

Report to Illinois Yearly Meeting from Quaker Earthcare Witness
Illinois Yearly Meeting Continuing Committee, 2012 October 27
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The year 2012 has marked a time of transition for Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW), a North American Quaker organization focusing on trying “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.” In June, QEW's Steering Committee met at the Cambridge Meeting House in Cambridge, MA, just before Friends General Conference Gathering, exploring ways we could prepare our own food and use fewer resources during our meeting. In early October this year, we met at the Cenacle in Chicago to celebrate our 25th anniversary, looking back on the impact we have made since 1987 on earthcare involvement among Friends while discerning what we are called to do in the future for environmental concerns.

As part of the October Meeting, we explored our theme “Biodiversity and Food.” We heard from Jose Aguto, Legislative Secretary on Sustainable Energy and Environment, FCNL, speaking on “Transforming Beliefs into Advocacy.” Jim Kessler, farmer and environmental educator from Iowa Yearly Meeting (FUM) explained “Why Native Plants Matter,” and Noel Pavlovic from ILYM examined “Tending the Garden: A Quaker Ecologist's Reflection on Biodiversity and Food” from his experience as a Quaker and naturalist at the Indiana Dunes. We were pleased that several Friends from the Chicago area joined us for these presentations.

With the retirement of Louis Cox, our Publication Co-ordinator and Editor of *BeFriending Creation* for 12 years, QEW will be making uncertain changes in its publication program, both in printed and web publications. With several candidates, we hope to have a new Publications Coordinator by the end of 2012.

As part of our transition, QEW will be gradually changing our website to be more interactive and useable by QEW for committee work, but the change will take some time and not be without challenges for all, whether experienced with websites or not. Please see <http://www.quakerearthcare.org> for our current website.

In specific actions, QEW jointly sponsored with Pendle Hill “Continuing Rev_1_tion: a Young Adult Conference on Ministry, Earthcare, and Social Action,” attended by 30 young adults from all over the United States, Canada, and Korea. QEW awarded six mini-grants for environmental projects (similar to ILYM's green roof project) to Friends monthly meetings throughout the United States. As part of QEW's status with the United Nations, QEW has been recognized as one of six Quaker organizations to review Quaker activities and statements involving the United Nations. We continue to work with FCNL on environmental and economic policy and action, in particular getting the reality of climate change back into political discourse.

In the future, QEW plans to expand its outreach to yearly and monthly meetings. Like other Quaker organizations, we need more financial support for carrying out our work. We are seeking grants for specific projects and are undertaking an intensified financial development program. To help QEW, we are requesting that ILYM restore in FY 2013 its \$200 contribution to QEW.

QEW's next face-to-face meeting of its Steering Committee will be at the Boulder Friends Meeting, Boulder, CO, at the end of 2013 June, just before the Friends General Conference Gathering in Greeley, CO. Our 2013 Annual Gathering will again be in Chicago at the Cenacle October 24-27 (when we hope there is no conflict with ILYM's Continuing Committee meeting). All Friends are welcome to join with QEW at these meetings, on our general discussion list serv, and in all our activities.