



BeFriending Creation

Newsletter of Quaker Earthcare Witness

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Earthcare means getting to know our 'larger self'

by Fran Palmeri
Sarasota (Fla.) Friends Meeting

*...the earth is our larger self,
in whom we live and move
and have our being.*

—Angela Manno

I'VE known this since early childhood, when I gardened with my grandmother. In spring we planted tiny seeds in the warm, brown earth and watched green shoots appear—a kind of miracle. I was growing taller and so were the plants. We seemed to be one and the same.

Realizing this connection to our "larger self" is vital if we want to preserve this beautiful earthly home of ours. Unknowingly, I began doing this several years ago, photographing in Oscar Scherer State Park near my home in southwest Florida. Glorious vistas, huge ancient Live Oaks, sunsets, and the more glamorous residents: Florida Scrub Jays and Gopher Tortoises attracted me first. Then it was insects, fungi, mushrooms, moss, algae, animal tracks, spider webs, and small and large burrows on the sandy trails that drew my attention. At night, I'd download photos to my computer and identify them from reference books and websites.

I started volunteering at the state park and sent articles and photographs to local papers. I made friends at the state park. One of them, Laurel Schiller, became an

invaluable mentor and friend.

As I became invested in the state park I wondered about the stark differences of the landscapes inside and outside the gates. I'd accepted unthinkingly the narrow construct that certain animals like



Fran Palmeri

**"Ask not for whom the bell tolls..."
—Endangered Florida Scrub Jay**

Florida Scrub Jays belonged in the 1,382 wild acres of the state park while humanity outside the gates spread out on asphalt and turf in ever widening circles, eradicating natural habitats. How artificial the boundaries soon seemed!

I started looking at local ecosystems. Reading Florida history, I learned how people who have moved here over the past four centuries have drastically altered the land. They cleared the land, lot line to lot line. They planted cash crops or built their dream houses

with lawns and plantings of mostly imported species, which drove out native plants and animals

On a bigger scale, they re-channeled rivers (the Kissimmee), dug canals, tore up sacred shell mounds of native peoples to build roads, dammed Lake Okeechobee, and cut down old-growth cypress trees to sell as mulch. The list goes on and on. If it weren't for the persistent voice of Margery Stoneham Douglas (who said her Quaker ancestors inspired her) sounding the alarm, we would have lost forever that beautiful "river of grass," the Everglades.

The destruction continues. Every acre that's cleared hastens extinction of native species. Ninety percent of the Scrub, the most endangered ecosystem in Florida, is gone. Loss of habitat equals loss of species. According to researchers at the Archbold Biological Research Station in Lake Placid, Florida, we lose one species a day. The existence of the Florida Scrub Jays is tenuous. If we don't do something in the next five years in Sarasota County, says John Fitzpatrick, Director of the Ornithological Laboratory at Cornell University, they'll be gone from here by mid-century. But we're not talking just birds here. We're talking ecosystems. We are talking the planet. We're talking our "larger self."

What can we, as Friends and humans, do? Start with asking our-

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>> **Larger self**, from page 1
selves these questions:

What's in my yard? Lawn? Shrubs? Flowers? Native? Non-native? What can I do to improve matters? Make an assessment. If you're heavy on lawn, consider taking out it out, bit-by-bit, and planting native species. Start small in the back. Work from the edges of the property in.

What's under the sink? Pesticides? Think about where they end up. Toss out the can of Raid. If you don't like a bug in your house, remove it or squash it. For larger problems you can find less poisonous natural alternatives on the Internet or in books than you would get from a pest control service.

What ecosystem do I live in? What was here? What's here now? State departments of natural resources and local universities have this information. What plant species are native to my area? Is there a native plant society or a native plant nursery?

How can I preserve, conserve, and restore natural ecosystems in my area? Can we integrate the natural world with the artificial? This is already being done in many places. A good example is Sirius, an intentional community near Amherst, Massachusetts, where Quaker friends of mine live.

How can I educate myself and others? Read, join with others, take a master naturalist or master gardening class, volunteer at schools or with Earth-based organizations. Our Earthcare Committee at Sarasota Monthly Meeting is getting together with other churches to see what we can do collectively. From my work at the state park, I've learned about the huge negative impact on natural resources by

invasive exotic plants and animals. Feral cats are one of the leading causes of bird extinction. Your kids or grandkids' school might need volunteers to lead field trips and other activities in the science area.

WE live on a planet of magnificent diversity and beauty. Dr. Fred Santana, Sarasota County's "bug man," says he just has to step outside his office to see something new to photograph.

According to an inventory done some years ago by Florida's Department of Natural Resources, the state has 69 natural communities.

When I get discouraged, two people sustain me. One is William Bartram, the gentle Quaker botanist who traveled in Florida in the 1770s. In his *Travels* he rhapsodized about the plant and animal life, the gorgeous landscapes, and the native peoples. (He even in-

spired Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who wrote the poem "Kublai Khan" after reading Bartram's book.) "What a beautiful display of vegetation is before me! ...seemingly unlimited in extent and variety....", he wrote. This summer I saw it for myself—a lush hardwood hammock of oaks, Sweet Gum, Buttonwood, and huge Sabal Palms, beside the spring of the brilliant sapphire blue that so enraptured Bartram.

The other is Archie Carr, a Florida naturalist, professor, writer, and conservationist. His love—passion—for these landscapes shines through in his essays. Optimistic about restoration, he wrote in an essay on the Suwannee River, "The biological landscape is to a degree self-healing.... The springs have been brutalized, but even they could be restored with careful tending."

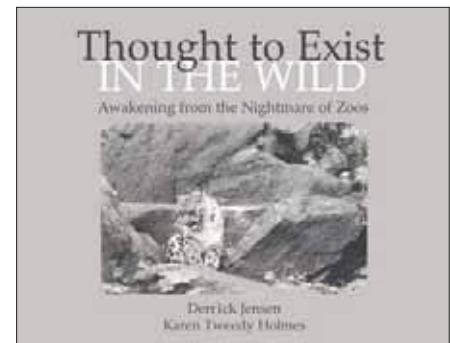
Let us tend to our larger selves, Friends! It is never too late! ❖

We're not talking just birds here. We're talking ecosystems. We are talking the planet.

Modern zoos—sanctuaries or spectacles?

LAST YEAR I told of our visit to the National Zoo in Washington, D.C., to see Giant Pandas and other "charismatic magafauna." My article depicted zoos as sanctuaries, where the general public can be educated about endangered species and potentially be moved to support habit preservation and restoration programs.

However, a new book, *Thought to Exist in the Wild*, by Derrick Jensen and Karen Tweedy-Holmes (No Voice Unheard, Santa Cruz, Calif., 2007), challenges this common view by documenting the immense physical and mental suffering borne by captive animals and exposing the distorted view of humans' relationship to the natural world that even the most benign and enlightened zoos tend to promote.



Its many poignant photographs of dispirited animals in confinement are offered as a mirror to a culture that is ignorantly and arrogantly destroying the beautiful and fragile community of life. "In part this is because...we experience the world according to ... the way we have been taught to perceive it," the authors say. "If we are to have any chance of survival we need to change how we perceive the world."—LC

Smart watering and cooling fight global warming

by **Barbara Williamson**
QEW Steering Committee Clerk

FOLLOWING my last article on saving water I received a note from F/friend Stan Becker of Baltimore, Md. He reminded me that the get-wet, turn-off-water, soap-up-and-rinse-off technique of showering saves lots of water. In some countries it's a necessity and may be common practice for all of us if we don't learn to protect our water resources.

Stan also wanted to remind us that many of us let the water run too long while waiting for the water to get warm. Collect that water while you are waiting for the warm water to reach the tap, and make sure you aren't waiting too long—probably less than a minute. And don't turn on the cold water on until you have hot water to mix with the cold.

Before moving on to another topic I would like to mention water and gardening. You can use less water by:

- ✓ Using finely ground mulch around your plants, bushes and trees.
- ✓ Designing landscapes that require little water.
- ✓ Planting native plants and grasses.
- ✓ Grouping plants together by the amount of water they need.
- ✓ Using plants that need water at the bottom of slopes.
- ✓ Planting your lawn to take advantage of runoff from your gutters (you can also install a water barrel).
- ✓ Using grass sparingly for walking and playing, and planting a lush ground cover for decoration.

For healthier grass that doesn't use much water, you should:

1. Mow with a sharp blade.
2. Mow only when the lawn is dry.
3. Cut your grass by an inch when it is three inches tall.
4. Change the mowing direction each time you mow.
5. Leave your one-inch grass clippings on your lawn instead of raking and bagging. The clippings will decompose quickly and return precious nutrients to your lawn and return water to the ground (grass clippings are 75 to 85 percent water).



Why have I written so much about water? Until the water we use for drinking, cooking, cleaning, and landscaping is transported and purified using only renewable energy

sources, every drop that we use or drink is contributing to global warming.

When you read this, summer will be almost over, but the day I was writing this it was in the upper 90s and very humid. Home heating and cooling carry high prices—on electric and fuel bills, and the environment.

As you might expect, room air conditioners are less expensive than central systems because they cool only the rooms in which they are located. However, central air conditioning is more efficient than multiple room air conditioners if you're trying to cool an entire house.

Some of the ways to save money and be more energy-efficient include:

- ✓ Clean or replace air conditioner filters at least once a month and more frequently in dusty environments, and
- ✓ If you have room air conditioners, make sure the seals between the air conditioner and the window frame are air-tight. Check weekly to make sure that drain channels are unclogged, and remove or cover the air conditioners during the winter.

SHADING your windows during the summer will keep your house considerably cooler and lower your cooling bills, and with new sun-control shades and screens you can keep your view.

Special insulating window shades or curtains can keep warm air in during the winter and prevent outside heat from passing into your home during the summer. Rolling shutters are another popular and economical option for exterior window shading. In the summer, keep your blinds or curtains on east-, south-, or west-facing windows closed to keep the sunshine and heat out (and do the opposite in the winter).

Sun-controlled or solar screens are just like regular window screens except that they're made of tightly woven fiberglass or polyester that has been specially designed to reduce solar heat gain. You can see through them and air can flow through them just as well as through regular screens. Solar screens are available in a variety of sizes and can be easily removed for the winter. You can install them yourself or have a professional do it. Some utilities offer rebates or other incentives to buy them.

—More on home heating soon. ♦

Barbara

Why nuclear power is *not* the solution to global warming

by Michael Rice

THERE is broad scientific agreement that massive species extinction, mass death of humans, and drastic changes in the conditions of “civilized” life will occur unless global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions—principally carbon dioxide—are reduced by 80 percent by mid-century. That means a reduction to *one-fifth* of the current level of carbon emissions. (Adherents to any sense of fairness, of equity of conditions of life with poorer countries, argue that U.S. emissions need to be reduced by 90 percent—to *one tenth* of the current level!) Much of this reduction needs to occur within the next ten years.

Among the worst offenders is the use of coal as fuel to generate electric energy. A prohibition against any *new* coal-fired power plants and timely phase-out of existing coal plants should be near the top of any list of steps to control carbon emissions. This gives rise, however, to a devil’s bargain of replacing coal-fueled electric power production with nuclear, supported even by James Lovelock, the “father of the Gaia Theory.”

Here is why nuclear power is *not* the solution:

✕ First and foremost is the intimate connection between nuclear power and nuclear weapons—and the ultimate disaster of nuclear war. Does civilization want to die by “fire” (nuclear war) or by “water” (flooding and deluge/drought cycles produced by human-induced global climate change)? Or are we ready to “choose life” by making the needed changes in our lifestyles, lest even more drastic changes be forced on us?

If there is no such connection between nuclear power and weapons—then why the fuss about Iran’s pursuit of nuclear power? If there is no connection between weapons and their use, why do not the nuclear powers rule out



even the “first use” of such weapons? How can we hope to pursue a policy of the *abolition of nuclear weapons* while supporting the production of nuclear power?

✕ The only technological fix with any genuine applicability to the carbon emission problem is the intensive use of photovoltaics, wind, and tides. Unlike nuclear power, these technologies are adaptable to less developed countries, and they are the only way to help them develop a modern standard of living without generating a lethal level of carbon dioxide. These technologies lend themselves to decentralized use as well as to use in power grids. There is no technological obstacle to their being placed in use and brought on line as quickly as a new generation of nuclear power plants. Their current “cost disadvantage” relative to nuclear power is an illusion due to a cost analysis that ignores hidden subsidies (more on this later).

✕ Additional reasons to reject nuclear power as a “solution” are safety and waste disposal. An argument was made by a panelist at the recent FGC Gathering that the number of deaths directly attributable to nuclear power plant accidents has been slight as compared to industrial deaths generally and coal mining deaths in particular. Granted. But that is not the issue.

The potential size of a possible disaster is unacceptable, even if the probability is low. Both the severity and the likelihood of nuclear accidents were severely underestimated in the initial projections, and have had to be revised upward repeatedly. A nuclear power plant is an ideal terrorist target, if the hypothetical terrorist

seeks to create maximum havoc. And a militarist state that seeks to maximize its own power advantage over everyone else invites terrorist responses.

✕ The wastes from a nuclear power plant contain relatively short-lived components that must be isolated from human contact for periods up to the normal human lifespan; and they contain other components that must remain iso-

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Michael Rice is a non-resident member of Cambridge Friends Meeting, which he attended during his doctoral studies in Physics at Harvard and his first teaching assignment at Boston University. He returned to Boston 20 years later for legal studies at Northeastern University. He now lives near Albany, N.Y., where he worked as Chief Scientist and Counsel of the state Legislative Commission on Science & Technology.

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lated from any possible human contact for *millions* of years—the life span of the human race! It is argued that the volume of such wastes is small. (But that makes the *concentration* of the long-lived, high level nuclear waste far greater than that of naturally occurring uranium ore.) Who and what are to guard it from geological events—earthquakes, drastic changes in groundwater flows? Who is to warn future generations of their location, their hazard—and in what language?

✕ A calculation of “cost per kilowatt-hour” of nuclear power—and any comparison with that of electric energy fueled by coal, oil, gas, or solar—fails to be meaningful. Aside from direct subsidies to the nuclear power industry, there is an enormous indirect subsidy: the Price-Anderson Act, a federally legislated cap on the liability of nuclear power plant operators for accidental damage they may cause (because “the Peaceful Atom” nevertheless plays a role in national defense). Without that cap, no private utility would have built even a single nuclear power plant. Similarly, the cost of necessary future disposal of nuclear wastes—also incalculable—is not figured into the cost to generate electricity now. (By the same token, a cost analysis of coal-fueled electricity is flawed if it fails to account for the environmental impact of mountaintop removal technology, or of petroleum-fueled electricity that takes no account of the costs of war.)

✕ But my biggest objection to the use of nuclear power as a “solution” to global warming is that it invites the delusion that we can conduct “business as usual” in the age of global climate change. Although we can “reduce our carbon footprint” by such measures as

switching from incandescent bulbs to compact fluorescents, using energy-efficient appliances, fuel-efficient cars—even by fueling power plants by nuclear instead of coal—we delude ourselves that we can maintain our current wasteful life style, and can model a similar wastefulness to developing countries. The shift to more nuclear power simply creates an excuse to keep on wasting.

WE are living beyond our means—beyond the ability of the earth to sustain our lifestyle.

- We are substituting shopping for the true human and community relationships that alone can sustain happiness.

- The average U.S. family living space has increased from under 1,000 square feet to over 2,300 square feet since 1947, even as family size has decreased.

- The average of vehicle-miles driven by Americans has undergone similar increases.

- We squander our resources by military adventurism.

- We participate in and encour-

age the destruction of whole societies and eco-systems by war and by arms production and sales. Even our military maneuvers and training exercises produce excessive GHG emissions. Far from protecting our lives and well-being, our military posture gains us enemies who would rejoice in our undoing.

We could, instead, devote our treasure and our energy to the development of the full potential of every citizen of the U.S.—of every human being on the globe—and to the protection of the earth and all its sensate beings. We would be both safer and happier for it.

(Moses said, in his swan song, “I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live.” Deut. 30:19.)

Note: Since I started to write this essay, I have seen an excellent article by Rebecca Solnit, “Reasons Not to Glow: On Not Jumping Out of the Frying Pan into the Eternal Fires.” It is posted at

www.commondreams.org/archive/2007/07/10/2417/ .

Annual on-line permaculture course announced

ELFIN PERMACULTURE'S 12th Annual Permaculture Design Course Online begins October. 14, 2007, culminating a dozen years of the on-line courses and more than a quarter century of teaching permaculture.

The six-month certificate course consists of three consecutive sections (Introduction and Basic Principles, Appropriate Technologies in Permaculture Design, and Social Permaculture), plus work on a permaculture design that students undertake throughout the cycle in which they are registered. Samples of student design work are included in the course CD.

Registration is limited because of the time required to review and critique individual designs. To enable more students to participate, students may enroll in a fast track, two-cycle track, or a deliberate track, each with different design report deadlines.

To review the course methodology, content, certification requirements, tuition & fees, registration process, scholarship policies, reading list & cost, and assignment schedule, download the course pre-registration package from www.barkingfrogspermaculture.org, or write to Dan and Cynthia Hemenway at Barking Frogs Permaculture Center, P.O. Box 69, Sparr FL 32192-0069 USA.

Pacific YM finds unity on climate action minute

Committee asked to consider drafting a new testimony on Earthcare

AT THE 2007 GATHERING of Pacific Yearly Meeting in July, attenders approved the Minute below on responding to the increasingly urgent climate crisis on our planet. This was the culmination of a year-long discussion process, during which at least 16 Monthly Meetings have discerned and approved their own Minutes on the issue.

Those present at Pacific Yearly Meeting expressed strong support, and in addition the matter was referred to the Discipline Committee to consider drafting of a new testimony on caring for the earth.

—Joe Morris, Clerk
PYM Unity with Nature Committee

THE CARE AND PRESERVATION of the environment, which sustains all life (including all future generations of plants, animals and humankind), is a religious concern. Life is threatened by destruction of the carrying capacity of the earth, by destruction of the gene pool, by destruction of the oxygen factories as well as by the possibility of nuclear holocaust. Thus, we are called upon to fulfill God's covenant with all creation. (Genesis 9:8–17.) We, the Pacific Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, intend to pursue our leading on this question, [to] "Go forth into the world, lecturing, teaching, writing, publishing, and walking humbly with God." ...

—From the founding Minute of the PYM
Unity with Nature Committee in 1985

Responding to the Global Climate Crisis

A Minute proposed by the PYM Unity with Nature Committee

FRIENDS have come to realize that caring for the earth is a true spiritual concern. In the current *Faith and Practice*, we are asked to "live according to principles of right relationship and right action within the larger whole. Be aware of the influence humans have on the health and viability of life on earth."

Throughout the Pacific Yearly Meeting, a growing number of individuals and meetings have taken specific steps to raise awareness and alter behavior in these regards.

We now are facing global climate change, a phenomenon no longer seriously in doubt within the scientific community. As a result of choices we have made, the earth is growing ever hotter, exacerbating weather extremes, habitat destruction, species extinction, and the dislocation of human lives. We recognize that resource scarcity brings greatest risk to the most vulnerable people. It can also aggravate the conditions for war.

These changes, we can no longer escape entirely. Yet some of the harm may be avoided if we act responsibly soon. In the face of these awesome challenges, we turn away from either apathy or despair toward way opening in the Light. We acknowledge the need to awaken to our sacred connection to life on this Earth.

We call for Friends to examine and decrease our individual impacts, where possible, so that Earth's resources are sustained or replenished. Such commitment will likely entail major adjustments in our purchases, diets, transportation, and livelihoods.



WHILE many individual Friends have progressed toward a more sustainable lifestyle, we must now move toward a corporate witness in our meetings, joining with and helping each other and also like-minded groups in our common concerns.

We ask all to stay continually informed about this evolving planetary crisis to discern future actions that will become needed. We appeal to all Friends to make this a standing priority in our families, Meetings, and communities.

We ask Monthly Meetings in the coming year to discuss and discern this minute in terms of their appropriate witness and action and input at the annual gathering of Pacific Yearly Meeting in 2008.

We submit the actions below, ones implemented in various meetings within PYM, to exemplify some possible first steps in creating a sustainable way of life on a healthier planet:

- ◆ Engaging in collective discernment in our meetings to understand and reduce human contribution to climate change, allowing Spirit to work among us.

- ◆ Reducing Meeting-wide, personal greenhouse gases at least 10 percent in the coming year through decreased driving, flying, and home energy use, and using efficient alternatives, for those able to do so.

- ◆ Being a resource, encouraging, and learning from others to reduce our contribution to global warming.

- ◆ Networking among Meetings and other like-minded groups, both religious and secular, to share resources and expertise. ♦

'Peace with Earth' Minute approved at New York YM

THE FOLLOWING "Peace with Earth" Minute was approved at New York YM sessions in July. NYYM's Earthcare Working Group, clerked by Janet Soderberg of 15th Street Meeting in Manhattan, will be forwarding the Minute with a cover letter to all Monthly Meetings in NYYM, asking them to consider and respond to the embedded queries.

NYYM sessions, whose theme this year was Stewardship, were filled with the Spirit and with a deep concern for the earth. One of the morning worship sharing offerings was Earthcare, and so many Friends were drawn to join that they were divided into three groups. We worshipped on and responded to a wonderful selection of quotations.

Our own Ruah Swennerfelt and Louis Cox, as NYYM evening plenary speakers, were inspiring and moving. Their presentation on John Woolman has been enriched and strengthened just since the FGC Gathering.

—Hollister Knowlton
QEW Recording Clerk

'Cosmic Creativity' workshop offered at Mt. Gilead Center

A ONE-DAY WORKSHOP on "Cosmic Creativity" will be offered by the Mt. Gilead Friends Retreat Center in Bloomington, Ind., September 22, 2007.

Writing in the August 2007 Mt. Gilead newsletter, *Jewelweed*, Kelly Carson said she and the other workshop leaders, Janette Shetter, and Deborah Hutchinson, had been inspired by a retreat they had attended recently called, "Earth is a Mystic full of God," presented by Sister Marya Grathwohl OSF.

"Our intent is to provide a time of exploration and reflection centered in the endless diversity and creative energy of God as so magnificently and continually revealed in Earth. The retreat will include group and individual time. A spiral walk will provide an opportunity to meditate on some of the miraculous milestones in Earth's history. Retreatants will have a chance to hike trails on Mt. Gilead, as well as work with art materials.

Contact: <kelly.pat.carson@gmail.com>.
Mt. Gilead Friends Retreat, c/o Christy Campoll,
P.O. Box 312, Bloomington IN 47402. ♦

New York Yearly Meeting's 'Eco-Spirituality & Action' Minute

IN OUR 1660 PEACE DECLARATION, Friends declared, "We utterly deny all outward wars and strife, and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretense whatever: this is our testimony to the whole world." That statement is still true, but its meaning has deepened beyond what those early Quakers would have understood. Can we now commit ourselves to ending humanity's war with the earth?

The Religious Society of Friends has witnessed for peace for almost 350 years. Over that time, our witness has grown and widened; we have worked for the end of war, for the end of the African slave trade, for equality for women, civil rights for African-Americans, and for human rights around the world.

Now we are led to widen our witness again to work for peace between humans and our sacred Earth community. Our culture has considered the earth our property to be exploited, and we have all, knowingly or unknowingly, been complicit in this violent appropriation of world resources. We must now search for the seeds of this war in our possessions and our lives and to work to nurture a new, mu-

tual relationship with the earth in all of our actions. The Spirit is calling us to hold in reverence this miracle that God has given us. If we are connected to our source, our lives are richer and deeper.

We are asking that this Minute be forwarded to all Monthly Meetings and worship groups in New York Yearly Meeting with a "call to action." We suggest that each Monthly Meeting worshipfully address the following queries:

1. *What are God and the earth asking of our Meeting at this point in time?*
2. *How do we respond in ways appropriate to our Meeting, our community, and the wider world?*
3. *How does this response build on previous or ongoing Earthcare work our Meeting has already done?*
4. *What further specific changes are we willing to make in our spiritual practice, in our Meetings and in our individual spiritual lives to reflect a strong witness for the earth?*

It is our hope that this prayerful consideration of our responsibility to the planet that sustains us will generate the actions necessary to bring us into deep harmony with our beloved Earth. ♦



Vegetated roof inaugurates Friends Center's "Quaker gray to Quaker green" renovation project

by Viv Hawkins

A Friend of Friends Center

IN June 2007, Friends Center in Philadelphia celebrated completion of the first Center City Philadelphia vegetative roof, the largest in Philadelphia. It joins Friends Center's solar array. The "green" roof will absorb 100 percent of the water from the majority of storms, cool and insulate the building, extend the life of the roof, and help decrease the urban "heat island" effect. The current photovoltaic cell array, expected to produce 10 kilowatts of electricity per year, can be enlarged to 100 kilowatts as photovoltaic cell cost decreases and electricity rates rise.

These are the first steps in a dramatic "green" building renovation at the Friends Center which houses the American Friends Service Committee's National Office, Friends World Committee Section of the Americas, and Friends Council on Education, among other groups.

The \$12.5 million project, featured in the November-December 2005 issue of *BeFriending Creation*, is envisioned as a distinct ecological witness to the Religious Society of Friends and beyond. Upon completion, Friends Center will be fossil-fuel free by using integrated strategies of geothermal heating and cooling, solar electricity, purchased wind power, and energy efficiency measures like added insulation, open design with improved windows, and use of equipment and practices that reduce consumption.

The "Turning Quaker Gray to Quaker Green" campaign was put into action following a "Day of Discernment" at Friends Center in



FRIENDS CENTER in downtown Philadelphia, with its new photovoltaic array on annex roof at right.

October 2005. At that gathering, representatives of the broad spectrum of Quaker organizations affirmed the Center's call to become a "beacon to Friends, the City and the World" in witnessing that Friends are "concerned that human interaction with nature be responsible, guided by a reverence for life and a sense of splendor of God's

"...Friends are living a witness that makes our words and actions speak with one voice."

continuing creation." (Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, *Faith & Practice*, 1997)

Not only is the building becoming a model of sustainability through this green renovation project, but Friends are making it a showcase for architects, builders, other property owners, and students of all ages to learn about sustainable design that preserves our planet. Local television, radio, and

newspaper coverage has brought policy makers, condominium and apartment high-rise developers, church members, and managers from IKEA to Friends Center to celebrate and learn about green building. Friends groups around the country are taking inspiration and encouragement from the model at Friends center. The project is truly spreading the word that Friends are living a witness that makes our words and actions speak with one voice.

With buildings estimated to account for 40 to 70 percent of energy consumption in the U.S., Friends have seen the opportunity for this project to allow us to "be patterns." The *Philadelphia Inquirer* (July 6, 2007) quotes Pat McBee, the volunteer capital campaign director: "We want to be a model for other property owners and building professionals to come here, kick the tires, learn that these things work, that they're cost-effective, they're beautiful, there's nothing you're really sacrificing, and it's worth doing." In 2004, a sustainable design charrette educated

Friends and non-Friends constituencies about sustainable technologies. *Environmental Building News* wrote that the innovative cross-functional process of the charrette at Friends Center allowed "the project [to go] from barely green to a showcase, standing as a model for other projects." A Kresge Foundation grant funded energy modeling, which tests potential initiatives for efficiency and effectiveness.

In addition to the vegetated roof and solar panels, drilling is planned for November 2007 of up to six deep (1,500 to 2,000 feet)

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standing-column geothermal wells, which will produce up to 40 tons of heat exchange capacity. The first of their kind in Pennsylvania, they are expected to reduce energy for heating and cooling by 39 percent. The Otto Haas Trust recognized this "extraordinary project" and awarded a \$500,000 grant.

Additional measures to protect the earth include the choice to renovate rather than rebuild, recycling construction waste, selecting recycled or rapidly renewable materials whenever possible, and choosing materials with low toxicity. Friends Center has purchased 100-percent renewable electricity since 1998.

Like the green renovation of the Friends Committee on National Legislation building in Washington, D.C., the green renovation of these high-profile Quaker buildings in Philadelphia give Friends a powerful voice in calling ourselves and others to live in harmony with all of Creation.

For more information about Friends Center's "greening," see <www.friendscentercorp.org>. If you would like to help "Turn Quaker Gray to Quaker Green," contact Pat McBee at 215/563-8832 or <pmcbee@friendscentercorp.org>.

Poem from a 2007 FGC Gathering workshop

So many seeds on grasses,
ready to fly I know not where,
filled with potential, ready to
become, evolve, be.

So many fledglings on branches,
ready to fly I know not where,
anxious parents feeding and
urging them away, to become,
evolve, be.

So many feelings inside of me,
ready to fly I know not where,
filled with potential, ready to
become, evolve, be.

—Ruah Swennerfelt

Earthcare events at Gathering nourish hope and community



A FOOD CO-OP run by Gathering participants in the basement of one of the dorms provided tasty, wholesome, and often locally-grown foods. A strong community spirit developed as these Friends swapped recipes, shared life stories, and plotted ways to introduce more sustainably produced foods at future Gatherings.

A WORKSHOP called "Walking into Wholeness" included a hike to the falls for which River Falls was named, where everyone paused in awed silence. Other outings included a nearby short-grass prairie. Each session ended in worship sharing and readings of quotations and poems on the wonders of nature.



A NEW "GREEN DESIGN" University center at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls campus contains materials recycled from the old center while using only a fraction of the energy the previous structure required for cooling and heating. It also uses rain water collected from the roof for flushing toilets.

THE EARTHCARE CENTER drew many folks who were eager to measure their ecological footprints, peruse literature, watch videos, and network with other Friends who shared their ecological concerns. A number of Earthcare-related workshops and interest groups were held in or near the Center.



Extinction may be one result of proposed U.S.-Mexico border fence

A MAJOR environmental issue has arisen down here in our new home, the lower Rio Grande Valley. It is the proposal to build a fence along the U.S.-Mexico border.

As a state government employee, my ability to speak my honest opinions about this issue is sorely limited. At least one of my co-workers is already in hot water over having distributed an inflammatory e-mail about this, which wound up in the newspapers.

However, I can provide some of the information which has already been made public, and let all of you make up your own minds about what, if anything, should be done. I love my job, but cannot remain totally inert in the face of this. I am hoping this e-mail will not come back to haunt me.

I know you are all deeply involved in a discussion of nuclear power right now. However, this issue is coming very fast. A 30-mile stretch of fence around Laredo is scheduled for completion by December 2008. Brush is already being cleared and riparian habitat is being destroyed on federal land in Roma (roughly an hour's drive west of here), reportedly in preparation for fence construction.

Congress and the Administration apparently gave the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) authority to declare emergency priorities and override all environmental protections. This means that, if DHS decides that a border fence is necessary, they can defy the Endangered Species Act, National Environmental Policy Act, Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and any and all other laws restricting them.

They have already done so to construct one length of border

fence in Arizona; when conservation groups there attempted to file suit, the legal system ruled that Homeland Security was literally above the law and could not be sued.

<http://www.defenders.org/releases/pr2007/pr011707b.html>

Some prominent local political figures are advocating clearing brush along the river as an alternative to the fence. Ecologically this would be almost as negative an impact. A wide swath of bare dirt would constitute a death sentence



A section of the border fence under construction in Arizona

for the species living along the river, an impassable barrier for species trying to travel to and from the river, and a massive erosion-fest for the first tropical storm or other strong rainfall to hit the adjacent Lower Texas Coast region.

MANY SPECIES would probably go extinct in the United States, either immediately from the habitat destruction, or slowly and with much inbreeding due to the small U.S. populations losing all gene flow with much larger Mexican populations (of, for example, Ocelot, Jaguarondi, Speckled Racer, Indigo Snake, Hook-billed Kite, White-collared Seedeater, Ornythion Swallowtail, Blomfild's

Beauty...). Not to mention the fact that the brush along the river is the only thing that keeps the Rio Grande from washing our whole Valley into the Gulf of Mexico....

Forwarded below is one suggestion that sounded productive. It recommended that conservationists all across the country contact members of the Homeland Security Committees of both U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. It lists who these members are and which states they represent. These committees could lean heavily on

DHS and make the agency very uncomfortable if they attempted to force a border fence through Texas using their "emergency" exemption from environmental review.

EVEN people who live far from the border might be able to push for a more rational process if you live in the state or district of one of the listed committee members. I have faith, if DHS is forced to comply with ESA, NEPA, and other environmental regulations, that the Valley's biodiversity might survive the Fence intact.

Someone down here is starting up an e-mail list to coordinate opposition to the fence:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/noborderwall/>

For more information:

<http://soapblox.net/texas/kaos/tag.do?tag=The%20Valley&feed=rss>

http://www.elpasotimes.com/breakingnews/ci_5837212

<http://www.gosanangelo.com/news/2007/may/10/border-coalition-get-say-fence/>.

[The author is a former QEW Steering Committee member, whose name is being withheld for reasons stated in the article.]

Radical change towards sustainable living needed

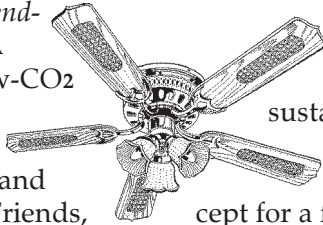
HAVING JUST RETURNED from FGC Gathering, where I attended all the QEW presentations, I am feeling very inspired to continue making changes personally and socially for care of the earth.

I am also very aware of the depth and magnitude of the crisis we are facing. Thus I was rather disturbed to read the full-page article in the current *Befriending Creation* "Summer: A good time to begin a low-CO₂/H₂O diet," with its tips about cleaning the coils on your air conditioner and covering your hot tub. Friends, we are way past that. No amount of tinkering on the edges of our consumerist lifestyles will make the profound difference in the short time span that is required, if we are not going to face the extinction of half the species on Earth in the next 100 years.

By virtue of being Quakers, members of QEW, and readers of *Befriending Creation*, we have demonstrated some awareness of the problems. We need to take leadership roles in finding ways to totally change our ways of living, to be sustainable.

My partner and I live in hot, humid Cincinnati. Our house already had central air conditioning when we bought it, but we never turn it on. We have a whole-house attic fan that we run all night to suck the hot air out of the top of the house and pull the cool air in. With that and some ceiling and window fans, we are generally comfortable as long as the nights are reasonably cool. For those days in August when the nighttime temperatures never get much below 90, we do have a window A/C in the bedroom, for sleep. Now that I am used to this, I hate A/C, because it means sealing the house up against the fresh air, breezes,

and bird song. And it means your body never adapts to the ambient temperature, so you are uncomfortable whenever you step out the door. If your house is closer to the outdoor temperature, you do adapt and you can be comfortable in nature. So turning off the A/C doesn't just save money and energy, it helps us live more in har-



mony with the natural world, which is part of what living sustainably is all about.

If you have a hot tub, get rid of it (except for a few people with medical conditions that require that kind of treatment). It is a constant major energy drain, keeping all that water hot 24 hours a day to be available the few minutes a day (week?) that you will use it.

If you have a lawn, *do not* water it. If you live somewhere where grass will not survive without regular watering, you should not have a lawn.... Do xeriscaping and take advantage of all the beautiful drought-resistant desert plants and wildflowers. Here in Cincinnati, our lawn gets brown in the heat of summer and again through the winter and greens up again in spring and fall, all with no added water or chemicals, and it looks just as smooth and green as the neighbors' when we mow it, with our electric mower).

LET'S BE ENCOURAGING each other to make radical change towards simple, sustainable living—don't buy anything new, don't drive, live in community. —Not that I have achieved all that, but those are the kinds of changes I am working towards.

—F. Kate Anthony, PsyD
Friends in Unity with Nature
Community Friends Meeting
Cincinnati, Ohio

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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BeFriending Creation

September–October 2007

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Help! Inflation pushes up BeFriending Creation postage costs—a lot!

REMEMBER last spring when the U.S. Postal Service raised the price of a first-class stamp about 5 percent—from 39 cents 41 cents? Well, that wasn’t the case for the rate hike it slapped on bulk-mailed newsletters like *BeFriending Creation*: The bill for mailing the July-August issue was about *double*

what we had been charged for the May-June issue. While our newsletter circulation has grown over the years, mailing and printing costs have been growing faster. We hope this news will prompt you, our faithful QEW supporters, to increase your contributions accordingly so we can broaden this ministry.

Ecological Footprint quiz opens many eyes at Earthcare Center

NEARLY 150 Friends learned a lot about themselves and the state of the world by totaling up their “ecological footprint” scores at the Earthcare Center at the 2007 FGC Gathering.

Although Quakers tend to have Earth-friendlier scores than North Americans as a whole, it was clear to everyone that living sustainably in these times is not something that comes easily.

During an awards-celebration on the last day of the Gathering, recipients were asked to share aspects of their personal lifestyles that seemed to have the greatest effect on their scores:

Transportation. One Friend who doesn’t own a car lamented that the grocery store she used to bicycle to had relocated, so now she relies mostly on public transportation. Another owns a diesel-powered car that is fueled entirely with reclaimed vegetable oils. One noted that a single trip by jet plane had virtually cancelled out the “eco-points” she had earned during



GOOD SCORES on the Ecological Footprint quiz at the Earthcare Center were rewarded with certificates and prizes of Earth-friendly products.

the past year through other-wise frugal living.

Diet. Most reported that they ate “low on the food chain,” while some followed vegetarian or vegan diets. Some talked of shifting to more locally grown foods to lower fossil-fuel consumption.

Housing. Most said they live comfortably in compact apartments, houses, or co-housing in urban areas.

Population. Two biological children seemed to be the typical family size for those

with small ecological footprints.

What was most striking about most of these recipients was their determination to act on their spiritual values in small daily choices, rather than single, heroic efforts. Many with exemplary footprint scores sounded a little embarrassed that they hadn’t done better. They also found it odd to be singled out for doing what they had come to see as appropriate behavior for anyone who takes Quakerism seriously. ♦