

Quaker Earthcare Witness Representatives Report to PYM's Annual Session 2016

June 17, 2016

Dear Friends,

Inspired by sessions at PYM in 1985 and PYM's nascent Unity with Nature Committee and Earthlight Magazine, Quaker Earthcare Witness [QEW] was founded in July 1987 at Friends General Conference [FGC]. During the 1987 FGC, Marshall Massey called for a Quaker testimony on unity with nature. A week-long workshop led by Alice and Bill Howenstine formed the vision statement and founding core group. This earliest vision statement includes, "We believe right relationship with our natural environment is basic to the achievement of peace and a just social order, and the equitable distribution of the world's resources, both today and through generations to come." They called on Friends to live in unity with nature. They soon began the "Befriending Creation" magazine/newsletter (August 1987), a major channel for disseminating information to Friends and other interested parties about all topics related to the next steps in more fully living our Earthcare testimony. PYM's Bob Schutz was a part of this founding group. According to records, Bob had been already working with PYM's Unity with Nature committee's [UwN] publication "Unity with Nature" since 1985.

QEW provides Friends throughout the North American continent a network to share environmental information, inspirations, concerns, and views. An overwhelming number of Friends agree on the urgent necessity to stop climate warming. Although individual and small group actions to live more sustainably are commendable and needed, the entire global economic system is the cause of the climate disruption, so to fix one, you have to fix the other. Both systems - world climate/ ecosystem and world economy are massive and complex. QEW facilitates collaborations for Friends to discern the best views, strategies and courses of action to slow climate change. QEW supports Friends in living more sustainable lives and supports Friends' leadings to bring faith into action as well as searching for global solutions.

The major vehicles for these functions and goals are the Befriending Creation Newsletter, epistles, various publications, many in trifold form, and the QEW website with its active forum for discussions and many informative pages. QEW has twice yearly steering committee meetings in which the yearly meeting representatives [YM Reps] are automatically members. Hence PYM and other yearly meetings, in sending Reps, give something more important than money: working advocates. The steering committee meetings are also collaborations. The Fall meeting has some programming. The YM Reps are two-way conduits of information and inspiration to and from QEW & YMs and to each other.

The two current PYM representatives to QEW, Rick Herbert and Catya de Neergaard are not just attending a three day meeting twice a year. Both are actively engaged in bringing forward the work of QEW. Rick is QEW's representative to FCNL and has recently become clerk of QEW's FCNL working group. Catya is clerk of the Spiritual Nurturance committee, somewhat analogous to an oversight or care of meeting committee, and has recently become convener of the Sustainability, Faith, and Action Working Group which is a birthing ground for supporting

concerns into Leadings, Faith into Action. As clerks, both Rick and Catya are members of the Continuing Council, the ongoing executive committee of the steering committee.

So PYM generously supports QEW by sending YM Reps and a donation. QEW shares PYM's Earthcare Leadings and inspirations with other YMs. QEW is available to YM members as a resource in many ways. QEW helps PYM's UwN committee provide the latest thinking and programming to PYM. QEW provides a platform for PYM Friends to call out to far flung Friends and to hear Friends' voices speaking about Earthcare across the continent, to collaborate, and to explore solutions. QEW and its contributing YMs form a web of creative interdependent co-arising.

In the last fifteen months, QEW has sent us the Epistle "The Three Challenges" asking for Monthly Meetings to plant edibles and natives, especially to support pollinators and ecological diversity and switch to renewable energy in Meetinghouses; work on climate action plans on the municipal and state level, and to divest from fossil fuel companies. PYM's Unity with Nature Committee brought "The Three Challenges" as an interest group to Annual session 2015.

Among other updates and publications, QEW wrote an epistolary response to Pope Francis's encyclical on climate and justice Laudato Si ("Praised Be"). In early May, QEW approved a new brochure advocating for women's reproductive choice which in turn is linked to lowering population growth which in turn lowers a whole host of problems including global warming. We feel privileged to serve as your QEW Representatives. Along with Shelley Tanenbaum, general secretary of QEW, we are here at Walker Creek 2016 and would be happy to answer any questions and talk about Earthcare.

Thank you.

Gratefully submitted,

Catya de Neergaard, QEW Representative

and on behalf of Rick Herbert, QEW Representative