

Report to Illinois Yearly Meeting from Quaker Earthcare Witness
Illinois Yearly Meeting Annual Sessions 2013 June 19-23
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Since the last ILYM Annual session in 2012 June, 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” has moved through a period of transition. In 2012 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 2013 October, 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, at the end of 2012, QEW welcomed Katherine Murray, member of First Friends Meeting in Indianapolis with a Master of Divinity degree from the Earlham School of Religion, as Publication Coordinator. She is editing QEW's bi-monthly publication, *BeFriending Creation*, and coordinating (on alternative months) a new bi-monthly electronic newsletter (enewsletter), “Resources for Earth Action,” which will be available to all who are interested. Katherine will also oversee all the printed publications (pamphlets, tri-folds, and books) of QEW. We welcome Katherine to her service with QEW.

Our General Secretary, Anne Mitchell, has decided to step down at the end of 2013 after three years. A search for a new General Secretary will begin soon.

Also as part of our transition, QEW has also made major changes in our website to be more interactive and useable by QEW for committee work. Please see <http://www.quakerearthcare.org> for our new website.

In specific actions, in 2012 June 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. QEW is forming several committees of discernment (COD) for investigation and action; under consideration currently are committees of discernment for climate change, energy, and the economy.

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 hope that ILYM will restore in FY 2014 its \$250 contribution to QEW.

QEW's next face-to-face and sponsored meetings are:

Young Adult Friends Conference, Continuing Rev_olution, at Pendle Hill, 2013 June 14 - 19, supported by QEW for its second year. Emily Higgs will be the conference co-coordinator and Shelley Tanenbaum, QEW clerk, will participate for the duration of the conference. All Adult Young Friends are invited to attend.

Spring QEW Steering Committee, 2013 June 27-30, hosted by the Boulder Friends Meeting, Boulder, CO, just before the Friends General Conference Gathering;

Earth Center and outdoor meeting for worship at the Friends General Conference Gathering, 2013 June 30 to July 6, at the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, CO;

Gathering for Deeper Relationship with Earth June 30 - July 6, 2013, in conjunction with the FGC Gathering in Greeley, Colorado. The FGC Gathering theme is, "At the Growing Edges of our Faith," which fits beautifully with our intent to gather, seek, deepen, and clarify leadings toward peaceful unity with nature; and

2013 Annual Gathering, 2013 October 24-27, again in Chicago at the Cenacle. The theme will be "Climate Change and Population from Friends' Perspective." Friends at the Gathering will explore the relationship between current and projected future population and climate change, in the context of food, agriculture, and consumerism.

All Friends are welcome to join with QEW at these meetings, on our general discussion list serv, and in all our activities.