Annual Eco-Resource Issue

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The last book on global warming you'll have to read?

HEAT—How to Stop the Planet from Burning

by George Monbiot
South End Press, 2007

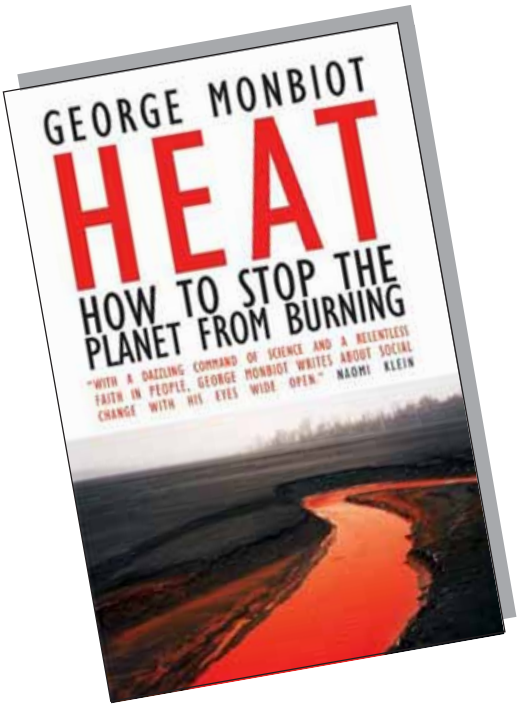
Reviewed by Louis Cox

BOOKS on such a crucial topic as global warming will of course continue to be published. But if you take George Monbiot's message and recommendations to heart, *you may find yourself very busy working to bring about a different future* from the one to which he warns we are headed. You may not have much time for anything else.

Monbiot, an award-winning author and journalist with *The Guardian*, a British daily, does an excellent job of summarizing for the layperson what the overwhelming majority of climate scientists and informed citizens now consider an incontrovertible fact: We must act soon to *cap total CO_2 emissions* to prevent a "tipping point," at which global warming-induced changes to the planet's surface will create conditions that lead inexorably to progressively more warming.

Monbiot is one of the few writers who have couched solutions to this problem in moral terms—arguing persuasively, for instance, that caps on carbon emissions will work only if everyone on the planet is given an equal share of the total that can be emitted.

Most scientific assessments we read about have been watered down before being made public, Monbiot advises; the climate situation is really *much more dire* than members of the general public can



imagine. Every delay will make what needs to be done even harder.

Yes, there are uncertainties about global warming, but these involve mostly the inherent difficulty of predicting how its effects will be distributed around the globe. But there is *no* uncertainty that the planet as a whole is rapidly becoming less hospitable to life as we know it, and that if greenhouse gases aren't sharply curbed soon, we can expect massive extinctions before this century is over.

The basic science is neither uncertain nor tentative, as the voices of what Monbiot calls "the denial industry" would have us believe. Known quantities include how much CO_2 and other greenhouse gases were in Earth's atmosphere at the beginning of the Industrial Age and how much has been added since then (mostly from human activities). Qualified climate scientists have calculated with a high degree of confidence that the industrialized countries (who are producing most of the greenhouse gases) must reduce their CO_2 emissions *90 percent by 2030* just to keep the climate from getting totally out of control.

"While not easy, this level of reduction *can be done without sacrificing a reasonable standard of living*," he states. "We can afford to do this, it is not too late, it is technologically feasible, and we have the moral obligation to the community of life to do so."

Monbiot frames this as a last-chance scenario. If we fail at stopping global warming, we fail at everything that matters. Options are rapidly dwindling. Stabilizing CO_2 levels cannot be achieved if we wait until 2020 to take action.

The Kyoto Protocol is not sufficient to meet the challenge, Monbiot says. Besides serious flaws in that agreement, there is

Heat, *next page >>*

>> **Heat,** *from page 1*

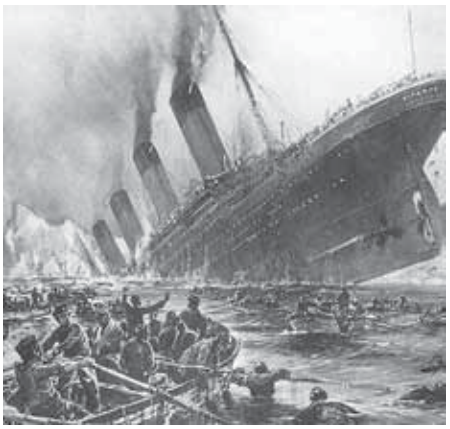
basically no way to effectively monitor emissions and effectively enforce controls against the political and economic interests that will try to get around them. (The same would be true for current negotiations in Bali for a new protocol.)

Monbiot likens the whole concept of emissions trading to "pushing food around on your plate to give the impression that you have eaten something." The only realistic approach, he says, is to set a *worldwide cap* on carbon emissions and to fairly allocate rights to emit up to that total. This would have the effect of closing down many carbon-intensive activities. It also would make many offending products and services too expensive to continue and would spur the development of alternatives, including wind, solar, and other renewable energy systems that earlier had seemed too costly.

THERE is a lot of room for waste reduction that can be made with relatively small efforts and investments, Monbiot claims. But first we must put an end to a regime of highly perverse industry subsidies that is operating in most countries, which in effect puts the economic burden of climate change on those sectors of the population who are likely to suffer disproportionately from it.

We also need to dispel certain myths that have led many people to pin their hopes on improved efficiency. The truth is that we tend to use *more* of a resource as the cost of using it goes down. For example, many well-intentioned folks who opt for 50-mpg Priuses seem to be driving a lot more than they did when they were driving cars getting the average of 27 mpg. More efficient engines have simply allowed cars to become bigger, heavier, and more powerful, while the average gas mileage has been static for two decades. After people weatherize their homes they tend to set their thermostats higher, and they end up using about the same amount of heating fuel as before.

None of this is to suggest that energy efficiency should not be pursued. But what the paradoxes appear to show is that, in the absence of proper government regulations, it is not just a waste of time: it is counterproductive.



WE DON'T WANT TO GO THERE—If climatologists' warning of a global warming "tipping point" is hard to imagine, just remember what sealed the fate of the "unsinkable" *HMS Titanic* in 1912.

So if personal decisions based on "free market" incentives can't reduce our burden on the natural world, what can? Monbiot argues that when government regulation is democratically administered it removes barriers to needed action and thereby increases the sum-total of freedoms:

Landlords could be required to meet weatherization standards through the same philosophy that requires them to have fire escapes and smoke detectors and other basic health and safety features deemed to be for the common good.

Besides eliminating subsidies for airlines and private cars and encouraging car-sharing and carpooling, Monbiot prescribes an efficient national mass-transit system based largely on upgraded and pleasant-to-use intercity buses. Travel time would be greatly reduced because modern, comfortable stations would be located at the outskirts of urban areas, and travelers would use a network of rapid shuttles to reach these stations. Railroads would carry the bulk of freight, eliminating most large trucks from roadways and giving more room for buses.

Car travel can be reduced further not only with more telecommuting but also through increased use of home deliveries, facilitated by "virtual shopping" via home computer terminals. If enough people turned to shopping this way, many energy-wasting retail stores would give way to more efficiently run warehouses.

Monbiot warns against extensive use of biofuels. This growing industry is putting pressure on agricultural land in competition with food production. Also, the market is already shifting production toward the cheapest sources of biofuels, such as the palm oil plantations that are devastating tropical forests around the world.

Monbiot concludes,

I cannot pretend that my proposals are anything other than extremely challenging. They can be implemented only if tackling climate change becomes the primary political effort, not just in our own country but in all rich nations. They require a good deal of money and a great deal of political will and expertise to enact.

But what I hope I have demonstrated is that it is possible to save the biosphere. If it is possible, it is hard to think of a reason why it should not be attempted. It is true that the effort will disrupt our lives. But it will cause less disruption than the alternative, which is to allow manmade global warming to proceed unhindered. ❖

Weatherization increases personal comfort and saves energy both winter and summer

by Barbara Williamson
QEW Steering Committee

THIS is another of a series of articles on making your home more energy-efficient. The holidays are over and it's time to start planning for spring. Get out those gardening catalogs and start dreaming. But just so you won't get too lazy during the winter months, here are few things to check on and possibly correct.

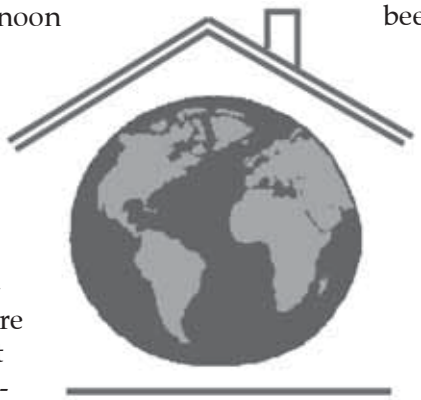
But you can start by having someone come in to see if you need additional insulation in your attic and give you a quote on any work that needs to be done.

Once you have sealed the air leaks between the living space and your attic (for more information reread the article in the September-October 2007 *BeFriending Creation)*, you can seal your attic with a vapor barrier. A vapor barrier will prevent indoor moisture from migrating through the wall or ceiling and condensing inside the insulation. If paper, plastic, tar paper, or kraft paper is already underneath the attic floor insulation, all you have to do is paint the ceilings of the rooms below your attic with special vapor barrier paint. If there is insulation directly underneath your roof, make sure there is a vapor barrier there, on the heated side, as well.

Ventilating your attic can save you cooling and heating dollars, prevent mold from forming in the attic, and prolong the life of your roof. Vents along the bottom surfaces of your roof overhang, called soffits, allow outside air to flow in, up and then out of your attic through vents at the peak of your roof, called ridge vents. For the best ventilation possible, make sure there are an equal number of soffit vents and ridge vents and distribute the soffit vents evenly around the bottom edges of your roof. Adding soffit and ridge vents to an unvented attic can reduce air conditioning costs by 10 percent.

A fan installed in your attic will ventilate just as well as a soffit vent-ridge vent system. If it's a solar powered fan, it will change speed in direct proportion to the strength of the sun, so the hotter it is, the more your solar fan will ventilate.

A whole-house fan installed in your attic can reduce your home's indoor temperature by up to 10°F, making air conditioning unnecessary in some climates, or at least from late afternoon to mid-morning. A whole-house fan ventilates your entire house and can replace an air-conditioner in milder climates where normal summer temperatures are less than 80°F. Most houses in milder climates that switch from air conditioning to whole-house fans can save more than 120 tons of carbon dioxide from being released into the atmosphere. More information on whole-house fans can be found at *<www.eren.doc.gov/buildings/home_fan.html>*.



You can plan now for potential gardening that you can do in the spring to improve your energy efficiency:

- ❖ Tree or shrubs can be planted where they will shade outdoor or window air-conditioners,
- ❖ Evergreens planted in a row can block strong winter winds,
- ❖ Vines growing on trellises can reduce the surface temperature of the wall where the trellises are attached.
- ❖ Ground cover planted around the edges of your house or along your driveway and walkways will cool these surfaces in the summer and insulate them in the winter.

See *<www.xeriscape.org/xerisape.html>* for more information on water-efficient and energy-efficient landscaping.

THE next article on energy efficiency for your home will be the last in this series. I've been spending the time since my last article with a "pull it all out and check every corner" cleaning project in the kitchen.

My house is almost 100 years old, and when you pull "stuff" out of the corners and the back of the cabinets you find places where things don't fit as tight as they should. When cleaning I always end up getting out my toolkit. If you miss the gadget you used to have but haven't seen one like it in 20 years, let me know. I just might have one. ❖

Bat gate design as a spiritual exercise

by John A. Kretzmann
Santa Fe (N.M.) Monthly Mtg.

SOMETIMES, going to sleep at night, I can hear the mines breathing. In summer they breathe in at the highest openings. As the rock cools the hot outside air, they blow refrigerated air out of their lowest openings. In winter the pattern reverses, with cold air drawn in at the lowest openings and rock-warmed air exiting the upper openings.

These abandoned mines also breathe in another way: They breathe life—walking, climbing, and flying life, moving in and out. Raccoons, ring-tailed cats, bears, mountain lions, rattlesnakes and bull snakes, porcupines, birds, barn owls, arthropods and insects, bees, cave-dwelling and cave-using bats, collared peccaries, and desert bighorn sheep are all known to use abandoned mines in the southwestern United States.

THE AUTHOR checks one of the many bat gates—many of them ornate—that he has designed for abandoned mine openings over the past 16 years.

These animals and arthropods bring with them nutrients and microorganisms that form and sustain ecosystems inside the mines, which are similar to those found in caves. Abandoned mines offer these animals a place to lay eggs and to give birth and raise their young, a place to find pools of water and a coolness and dampness not found outside in summer, and a place of shelter and warmth on cold winter nights.

Miners of previous generations formed these mines by a back-breaking labor and exposure to danger that many of us would find difficult to imagine. Most miners worked to feed, clothe, and shelter their families, so when the profitable ore played out in a mine, they moved on to the next operating mine where they could find jobs—until they were too injured or too old to continue. Some might have found their way into other professions—unless they gave their lives in the endeavor.

I don't suppose that any of the miners imagined that someday these mines would harbor life, sometimes in abundance. To them, the mines were dark, shadowy, noisy, and hazardous places, where a mistimed explosion, a faulty ore car, or bare electrical wire could change lives forever. In such places one gambled with death every workday.

As the miners and their mules and the scavenging rats left, the mines grew silent, devoid of bells, whispers, grunts and shouted commands, scraping shovels, deafening blasts of black powder or dynamite, rumbling ore cars and conversations over a hurried lunch. Except for the occasional explorer, thrill seeker, mining-artifact collector, and gem hunter, the silence persisted.

And that's when other life forms began to move in and thrive.

In 1977, the United States Congress set up a national abandoned mine land program, first to address the hazards of abandoned mines and second to evaluate the environmental detriments of old mines and mining landscapes. In the early years of the program, this unfortunately meant that many mine openings were sealed with earth and rock, regardless of the life that may have been inside.

When I began to work with the New Mexico Abandoned Mine Land Program (AMLP) in 1991, I was not expecting to come to love mining history and bats. I was not expecting to become fascinated with how abandoned mines illustrate the tenacity of life in places of death and destruction. For cave-dwelling bats in particular, as they have lost habitat in caves to despoliation, human disturbance and commercialization, abandoned mines have become arks that are helping to assure their survival.

In the late 1980s, the New Mexico AMLP was among the first abandoned mine programs in the United States to evaluate abandoned mines for bat habitat. The program protects bat habitat—where significant—through the design and construction of steel gates that allow bats to fly through yet keep people out. Other closures are designed not for bat passage but to maintain airflow conditions in the underground mine workings for bat habitat.

Bats use abandoned mines in a variety of ways, most notably for

Bat gate design *next page >>*

>> **Bat gate design,** *from page 6*

hibernating in winter and raising their young in summer. Other uses include night roosting, mating rituals, and gatherings of bachelor bats.

THE engineering challenges of designing bat-compatible closures are sometimes daunting. Poor rock conditions, collapsing openings, rotting timber shaft linings, large openings, and the preservation of historic headframes and ore loadouts all present challenges. Through the years, the relatively small number of engineers and designers working in this field internationally has developed many ways of dealing with these challenges. These include the use of polyurethane foam plugs with corrugated steel pipe passageways, concrete wedges, high-tensile-strength steel meshes, and spent tires from large earthmoving equipment to plug openings, again with pipe passageways for bats.

In addition to meeting the engineering challenges, I began to feel a need to honor both the lives of the miners and to celebrate the bats and other animals that are making use of what the miners created with their labor and their lives.

As I designed these bat gates, I was moved to include elements that reflected my convictions—use of weathering steel for longevity and the beautiful orange-brown patina that it develops, the use of colored concrete to blend with the surroundings, additional openings in the bars to allow for barn owl and small mammal access, and aesthetic bar patterns, sometimes in ways that reflected the history of the site.

Several times the contractors who work on the projects I have designed have said to me that they also find the work gratifying, especially working on the aesthetic aspects of the design. Most of us respond to beauty and to the chance to create beauty in our world.

I have been at this work for sixteen years now and it is with me when I dream. *The breath of the atmosphere through the mines dug into our earth's skin and the pulsing of life into and out of the mines remind me that the earth is powerfully alive, that the light of the spirit shines in dark places and in the work of unknown men and women. I hear the soul of the world breathing.* ❖

Abandoned mines have become arks that are helping to assure the survival of cave-dwelling bats who have lost habitat in caves to despoliation, human disturbance, and commercialization.

Powell House Earthcare Witness Series I

Earth in the headlines: How are we called to respond? with Marshall Massey, March 14–16, 2008

THIS WORKSHOP at Powell House in Old Chatham, N.Y., will focus on the Friendly basis of Earthcare and the actions we can take corporately.

In 1985, speaking to Pacific Yearly Meeting, Marshall Massey proposed creation of a nationwide Friends committee on environmental matters. After two years of labor, such a committee was formally organized at an FGC summer Gathering. Now called Quaker Earthcare Witness, it has a permanent staff and well over a thousand supporters and volunteers, and facilitates activities ranging from environmental lobbying to Earth-friendly agriculture.

Marshall has campaigned for a Nature Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and is at work on a book about the vision and practice of Friends, and how the underlying principles of Quakerism might bear on today's environmental crisis. He is a member of Omaha Monthly Meeting, Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative).

Cost is $200 for adults, $100 for ages 13–22, $50 for infants through age 12, and $100 for commuters.

The children's program is led by Katherine Wood. Childcare is available with three weeks' notice.

To register, call or write Powell House, 524 Pitt Hall Rd., Old Chatham NY 12136; telephone 518/794-8811; *<www.powellhouse.org>; <info@powellhouse.org>.*

Can you fathom this?

—Each year, U.S. residents spend $15 billion on bottled water—about the same amount their governments spend together on sanitation and water improvements.

—About 24 percent of all bottled water is just reprocessed tap water.

—Hauling bottled water each week takes 38,000 18-wheel trucks.

—Making plastic water bottles takes 1½ million barrels of oil a year, which would fuel 100,000 U.S. cars for one year.

—Of the 50 billion plastic bottles made each year, 38 billion end up in landfills—$1 billion worth of plastic that is not recycled.

—1 billion people in the world, including 300 million Africans, do not have safe water.

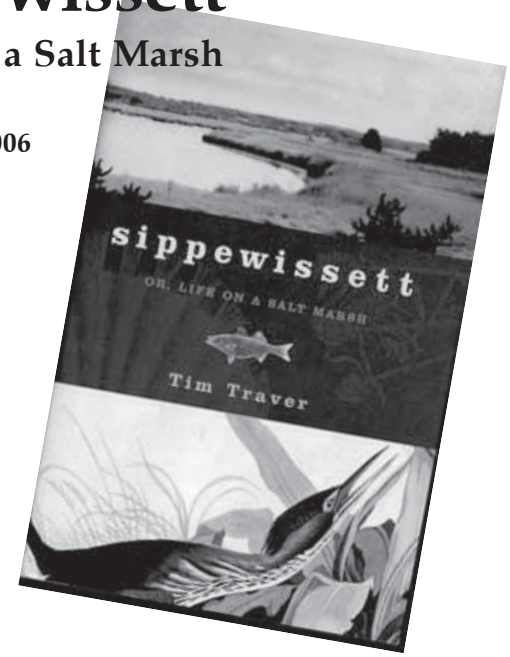
—Each day 3,000 children die from unsafe water.

—from a hand-out at William Penn House, Washington, D.C.

Sippewissett

or Life on a Salt Marsh

by Tim Traver
Chelsea Green Publishing, 2006
Reviewed by Louis Cox



AFTER RELISHING this thoughtful piece of New England nature writing, I proudly placed it on my bookshelf next to Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac*, Annie Dillard's *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, and other monuments to the spirituality and ecology movement.

The author, Tim Traver, shares in an almost poetic way the ecological wisdom that he gained while spending many summers exploring a salt marsh called Sippewissett, near Woods Hole on Cape Cod—first as a resident and later as an environmental scientist.

For generations of Cape Cod residents, the neighborhood around the salt marsh has provided homes, recreation, and livelihoods. For generations of scientists, the salt marsh itself has served as a living laboratory, as they try to understand the physical forces that are constantly tearing at its sensitive web of life.

Traver goes further in trying to understand the social and psychological forces that can put human activities in conflict with such exquisite natural systems.

I bought the book directly from Traver while we were both taking part in a Spirit & Nature workshop last fall in Vermont. During a dialogue exercise, I was surprised to learn how much he and I, as writers and environmental activitists, had in common—particularly our interest in ideas that affect people's patterns of thought and behavior. We were both using our communication skills to encourage healthier ways of seeing the world.

When Traver mentioned he had recently published a book titled *Sippewissett*, I told him I had seen a road sign to such a place while attending a family reunion on Cape Cod the previous summer. He said the subject of his book was only a mile or so from where we had been staying at West Falmouth. How ironic and unfortunate. Had I read his book beforehand and learned about this special place, I would have taken time to get to know it personally.

Through the reading I did appreciate the natural and human history of Sippewissett from the perspective of someone who knows it intimately as *home*, as something inseparable from his own life story, as something to be protected with the passion of love.

> *Our home place is the stage for our metamorphosis. It is our calling to find it. It's the place that takes us back in. Only a small, flickering flame inside guides us.... We can imagine what that's like by watching people who burn with knowledge and energy around us to change the world; or by reading the prophets and poets who made it possible to link head to heart, place to being, and matter to spirit. Those who burn with love. We all need to catch on fire.*

Traver also recognizes the inherent limits of scientific knowledge and rationality in trying to motivate humans to behave responsibly toward the rest of the natural world. He calls for a new trinity of science, ethics, and practice:

> *If what we know is separate from what we value, and what we value is separate from how we act, then we can only continue to repeat destructive patterns. Calvin Dewitt urges a view of nature through the lens of the sacred. The sacred must become as real as the specific weight of calcium, he writes. Thomas Berry, echoing the idea, writes that there should be a carbon component functioning at our highest levels of spiritual practice.*
>
> *Why not an ecological cosmology that integrates the objective and the sacred, the chemical and moral, the known and unknown—a new creationism that recognizes the empirical truths of science but allows that the universe won't be understood solely by what we can measure?*

TRAVER SHOWS his affinity with the recent "greening of faith" movement when he observes,

> *We need to wake up to new ways of living in the world, beginning with a new view of our place in it. We need to learn how to experience nature in a numinous way again. Religion is about reordering, reorienting, seeing deeply into the pattern of the universe.... We live in a world dangerously out of balance, and yet tantalizingly abundant in possibility. The answer lies perhaps in the fire, not next to it. Change is coming and there are things we all must do.* ❖

Carbon-Free and Nuclear-Free: A Roadmap for U.S. Energy Policy

by Arjun Makhijani, Institute for Energy & Environmental Research, 2007, 257 pp.

Reviewed by J.C. Armbruster
Olympia (Wash.) Friends Mtg.

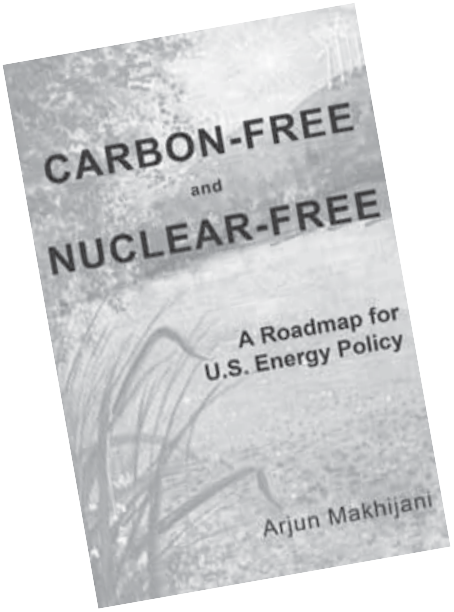
" 'Is Rivendell safe?' 'Yes, at present, until all else is conquered.... There is power, too, of another kind in the Shire. But all such places will soon become islands under siege, if things go on as they are going.' "
—Frodo and Gandalf
Lord of the Rings

I HAVE BEEN an environmentalist since I was a young child. The miracle of snowflakes, the hot summers with the rich aroma of peaches ripening on the trees along our drive in Saint Louis—these shaped in me a deep affection for nature. Around 2004, however, I began to refocus on global warming mitigation and related sustainability issues as my "given" work. Hence this review.

Arjun Makhijani helped develop energy efficiency policies adopted by the Carter Administration. He later developed the energy analyses that led the Tennessee Valley Authority to cancel eight planned nuclear power plants, instead building an extensive energy efficiency program. He wrote this book to "assess the feasibility of a zero-CO_2 economy in the United States and to lay out a roadmap to achieve that as early as is technically and economically practical, without resort to nuclear power."

He says our energy crisis is threefold: it causes climate change, hinges on oil supplies of questionable security, and assumes nuclear power is a necessary energy technology. He then explains how Americans currently use fuels—mainly oil, coal, natural gas, and nuclear fission power, along with a much smaller fraction of renewable energies, including hydroelectric, wind, and solar. I recommend this analysis to anyone wanting to understand our current energy condition. Reading through this also reminds me of how much deeply mired I am—how mired we all are—in carbon-based fuels. Every time I flip a light switch, every time I fire up my car, I am part of a vast energy chain stretching from my home to the Mideast oilfields and Appalachian coalfields, and elsewhere.

The section on alternative energy systems is a pleasant tumble through Alice in Wonderland for green energy enthusiasts. Essentially, we *could* be a few years



away from developing competitive solar photovoltaics, other renewables, and related energy-storage and carbon-capture and sequestration technologies. He accounts for "uncertainties and setbacks" in ramping up these technologies and liberally assumes that current trends in consumerism will continue—for example, our trend towards bigger and bigger houses.

Some of his points astound and dazzle me. Can we really design homes using a tenth of the energy per square foot that current homes consume? Tie the power from parked hybrid car batteries back into the power grid (something Google's philanthropic arm, google.org, is already experimenting with)? Capture wave power? Gosh. Wow! *How?*

However, Makhijani also says that to convert to a carbon-free economy, we will need to tax carbon use. This, folks, is the hard part. His market controls include 1) fossil-fuels taxes based on carbon content, 2) CO_2 emission taxes, 3) CO_2 emissions caps, and 4) caps on the total production and import of fossil fuels, with eventual bans.

So, the greatest challenge is not building green energy technologies—it's creating the *political* climate to do so. But, as Quakers and others proved in the anti-slavery movement, we can eventually kick this economic addiction, too. We need to act *now*, mindfully, quickly and vigorously. Why? Because the longer we wait, the worse the climate changes will be.

I entirely recommend Makhijani's blueprint, including his vision of a nuclear-free energy future. We can't allow more poisons, either greenhouse gases or radioactive materials, into the biosphere.

And please—realize that you are not alone. Millions of people are already working to remove this threat to the planet. Look to the wind farms of Sweden and the clean water projects in Africa and simply ask yourself: How can you do more than your personal lifestyle changes allow? How will you join the chorus of peoples striving to build a clean future for ourselves, our children, and all creatures of this good Earth?

Remember, "a hummingbird's kiss wakes the whole forest." ❖

Illinois YM steps up its corporate Earthcare work

"Peace House on the Prairie" envisioned

by Roy C. Treadway, clerk of IYM Environmental Concerns Committee

IMPORTANT environmental activities—many of them coordinated by QEW members—have routinely been carried out at the annual sessions of Illinois Yearly Meeting, held this year July 25–29, 2007 at Clear Creek Friends Meeting in rural Illinois near McNabb.

Alice Howenstine, for instance, has organized a complete recycling program, with Friends taking recycling materials to their hometowns after Yearly Meeting. Vegetable wastes from the kitchen have been regularly composted near the adjacent corn or soybean field, a short distance from the back door of the kitchen. Roy and Carolyn W. Treadway have taken all leftover food on the last day of Yearly Meeting to a homeless mission in nearby Bloomington.

For the last three years, the Environmental Concerns Committee, including Nancy Halliday, Roy Treadway, Bob Wixom, Noel Pavlovic, Bob Cordova, and others, has planned a 16-mile bicycle ride for Yearly Meeting attenders. This has brought many attenders in touch with the natural beauty of the agricultural fields and wooded hills surrounding the Yearly Meeting site.

In the last two years, the Site Envisioning & Building Committee, clerked by Bill Howenstine, has overseen the recycling of the wonderful wood from an old (but out of date) dormitory into six convenient and spacious cabins on the campground. In addition, a venerable building once used for Junior Friends has been moved to the campground to be used as a bunkhouse and meeting place for the vigorous high school program. The Yearly Meeting has tenderly reused its old buildings for new and important purposes.

This summer, the Yearly Meeting witnessed continuing environmental activities throughout its annual sessions. A brochure featuring a nature walk around the periphery of the Meetinghouse

grounds showed important natural features and man-made changes to the land over approximately 150 years of European settlement. The walk was developed by Sarah and Noel Pavlovic, with artwork by Nancy Halliday. Signs along the route held queries to help us contemplate how a given natural feature affects our spiritual lives.

Thursday evening, Roy Treadway was part of a four-person panel on "How God has Led Me to Answer to That of God through Service." He explored the spiritual basis for his environmental involvement over a lifetime: "Quaker simplicity; living within the earth's resources; and the preciousness of nature."

Instead of the bike ride this year, the Environmental Concerns Committee organized a canoe trip to the nearby Hopper and Hennepin Lakes, a restored wetlands just off the Illinois River. Nancy Halliday found a canoe outfitter and a naturalist to show the renewed plants and birds in the wetlands, and Roy Treadway coordinated the 41 persons (about one-fifth of those attending Yearly Meeting) taking part in the trip. Next year we plan to have an early morning bird and nature walk, led by our own very capable and expert naturalists.

Carolyn W. Treadway led a powerful workshop on "Reversing the Climate Crisis," using materials from Al Gore's The Climate Project, which trained Carolyn to be one of Gore's of 1,000 messengers. On the hot afternoon of the workshop, attenders understood the impact of global warming and discussed in some depth what we might do in response to climate change.

BECAUSE of plans to build a new small dormitory/dining hall to meet the needs of growing numbers of attenders at Yearly Meeting, Roy Treadway, Steve Walsh, and Noel Pavlovic presented a workshop on building sustainably, focusing on issues of "green building." We explored the advantages of green building, minimal additional costs, and the spiritual meaning of green building for Quakers.

Perhaps because of the workshop, the Yearly Meeting approved exploring incorporating green features into the plans for the new building as part of the planning process in the next year. The Yearly Meeting envisions the building to be a "Peace House on the Prairie," inviting many groups to meet in the building throughout the year. It should also be a witness to environmental sustainability and Earthcare to all who use it and see it across the open Illinois countryside. ❖

The evolution of an Earthcare Minute at New York YM

Janet Soderberg
15th Street (N.Y.) Friends Mtg.

At its 2007 sessions, New York Yearly Meeting approved a "Peace with Earth" Minute that had originated in an "Eco-Spirituality & Action" course in New York City (See the Sept.-Oct. 2007 BeFriending Creation*). We invited a course member, Janet Soderberg, to share her story of the Quaker process that was followed, as a lesson for Earthcare or Peace & Social Concerns groups in other Yearly Meetings. —ed.*

THE "Peace with Earth Minute: A Call to Reverence and Action" began at 15th Street Monthly Meeting in New York City and was approved in its first version at Business Meeting on June 10, 2007. It was a bit of a miracle that it moved quickly through approval at New York Quarterly Meeting, NYYM's Earthcare Working Group and Nurture Coordinating Committee, and on July 27—less than two months later—NYYM's Business Meeting approved it. Perhaps the story of how the Minute arose and evolved will help explain how this was possible.

In the Fall of 2006, at a meeting of the New York City Friends in Unity with Nature (a joint committee of 15th Street and Morningside Monthly Meetings), we worshipped on what could we do to advance Earthcare in our Meetings. We had all recently seen Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* video, and some of us were on fire with his message. As we worshipped, it became clear that a newer member, Angela Manno, had a profound grasp of the state of the earth and years of experience working to enlighten others of the impending crisis that we were in fact already experiencing. One of us suggested that she offer a course to members of our Quarterly Meeting, and the highly successful "Eco-Spirituality & Action" course was born.

For Angela, this course was an opportunity to distill decades of work in her quest to wake people up and instill in them the desire for action. (See her article on this course in the July-August 2007 issue of *Befriending Creation*.) In fact, she did wake up the 10 or so of us who took the course. She not only gave us a planetary perspective but she empowered us with techniques to foster our creativity

At the close of the course, the plan for corporate action that Angela had envisioned still had not occurred. We all seemed to have different visions of what was most important. However, we decided to meet at one class member's home for worship-sharing as the culmination of the course. If worship sharing could be called arduous, that was how I experienced it that evening. Finally, one of our weightiest Friends began speaking of the Peace Testimony and of the peace vigil that 15th Street had been holding at Washington Square Park for many years. With this sharing, the energy in the group shifted, and the Spirit began to flow through all of us. Yes! We would base our action on *peace with Earth*! The Friend who had first spoken of the Peace Testimony agreed to do a draft of a Minute.

With very little revision, the Minute was brought to one of our Friends in Unity with Nature meetings and approved. I volunteered to bring it before 15th Street's Business Meeting in June, where the Minute was approved and sent to New York Quarterly Meeting on Saturday, July 14. There, on a beautiful summer day in Friends Cemetery in Prospect Park, the Minute was again approved to be sent on to NYYM's Summer Sessions, which were scheduled to begin in eight days.

Meanwhile, Angela had some misgivings. She felt that it needed to suggest some kind of action. We had e-mailed the minute on to Ernestine Buscemi, the clerk of our Yearly Meeting, so that she would be aware that it might be on the business agenda for Summer Sessions. By chance, or by God's divine plan, Angela ran into Ernie in the West Village neighborhood where they both lived. Ernie agreed that the Minute was beautiful, but "what were we asking of NYYM?" Wouldn't an "action plan" be in order?

AT this point, our task shifted, and we sought to bring a revised minute—with action plan—before the Earthcare Working Group, who could send it to Nurture Coordinating Committee, who could send it to the floor of the Summer Sessions.

But time was very short, and we were all in different parts of the state. I attempted with great determination to get approval by e-mail. The co-clerk of EWG, Liseli Haines, who had just returned from the FGC Gatheriing, wanted to put the brakes on. She said she was very uncomfortable doing business by e-mail. Perhaps, after a meeting of the EWG at Summer Sessions, she

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said, we could send an approved version to Representative Meeting in the Fall. My dismayed response was, "But our theme this year is *Stewardship*, including Stewardship with the Earth." I felt that the momentum was there for approval and action by NYYM if the EWG could somehow meet.

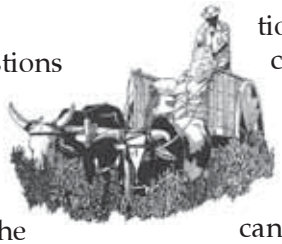
WE were able to hold two face-to-face discussions of the Minute in our working group. Four of us met on the Thursday before Summer Sessions (which began on Sunday). I was humbled by this experience of Quaker process and grateful for the experienced background of Liseli and another EWG member, Buffy Curtis. We made some important changes, and at 3:00 on Sunday afternoon others in the Earthcare Working Group continued to refine and season the wording of the Minute.

I took it to a Nurture Coordinating Committee meeting the next day, where it was approved as-is. One Friend, however, encouraged us to include a cover letter inviting the Monthly Meetings and worship groups who would receive this Minute to share their action plans and Earthcare work with the Earthcare Working Group. Our group could then compile a report on the state of Earthcare in NYYM for Summer Sessions 2008. We agreed that this should be an important component of the Minute.

You know already that NYYM approved it. No one raised any objections. Perhaps, the fact that we had all spent five days on the shores of beautiful Lake George had us all in a grateful state of mind. Those face-to-face meetings had been essential. For me the whole process had been a clear demonstration of how God works when we seek harmony with all of Creation. ❖

IN THE LETTERS SECTION *of the latest* BeFriending Creation, *I noticed a letter from Richard Grossman addressed to me and my wife regarding our earlier article [March-April 2007] about promoting sustainable development in Paraguay. As his letter contained several questions which I thought might also be on the minds of other readers, I figured I'd pass on this response for possible publication.*

—Justin Mog



Dear Richard Grossman,

Thanks for your questions about our article in *BeFriending Creation*. We cannot claim any responsibility for the "Odd Couple" title—that was the editor's idea—but it is true to the fact that we are seen by most folks in our community as very "odd"—if F(f)riendly—indeed! Fortunately, it hasn't been too big a barrier for working with most of them.

As for your questions about family planning in Paraguay, I'm afraid it's essentially nonexistent in rural communities like ours. To be sure, that is one of the major reasons why families are so large. Most Paraguayans simply know no other way, or are not interested. Lack of education, empowerment, and opportunities for girls and women also contributes heavily to the phenomenon. Paraguay is renowned for its *machismo* culture, built on a very old foundation of subjugating women.

In this environment, for most young Paraguayan women, mating with and/or marrying a man is their only ticket out of their parents' home. In fact, not doing so can be seen as irresponsible, highly suspect, or even a cultural threat. Basic, affordable family planning services and contraception can sometimes be found in clinics and health posts around Paraguay, but in communities like ours, very few actually take advantage of such services. We cannot know all the reasons why; but we can speculate that males do not see it as their responsibility. Females cannot leave the house or lack transportation to do so, have no spare cash, or simply don't believe contraception is "right" or good for their future.

In some cases, there can also be economic reasons for having as many as a dozen children. With sizable farms to manage entirely by hand and no such thing as financial savings or retirement or insurance, for most rural Paraguayans having children is one of the only ways they have of accessing the labor necessary to work the farm and of ensuring someone will take care of them when they are too old to work. It is the same way in scores of impoverished rural communities around the world. Even if contraception and family planning were cheap and available, many men would still want to have very large families simply for economic reasons.

But in Paraguay there are deeper historical reasons for this trend, as well. During the War of the Triple Alliance in the mid-1800s, Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay made a secret genocidal pact to wipe Paraguay off the map. Millions perished, and at the end of it all, only 200,000 Paraguayans remained alive (and of those, only 50,000 were men)! This led to a massive effort to repopulate the country and deeply engrained in the national psyche the idea that having large families is not only necessary, but patriotic—a way of saving the indigenous Guarani culture from extinction. That sentiment still reigns in much of Paraguay today. ❖

Quaker Earthcare Witness Mini-Grant Application

QEW HAS MINI-GRANTS available for Friends Meetings and churches who want to enhance their relationship with the earth. We can make five matching grants of $200 each to help with projects consistent with the QEW Vision & Witness statement. (See the QEW Vision & Witness at right, in the masthead on this page.)

The application deadline is May 1, 2008, and funds are available by July 1, 2008. For more information, contact the QEW office at 802/658-0308, visit *<www.quakerearthcare.org>*, or e-mail Ruth Hamilton at *<Ruth@ArtsCanHeal.com>*.

Background on QEW

Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW) is a spiritually-centered movement of Quakers and like-minded people seeking ways to integrate concern for the environment with Friends' long-standing testimonies for simplicity, integrity, peace, and equality.

QEW Application Instructions

Complete the following form and e-mail to Ruth Hamilton at *<Ruth@ArtsCanHeal.com>* by May 1, 2008. Please complete the form in MS Word and send by attached file. If you do not have e-mail, you may send the application to the QEW office at QEW Mini-Grants, Quaker Earthcare Witness, 173-b N. Prospect St., Burlington, VT 05401-1607. Please send your mailed application two weeks before the May 1, 2008 deadline, and also call 802/658-0308 to let QEW General Secretary Ruah Swennerfelt know that the application is being sent.

Please complete:

Name of your Quaker Meeting or church _____

Address _____Zip _____

Telephone _____/_____-_____ Contact name _____

E-mail _____@_____ Telephone _____/_____-_____

Total cost of your environmental project $_____

Treasurer of your Meeting or church:_____

You will need to include a signed letter from your treasurer, stating the cost of your project and that your Meeting or church can match the $200 QEW grant for the specified project. If you are awarded a mini-grant, you are required to send a report on the progress of the project by September 15, 2008. Digital or printed photographs are appreciated.

Please complete a typed one-page description of your project stating why it is necessary, who will be directly involved in the implementation of the project, how you will meet the $200 grant match, and how your Meeting or church will benefit from the environmental project. Please use at least 10-point typeface and no less than one-inch margins.

—Ruth Hamilton, Clerk,
QEW Mini-Grant Committee

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.

Membership is open to all who demonstrate commitment to support the work of Quaker Earthcare Witness and who support its work at the Monthly or Yearly Meeting levels, or through other Friends organizations. Quaker Earthcare Witness is a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation; contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

VISION AND WITNESS

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

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Let's all practice walking the talk and speaking from the heart

AFTER READING BELOW about Ruah and Louis's six-month face-to-face outreach to Western Friends, *please* join them by making a personal appeal to Friends in *your* Meeting to support the work and vision of Quaker Earthcare Witness. Circulate copies of this newsletter and order QEW literature for your Meeting library and First Day School. Organize programs or study groups around Earthcare-related themes. Ask your Meeting to include support for QEW in its budget. Consider setting up an automatic monthly donation to QEW.

December check-in finds 'Peace for Earth' pilgrims well and making good progress

OLYMPIA, WASH., December 18, 2007. We have met with Friends in Olympia and are now heading out for an 11-day walk to the Washington-Oregon border. We'll be camping many nights and hosted some. We feel our hearts opening and our bodies strengthening.

What really stands out for us on this journey is the loving care of so many people. They want to be part of the walk in whatever way they can. Some provide overnight hospitality, some a meal, some a contribution, some a kind or encouraging word, some a prayer. Some walk with us.

QEW STAFF Ruah Swennerfelt and Louis Cox resume the first phase of their 1,400-mile Peace for Earth Walk after staying at a state park on Padilla Bay near Mt. Vernon, Wash.

Those who walk have the time to share their lives, hopes, joys, and fears in a way they never could during a dinner party, potluck, or gathering. We speak heart to heart. We also have fun, laugh, and kid each other. Drivers honk and wave and give the thumbs up. Others stop their cars and ask about our mission. Some think we're crazy (and maybe we are, a little), and some put us on a pedestal (which they really shouldn't). We just put one foot in front of the other and pray that we stay physically strong and spiritually grounded.

We're touched by the responses to our presentations and hope that the encouragement people feel at the moment is translated into action later. We're also a little afraid that at the end of the 1,400 miles we'll have gained 20 pounds from all the great meals we're offered! We feel loved and held by all of you.

Find the link to our blog at *www.peaceforearth.org*.

—Ruah and Louis