many NGOs, including Amnesty International and the Canadian Friends Service Committee, have issued statements censuring what happened in the Third Committee.

Background

For decades, outside the limited spotlight of the major media, Indigenous groups have been collaborating and finding common cause. On July 28, 2000, after years of work, a Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII) was established at the UN. It was a triumph. They held their first

session in May of 2002.

Although the PFII doesn't have a vote in UN proceedings, they do have a voice. Their mandate is to "discuss indigenous issues ... relating to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights," through ECOSOC, by "provid(ing) expert advice and recommendations on indigenous issues to the UN system..." You can find more information about the PFII and how it is composed, including bios of appointees, at www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/members.html.

The Declaration discussed above was over 20 years in the making and was elaborated with full and democratic participation of all parties concerned. The Declaration claimed no new rights; it just underlined specifically that Indigenous Peoples are entitled to the same respect and fairness as everyone else.

This year a draft was finally brought to the Human Rights

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Websites

<www.eatlocalot.org> This is the website of my community's eat-local program. It offers a glimpse into what would be possible in your area. It's loaded with great suggestions, recipes, and comments from individuals. You'll see that we're having a January "challenge" and folks are encouraged to pledge to eat local for one week. Last summer we pledged a month! That's how different things get here in the north country.

<www.organicconsumers.org> This website campaigns for food safety, organic agriculture, fair trade, and sustainability. There are many fine articles and lots of information for food activists.

Videos

Beyond Organic, Bullfrog Films, 2000, 33 min. This is the story of a farm surviving against all the odds of rampant development in northern California. Michael Ableman has a vision of a diversified farm, serving the community. He not only survives, but becomes a cornerstone of the neighborhood.

The True Cost of Food, Sierra Club, 2004, 15 min. This animation is packed with revelations and funny at the same time. It's about a young mother shopping for her family's dinner who is shocked to learn where her family's food comes from. In the end she learns a new approach to eating that is healthier for people and the land. ❖

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Council in Geneva, whose recommendation was needed before it could be brought to the UN as a whole. In Geneva, Canada, previously a leader in drafting the document but now under a new administration with a different point of view, opposed the draft. Canada was encouraged in this by the U.S. and Australia (countries not on the Council).

After a major struggle, the Council approved the draft Declaration on June 29, 2006. It came before the Third Committee this fall and would have gone straight to the General Assembly, where approval was expected—if a vote had been permitted.

The importance of the Declaration and the voice of Indigenous Peoples

The Declaration is an aspirational human rights instrument, not a binding document, but such Declarations have great value. They establish a framework for resolving issues and achieving common objectives. The Declaration on the Rights of Children is an example. It is referred to frequently and held up as an agreed goal for all countries, which strengthens the international human rights system as a whole.

The Indigenous Peoples' voice at the UN is often the only one that speaks what my heart wants to hear. I consistently find them forthright and in true harmony with the concerns of QEW. They are not afraid to mention the Spirit, even in the halls of the UN, and they profess unity with nature at every turn. Please judge for yourself. Here is a statement that Tom Goldtooth, of the Indigenous Environmental Network/International Indian Treaty Council, and Joji Carino, of the Tebtebba Foundation (based in the Philippines) made last May:

Bellingham (Wash.) Friends Meeting approves sustainability Minute

BEING AWARE of the very serious threats to our planet and to human lives, we Friends of Bellingham Meeting hereby affirm the Sustainability Minute as a guide for living with more conscious awareness of the needs of Earth and its life forms, both present and future.

We rejoice in the marvelous intricacies of the fragile web of life, and recognize humans as only one strand within that web. We feel the importance and right to life of all beings in the natural world, seeing them as expressions of the Divine Spirit. We strive to be aware that our human actions have far-reaching effects for good and bad through space and time.

Knowing now that we were not born to dominate the Earth or to use its resources to enrich ourselves at the expense of other forms of life and of future generations, we humbly seek to live in partnership with all Earth beings. Earth sustains and nourishes us, yet we have done it great harm

through physical despoliation, extinction of species, and global warming.

Our Earth community is at a critical juncture. Friends must implement our Testimony of Peace not only among humans but with all life forms. We need to express our Testimony of Simplicity more constantly and effectively.

We know that the world's resources are not shared equitably, nor are the accumulations of toxic substances, which is not in accord with our Testimony of Equality. If we ignore the effects of our behavior on the rest of Creation, we are not living our Testimony of Integrity.

We acknowledge that we must learn to live sustainably, not using Earth's resources faster than they can be replaced, or producing waste faster than Earth can absorb and recycle it. We seek the guidance of the Light in order to live so that all living beings, both present and future, may flourish. ❖

—Approved 11th Month, 2006

Indigenous Peoples are here representing the spirit, hearts and minds of many not speaking here. Our extended family includes our Mother Earth, Father Sky, and our brothers and sisters—the animal, fish, bird and plant life. We all bear the impacts of unsustainable economic and energy growth and obscene corporate greed. We have accepted the responsibility designated by our prophecies to tell the world that we must live in peace and harmony and ensure balance with the sacredness of our Mother Earth and Father Sky. A growing body of Western scientific evidence now confirms what indigenous peoples have expressed for a long time: life as we know it is in danger.

THE Indigenous Peoples at the UN are speaking for themselves and for our Earth, and they know Friends to be their allies.

When he got back from Geneva last summer, Tom Goldtooth sent me a postcard picturing a statue near the UN of a man beating a sword into a plowshare. Tom wrote that during the struggle for the draft Declaration at the Human Rights Council sessions, he thought of the long-time Quaker witness for truth, equality, and peace, and he was grateful for our steadfastness.

And I am grateful for his. ❖

Resources for using less energy and living in green efficient homes

by Noel Pavlovic

QEW Sustainability:

Faith & Action Committee

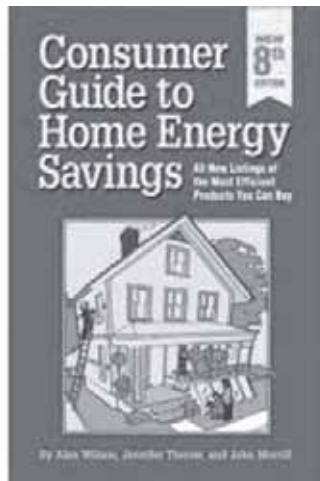
As an ecologist for the U.S. Geological Survey, I am constantly in mind of my physical, emotional, and spiritual connection to living beings and ecosystems. Aldo Leopold spoke to my condition when he wrote,

One of the penalties of an ecological education is that one lives alone in a world of wounds. Much of the damage inflicted on land is quite invisible to laymen. An ecologist must either harden his shell and make believe that the consequences of science are none of his business, or he must be the doctor who sees the marks of death in a community that believes itself well and does not want to be told otherwise.

Nevertheless, I struggle daily with how to shed material encumbrances, live with less dependence on industrial energy production, and foster the voiceless wild creatures and their homes. One place to start is in the home. *We have had compact fluorescent bulbs throughout the house for over 10 years. Another step was to rid our bedroom of clutter; it has been a spiritual blessing to have one place with greater simplicity than the rest of the house.*

Another step is to try to be as energy-efficient as possible. *Recently we were able to replace our hand-me-down avocado green fridge (you know the 70s) with a modern efficient one.*

I want to do more, yet suffer from inertia, lack of time, support, doubt (*can I do this stuff?*), and money (now that my son is in college). The industrial Northwest Indiana may be the last place that will embrace green living and construction, despite the presence of long-standing environmental organizations focused on protecting and preserving the unique glacial and dune landscapes. The county just built a large visitor center less than a mile from our house that lacks green technology and features. *I fear being an activist. Please hold me in the Light.*



I fear being an activist. Please hold me in the Light.

In my searchings, I have found a few encouraging and useful resources. *The Consumer's Guide to Home Energy Savings* by Alex Wilson, Jennifer Thorne, and John Morrill, published by the American

Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (Eighth edition, 2003, 247pp), is a great resource to get a homeowner started to reduce energy use. It covers heating, cooling, windows, appliances, and much more. It explains the important principles that are relevant to selecting appliances, windows, and other home amenities. It has information about appliances that may be dated but nevertheless can help the shopper. *I now know what to look for to replace my single-pane 1950s windows.*

The next book is *Green Remodeling: Changing the World One Room at a Time* by David Johnston and Kim Master, pub-

lished by New Society Publishers in 2004 (379pp). This book is a nice guide to remodeling your home from design, finding an architect if necessary, and finding contractors that are willing to work with recycled products and alternative home design. This is not straw-bale technology, but more mainstream in approach. They discuss the use of recycled building materials as well. (*Oh could northwest Indiana be as progressive as Boulder, Colorado?*) The authors discuss the design features for each room of the house to help you plan and design your energy-efficient and Earth-friendly kitchen, bathroom, study, and more. Checklists for each room project and text boxes with tips aid you in your planning. *I need to read this one again.*

The third book is titled *Green Building Products: The Greenspec Guide to Residential Building Materials* by Alex Wilson and Mark Piepkorn, published by—you guessed it—New Society Publishers in 2005 (306pp). This is a guide to sources of green building materials that can start you on the search for green products for your home. The book does not rate the products but discusses their features and lists the company name, address, phone numbers, and e-mail address. It will be up to you to evaluate and choose products. *I must make time for this research!*

OF COURSE there are lots of other books to help you prevent global warming and save money at the same time that have good ideas, but the three here can help get you started in becoming more energy-efficient. As my father always says, *"Rome was not built in a day,"* so be kind to yourself and pursue your leadings. It is okay if change is incremental. But if you have a revolutionary epiphany then go for it. These resources can help you! ❖

We can help the earth by helping Friends to limit their family size

by **Richard Grossman, M.D.,**
of the QEW Sustainability:
Faith & Action committee

QEW recently established a “Men For Men” (M4M) fund to assist Quaker men who want a vasectomy to limit their family size. The need for this can be summed up in personal terms:

“Hannah is to be an only child. Sarah and I love being parents, but don’t think that we have the financial resources to have another child. We spend a lot of time with Hannah, and we hope that she will get a good education. We are lucky enough to live in a city with a Friends school; our desire is for her to go there when she is old enough.

“Sarah and I realize that the average person in the U.S. uses as many of the planet’s resources as a dozen people in India. Although our family lives a simpler life than most, we still consume a lot of the world’s resources—perhaps more than our share. We’ve read that we humans have already overshot the earth’s ability to sustain us by 20 percent!

“In his book, Maybe One, Bill McKibben deals with the process that he and his wife went through to decide on their family size. Zero children was an option they considered, since they are so concerned about environmental issues. They decided to have one, however, and the book takes a careful look at the mental health of only children. The common perception is that only kids grow up spoiled and neurotic, but McKibben reassures us that this is not so. In fact, only children are generally well-adjusted and high achievers.

“Sarah has taken care of the family planning since we were married. Now it is time for me to take the responsibility for limiting our family size. Vasectomy is the way we have chosen, but unfortunately we don’t know how to pay for it.”

Hannah, Sarah, and this father-of-one are fictitious, but they illustrate a problem that I hear frequently: Many families cannot afford health insurance, and many who do have limited coverage still cannot afford surgery to end their fertility. Some have problems with birth control pills and other temporary means of contraception and end up taking chances. Indeed, *half of all pregnancies in the United States are unplanned.*

In the past we have focused on the personal dimension of having unplanned children. When unwanted parenthood keeps people from advancing educationally or economically, they often become child-abusers, and their children are more likely to commit crimes. Each new child also represents increased demands on shared resources of the world at large.

Human population growth is not just a personal matter; it is also a *moral* question. By our overconsumption and large numbers, our species is defacing a jewel of Creation. Worldwide, we are displacing other species and threatening them with extinction.

In some places, such as Rwanda, overcrowding and inadequate food have resulted in war and genocide. At the time that hostilities broke out in the 1990s,

the average Rwandan woman had *eight* children. It is likely the bloodshed could have been prevented by smaller family size.

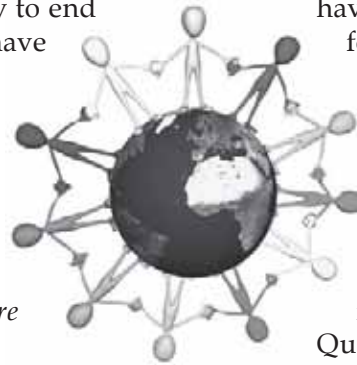
When Quaker Earthcare Witness was formed 20 years ago, it expanded the traditional testimony of conscientious objection to war, to include “*conscientious protection of our planet,*” in recognition that historic Quaker concerns for peace and justice cannot be separated from ongoing deterioration of our planet. This in turn cannot be separated from our individual and corporate responsibility to help stabilize human population.

We suspect that there are not many Quaker men who don’t have the resources to pay for a vasectomy if they desired to limit their fertility. But we feel that even one unplanned pregnancy is one too many if we could help prevent it. The M4M fund will start with Quaker men (including Meeting attenders). Later the fund will be made available to any man who desires a vasectomy but cannot afford it.

M4M will pay a stipend of \$350 towards a vasectomy. The recipient must make arrangements with the surgeon of his choice. There is a simple form to fill out, and a letter from QEW to the surgeon explaining M4M. We hope that later on the recipient will be able to reimburse the fund so that others can benefit from it.

Someone who might be interested in receiving a stipend, or who wants more information on M4M, should contact the QEW office. The forms are also available on the QEW website.

The fund also is open to outside donations. This is an excellent way of helping to assure that every child is a wanted child. ❖



I WAS SO MOVED by the article about the video, *The Story of the Weeping Camel* in the September-October 2005 issue of *BeFriending Creation*.

I appreciate so very much the work of Ruah and Louis in their devotion to Quaker Earthcare awareness. *BeFriending Creation* is a superb, searching, challenging, mournful, and celebratory publication, nurturing hope—or the potential for hope—with each issue.

Steering Committee Clerk Barbara Williamson's regular articles are most welcome and pondered, and they instigate change.

—Wendy Clarissa Geiger
Jacksonville (Fla.) Friends Meeting

I WENT TO a movie called *Buyer Be Fair*, about coffee and lumber. I copied the first page of the QEW website and took two with me to pass out—next time I will take ten! I realized when I pulled it out what an attractive piece of paper it was and how proud I was to hand it out. So, thanks, it looks absolutely great—very eye-catching.

—Mary Jo Klingel
Ft. Lauderdale (Fla.) Friends Mtg.

OUR MEETING NOW HAS an Ecology Interest Group. A small group (perhaps 7 or 8) have covenanted to meet regularly two times a month, once for a study session and once for an outing to someplace where good stewardship is being practiced (e.g., compost education centre, a park, etc.) and to provide a nucleus for the Meeting, children's education, a learning event, or a spiritually focused event. Lots to do.

We are going to use *Earthcare for Friends* study book, prepared by QEW, as a basis of collected study at least once a month. I am very pleased....

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

MY PARTNER, Daniel Richards, and I are very grateful for the efforts all of you are making to bring about awareness among Friends, that our beloved Earth is being severely impacted by human practices.

We wish we could be more optimistic that Friends' passion for justice and peace would incorporate the drastic shifts necessary individually and corporately to allow us to become leaders in a new approach to human-Earth relationships. However, our personal experiences in attempting to convince Friends that we are all *personally* responsible for ongoing life destruction seem to be of no avail. We have direct, hard-lived experience of human poisoning of all life: We have what is now called "environmental illness." It's also known as "multiple chemical sensitivity" or MCS.

Our state, New Mexico, has a task force on MCS, headed by Ann McCampbell, M.D., who herself has MCS. She has been ill with the poisoning that causes this since 1989, and unable to practice medi-

cine. Daniel and I have supported her efforts, sometimes successful, to halt the poisoning of New Mexico wilderness and forest areas, also, to bring awareness of the increasing severity of the MCS problem.

In 1997 a statewide New Mexico survey showed 17 percent of New Mexico residents responding that they had adverse effects to commercially used artificial chemicals. Some 2 percent of the population is severely affected, ill with MCS. This equaled at that time 30,000 people with MCS in New Mexico alone.

In spite of this, we, as Friends, have had little results in awakening Friends to the first steps they can take to protect themselves, people already injured, and all of life, which is to *stop using products containing fragrance chemicals*.

We cannot meet with Quakers anywhere, including QEW events, because of fragrance usage. Is this right, just, and in line with your intentions?

Alicia Adams
Miembres, N.M.

Kenyan Quaker seeks relationship with QEW

Dear friends,

I am interested to be a member of the Earth movement. I am a committed Quaker from Malava Yearly Meeting of Friends, Kenya. I am a college tutor teaching tourism management course in the business department. I am interested in becoming a member. Please advise.

—Koki <jairuskoki@yahoo.com>

Dear Koki,

Thank you for your interest in Quaker Earthcare Witness. I serve as General Secretary for QEW. We publish a bi-monthly newsletter, *BeFriending Creation* which we can send to you each issue or we can send you an email to let you know that the newsletter can be read on line. We would be happy to share it with you either way. This would be a first step toward working with us.

Also, you can use our website as a resource. Let us know what would be helpful for you.

There are other Quakers in Kenya who receive the paper version of the newsletter. It's a good way to share the information with others in your Meeting.

—For the Earth, Ruah Swennerfelt

Quaker Earthcare Witness Order Form

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Address

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Country

E-mail

Phone

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Yearly Mtg

Interests

Please check the appropriate boxes

- 1-year support for Quaker Earthcare Witness
(includes subscription to **BeFriending Creation**)
- \$500/US \$100/US \$50/US (avg) \$35/US Other \$ ___/US

Make checks payable to **Quaker Earthcare Witness**. Send with this form to
Quaker Earthcare Witness, 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 QEW support. Forward this form to QEW to let us know that you have chosen to contribute through CYM.

Call of the Trees by Dorothy Maclean

The Lorian Association, 2006, ISBN 0-936878-13-4

ACCLAIMED Scottish visionary and author Dorothy Maclean wrote *Call of the Trees* based on her intuitive connection with the nature intelligences of trees. Co-founder of the famous Findhorn Foundation and community, she has spent untold hours sitting in meditation, listening.

Maclean's book, printed with stunning photographs of many of the trees, recounts the communications that she has received from the nature spirits, or devas, that over-light and guide the forests that are guardians of our planet. Each kind of tree has its own deva, and not surprisingly, they have messages for us humans walking not so gently upon the earth.

Their messages are ones that express their gratitude for life, their interconnectedness with all that is, the ways that stillness and movement pulse throughout the world, and their prayers that humanity listens to their words of respect for living in balance.

From the Cedar Deva:

Feel our steady love, part of the land and yet returning to the land. We are separate and we are not separate, and we glory in both aspects. We send forth as much love as we can—our life energy—into the sky above and deep into the earth, and we open to whatever comes. The cars? They fly by, we stay and dream, timelessly. We welcome your love energy and wish you well in spreading it wherever you go. Take a part of our strength with you into a weak and dispirited world.

We believe that *Call of the Trees* is a fundamental book for Quakers to read. Dorothy Maclean has gifted us with an opportunity to hear what the very trees around us have to share. They tell of their Love, Unity and Connectedness; they invite us to join with them in stillness. Breathe in this book and look around you with new eyes.

To order *Call of the Trees*, go to web site <www.callofthetrees.com>.

—Jim and Jennifer Vyhnak
South Starksboro (Vt.) Friends Mtg.

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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January-February 2007

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- ✓ *Using less energy and living in green, efficient homes.* 8
- ✓ *We can help the earth by helping Friends to limit family size.* 9

Resources for a safer household for your family

YOU MAY OR MAY NOT BE AWARE of the hazards of PVC (Polyvinyl chloride), but in response to PVC's toxic threats, governments all around the world (except our own federal one) have passed sweeping policies to phase out PVC and switch to safer, healthier consumer products.

During the phase-out, you can protect yourself and your family by choosing safer alternatives available today (and give healthier gifts). To learn how, go to: www.besafenet.com/pvc/safe.htm.

Hint: Products marked with #3 or V are to be avoided. Useful advice can also be found in the book, *Safer for Your Baby*, by Lynn Ruggeri, PhD, and Laura Costa, PhD:

"Safer plastics include polyethylene (#1, #2, and #4) and polypropylene (#5) These plastics require the use of less toxic additives and are non-chlorinated. Silicone teethers and nipples appear to be safer than latex or rubber ones. Therefore, for these products, the safer options are thought to be silicone or plastics numbered: 1, 2, 4, 5" (These are inside a little triangle on the bottom or on the label).



This book includes much more on how to have a safer household for your family (not just babies), and can be purchased (only \$6) through the Toxics Information Project (TIP) website at: www.toxicsinfo.org/LTL/Sales3.htm.

Another way to have a healthier holiday is to learn about safer personal-care and cosmetic choices. See info on the TIP website at: www.toxicsinfo.org/TIPS_personal.htm.

If you are interested in more on the environmental and health effects of PVC, and/or want to urge our own government and businesses to further the switch to safer options, see: PVC: The Poison Plastic: The Campaign for Safe, Healthy Consumer Products at <http://www.besafenet.com/pvc/about.htm>.

Contact me if you wish to discuss this or have questions I may be able to help answer.

—Liberty Goodwin, Director
Toxics Information Project

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