

## QUAKER EARTHCARE WITNESS

Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW) is an organization of Friends, spanning national boundaries, focusing on environmental concerns of Friends and calling us to live in right relationship with the earth. QEW's Vision and Witness says:

*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.*

The year 2010-11 was one of transition for QEW; in 2011 ILYM Friends will have an opportunity to join QEW for its Annual Meeting in Chicago.

At its Annual Meeting in Houston at the end of October 2011, the Steering Committee of QEW approved Anne Mitchell from Toronto, Canada, as its new General Secretary, replacing Ruah Swennerfelt after 16 years of faithful service to QEW. Anne is finishing her term as Clerk of Canadian Yearly Meeting and is active with the Quaker Institute for the Future. She is helping QEW to focus its activities and outreach in the future.

After several years of careful searching and discernment over how many times to meet face-to-face each year because of concerns over using of energy and creating carbon in our travels, the Steering Committee decided last April to continue meeting twice a year because we also value our personal times together. For many years, we have met in Chicago because of Chicago's central location with public transportation, particularly bus and train. We are also exploring meeting with other Friends organizations (in part to reduce travel); for instance, in 2012, we will hold our Spring Meeting in connection with the Friends General Conference Gathering in Kingston, RI. ILYM's Environmental Concerns Committee is considering inviting persons from QEW in surrounding states to meet before or after ILYM in the future.

Thus, **QEW invites Friends from ILYM and surrounding yearly meetings to join us for our Annual Meeting in Chicago at the Cenacle (on Fullerton Ave.) October 20-23, 2011 (Thursday to Sunday).** Recognizing how crucial adequate, healthy, and sustainable food is all around the globe as well as locally, our plenary sessions will focus on "Food and Biodiversity." In addition to our reflecting together on how we see growing, producing, and distributing food affecting us, several speakers will help us understand the broader issues of food from a spiritual perspective. Marcia Cleveland, Legislative Representative on Environment for the Friends Committee on National Legislation, will be our keynote speaker. Molly Anderson, Professor of Food and Sustainable Agricultural Systems at the College of the Atlantic, will also join us. We expect one or two knowledgeable persons from the Chicago area to help us understand local food and biodiversity issues. We will keep you informed about the specific program of the QEW Annual Meeting as it becomes clearer.

QEW has been active in many ways.

- \* The QEW Mini-Grant fund (which matched ILYM's support of ECC's "green" – or live-plant – roof over the kitchen) has been expanded to support more projects, some outside of North America.
- \* The *Finca La Bella* Project in Costa Rico (started in part by Bill and Alice Howenstine many years ago) has provided land for 24 families, crossing religious and language lines; final arrangements to transfer the land to the families are being worked out.
- \* QEW continues its outreach to many yearly meetings; in 2011 Roy Treadway served as QEW Ambassador to Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative).
- \* Through its publications, QEW disseminates its message of earthcare; *BeFriending Creation* is published bimonthly; the tri-fold, *Water is Life*, was published in 2010; and a revised tri-fold, *Healthy Food, Healthy Planet*, is scheduled for release this Fall.

Many persons from ILYM are active with QEW. John Hackman, Alice Howenstine, Bill Howenstine, and Roy Treadway (Recording Clerk) serve on QEW's Steering Committee. Sara Pavlovic, Nancy Halliday, and Noel Pavlovic are active with QEW's committees, working groups, and project. We invite **you** to join us with QEW.

John Hackman and Roy Treadway