



SPARK

New York Yearly Meeting
The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

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March 2018

Earthcare Now

**A Robust, Joyous, Post-Carbon Remnant
Local Food Production and
Self-Transformation in Community**

Guest Editor, Pamela Boyce Simms

Hudson Meeting, NYYM, Friends General Conference,
and Quaker Earthcare Witness UN Representative

The lives of NYYM (f)Friends who brought this issue of *Spark* to life are profoundly inspiring. They and other likeminded Friends throughout the Yearly Meeting are the fiery heart of environmental resilience-building that will generate a robust, joyous, post-carbon remnant. Their work provides a window into how, with focused intentionality and in community, we will emerge victorious and stronger from the climate change crucible.

It has been a joy and privilege to wholeheartedly sing the praises of how “aerated” and spaciousness i find New York Yearly Meeting to be as i visit with other yearly meetings, and the constellation of Friends’ organizations. NYYM has offered me space to explore leadings, and NYYM Friends have shown me unwavering support.

However, as a former clerk of the NYYM Earthcare Working Group i was admittedly less enthusiastic about what i observed of NYYM Friends’ commitment to Earthcare as an organized witness concern *until* i began Earthcare conversations for this issue of *Spark*.

We are delighted to lift up herein, Friends among other New Yorkers in large swaths of the state who never stopped living the simple, environmentally sustainable lifestyles of their great grandparents. These Friends have now doubled down on

their commitment to safeguarding the Earth. Other Friend-exemplars, who, while surrounded by mainstream consumerism, steadfastly model resilience in such a way as to touch the lives of *exponential* numbers of people around them.

Focus on What Counts—Food, Water, and Self-transformation in Community

Let’s maintain one-pointed focus on building the foundation for thriving in the oil-constrained future that’s on the horizon. At a time when climate change is dialing up and most Americans are dependent upon an oligarchic corporate infrastructure for survival, let’s ensure that we address the basics. Let’s focus on access to food and drinkable water as the frequency of climate disruptions accelerates.

We have choices. We can reskill and reverse the overspecialization that has atrophied core life skills.

We can relearn to holistically and autonomously take care of our own basic food needs rather than be fed by corporations focused on profit rather than people. We can choose to purposefully relocalize food production wherever we are and protect our water supply as we care for the Earth AS Self. Learning to care for the Earth AS Self invites us to commit to ongoing self-transformation.

**Come to
Spring Sessions!
see page 11**



Showing off the bounty harvested from Seneca Castle Organic Farm with students from Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva, NY, August 2017. For more about the farm, see page 9. Photo © Finger Lakes Institute at HWS.

The NYYM Friends who have shared their stories herein are farmers, chaplains, hydrogeologists, shepherds, mystics, homesteaders, local government officials, naturalists, professors, and Master Gardeners. They till the soil, herd the sheep, insulate walls, minister unto many, commune with nature, educate, and model resilience in Ithaca, Brooklyn, Clinton, East Chatham, and Seneca Castle in New York, and in Highland Park and Montclair in New Jersey.

They are steadfastly supported in their local environmental resilience-building by the policy and advocacy work of Friends dedicated to Earthcare engagement at national and international levels: **Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW), Quaker UN Office (QUNO), and the Friends World Consultative Council (FWCC).**

The highest collective aspiration we offer for NYYM, and for all Friends, is that we learn to imitate the natural world and *live into* the reality of our interconnectedness, from hyper-local to international levels. May we learn to “be love” personified, and in so doing become a robust, joyous, remnant.

An Earthcare and Culture-building Experiment: Quaker Intentional Village-Canaan

Dee Duckworth, Eric Bear Ludwig, Jens Braun
Interviewed by Pamela Boyce Simms

“When I was a shepherd I stood out in the field with the ewes. I witnessed the emotional and social life of the creatures, the relationships that the sheep had with each other and with the

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Special Earthcare
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Notices

New Members

Roy Allen, II—Rochester
Jeffrey W. Barr—Fredonia

Deaths

William Fairhurst, III, member of Unadilla, on January 5, 2018.
Mia Kissil Hewitt, member of Chatham-Summit, on February 28, 2018.
Cynthia Kaufman, member of Manhasset Meeting, on August 19, 2017.

UPCOMING EVENTS

***This Evil Thing*, a play about conscientious objectors in WWI**

Performances:

- **March 18, 2018**, at Old Chatham Meeting, NY (12:45pm potluck, 1:45pm play with discussion afterward)
- **March 24, 2018**, at 15th Street Meetinghouse, NYC (7:00 pm play, panel discussion afterward with the actor (Michael Mears), Bill Galvin, and Dan Seeger, a member of Morningside Meeting who was the subject of a Supreme Court case about conscientious objection.)

In honor of the 100th anniversary of the US entry into World War I and the persecution of conscientious objectors to that war, the Center on Conscience & War (CCW) is helping to bring actor and playwright Michael Mears to the U.S. from the U.K. to present his award-winning, one-person play, “*This Evil Thing*.” It is about the experiences of COs in the U.K. during WWI, but its themes and messages poignantly reflect the experiences of COs in this country, as well.

Upcoming Powell House Conferences

Powell House is the NYYM retreat and conference center in Old Chatham, NY. Visit powellhouse.org for more information!

Work / Messiah Sing / Scavenger Hunt

March 30-April 1, 2018

This weekend has become a favorite of many F/friends and families. Whether you come to work and sing, work and play, or work—this weekend is for you! We’ll have childcare for the young ones while we work.

Around Our Yearly Meeting

Playing in the Light: Faith & Play/ Godly Play Training for Quakers

April 20-22, 2018

Transform your First Day School or Friends school classroom, and nurture your own spiritual life. Learn and practice skills to help children explore the existential limits of their lives through wonder, play, and core stories from the Bible and Quaker faith and practice. These stories are scripted and tested to work well with multi-age groups of children, as well as in multi-generational settings. A certified trainer will model stories, and you will have an opportunity to practice them with your peers.

Rise and Shine (for 3rd-5th graders)

ALSO April 20-22, 2018

The sun rises, the moon rises, and new plants rise out of the ground. Bread rises when we start it well; our ideas and spirits rise when we treat them well. What is rising in you? We will make some homemade bread, plant some seeds, and start some new friendships. And we will wait quietly to see what rises and shines in each of us.

Upcoming Anti-Racism Workshops

The Center for the Study of White American Culture, Inc. (CSWAC)

Registration is open for **Raising Anti-racist White Children** on Saturday, March 24, 9am-3:30pm, in Titusville, NJ.

We’ll also offer **Raising Anti-racist White Children** in Manhattan on Saturday, April 7, 9am-3:30pm. \$95 includes lunch.

All of our workshops are appropriate for white people who are learning what to do about racism, and for people of color who support white people in taking action against racism. For full details and registration, see www.euroamerican.org.

Peacemaking Circles Trainings

The Conflict Transformation Committee of New York Yearly Meeting is sponsoring two three-day trainings in the Restorative Justice Practice of Peacemaking Circles with the author of *Little Book of Circle Processes*.

- April 20–22 in Rochester
- April 24–26 in the New York City region

This training will increase participants’ understanding of Restorative Justice and prepare them to keep/

facilitate a peacemaking circle for a variety of circumstances. The Conflict Transformation Committee envisions circle processes becoming part of the culture of New York Yearly Meeting. To receive a registration form, please send an email to kreixach@gmail.com with the subject line “Circle Processes Training Rochester” or “Circle Processes Training NYC region.” Please consider if you feel led to this work and committed to engage in it after the workshop.

Farmington Scipio Spring Gathering

Reserve the weekend!

May 18-20, 2018

At Watson Homestead in Painted Post, NY

A restorative weekend of worship and connection. Pay as you are led and able! Registration and more info coming soon.

FGC Gathering

University of Toledo, Ohio
July 1-7, 2018

Registration for the Gathering opens April 2, 2018 (about 10 am)—register early to maximize access to workshops and financial aid. Go to fgcquaker.org/connect/gathering for all program information. The Gathering is great place for families with children & teens. Each age group finds opportunities for spiritual growth and community AND there is plenty of family time as well! May 31st is the deadline for children and youth (birth-8th grade) to register. For more about the Junior Gathering visit www.fgcquaker.org/connect/gathering/programs-and-events/children-and-teens

And SAVE THE DATE for NYYM Summer Sessions!

Summer Sessions will be at Silver Bay on Lake George again this year, July 22-28, 2018. View the Summer Sessions page at www.nyyym.org/session/summer-sessions-2018 for links to the week-at-a-glance schedule, registration fees, and room rates.

OPPORTUNITIES

Grants available for Outreach!

Time sensitive: applications deadline is April 15

There is growing energy throughout NYYM for doing Quaker outreach—whether it be in the form of **Inreach** (Growing Our Spirits), **Publicity and Invitation** (Growing

our Presence), or **Welcoming** (integrating newcomers into the life of the meeting). If your meeting is engaged in or planning to do outreach, you may be interested in the Outreach Initiatives Support Fund, established to encourage and support outreach activities. To learn how **your meeting can apply for a grant**, visit nyym.org/sites/default/files/Outreach-Support-Fund.pdf or contact Arlene Johnson: 973-994-2314, arlene_johnson@verizon.net.

Powell House Seeking Administrative and Program Intern

Role of the intern: We desire a dynamic individual able to work on their own initiative who will engage in tasks within all areas of our organization and facility. More specifically, the intern will engage in

- data entry and processing
- facility maintenance projects
- food preparation and kitchen work
- program planning and leadership, as well as any other assignments designated by directors.

For more details visit

www.powellhouse.org/index.php/about-us/administrative-and-program-intern-2



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A Note on the Guest Editor



photo © Jim Pepler

This special expanded issue of *Spark* was guest edited by **Pamela Boyce Simms**,

member of Hudson Meeting, on the Central Committee for Friends General Conference, and the Quaker Earthcare Witness UN Representative. Pamela is dynamic, inspiring, and infectious about everything she does. She's a leader, organizer, speaker, and social change agent. Pamela convenes the Mid-Atlantic Transition Hub (MATH), an information hub for environmental activists working throughout the Mid-Atlantic coastal megacity corridor. She also works with teams and organizations that want to build regenerative "human ecosystems." We are fortunate and grateful that Pamela has given her time and energy to this special issue of *Spark*. Learn more about Pamela and her evolutionary culture-building work at: www.geo.coop/search/node/pamela%20boyce%20simms

Editor's Note

I encourage you—yes, you!—to write an article for *Spark*. Articles should be spirit-led and considered a form of ministry.

Upcoming Spark themes:

May: Learning from First Day School What did you learn in First Day School—as a child, a parent, or a teacher? Are there new ideas in First Day School coming up through the yearly meeting? Share them with us.

Please send your submissions for *Spark*, including news from your monthly meeting, to communications@nyym.org by **April 9, 2018**.

In between issues of *Spark* we distribute InfoShare, NYYM's emailed newsletter. **Share your meeting's news and events** by sending them ASAP to communications@nyym.org. Sign up to receive InfoShare—or any of NYYM's newsletters—at www.tinyurl.com/nyymconnect

Keep up to date at [facebook.com/newyorkyearlymeeting/](https://www.facebook.com/newyorkyearlymeeting/) & at twitter.com/NYYMTweets.

Enjoy Spring! —Sarah Way

A Call to the Light

Don Badgley
Poughkeepsie Meeting

Recently, a young man and non-Quaker observed to me that, in his experience, New York Yearly Meeting was best described as a "social justice club." This observation is important and while incomplete, it is uncomfortably accurate. There is no question that our social causes in the world define Eastern non-programmed Quakers to those very few who notice us at all.

Friends have been laboring in the causes of earth care, prison reform, racial justice, women's rights, native American rights, anti-poverty, and the anti-war/peace movement for generations. We often point proudly to our early work as abolitionists. We claim this work as our heritage and as the legacy of 365 years of Quaker history. This Friend supports and participates in much of this work. Yet, even as I support these worthy efforts I observe a Yearly Meeting increasingly disconnected from its constituent meetings and further observe the shrinking, aging and seemingly inevitable collapse of a majority of those local meetings. With few exceptions our meetings struggle to attract young people and young families. Many are figuratively and literally dying.

Social justice outreach concerns do not make Quakers unique and, it seems clear to me that worthy causes in "the world," while laudable, are a weak foundation on which to build a faith community. In fact, these efforts are not foundational at all. Furthermore, the connection to our Quaker history is not sufficient unto itself to define us as a faith community. Yes, we gather in silent "worship" once a week. We reference "The Inner Light," "being led," Divine Love, and call our meetings for business an exercise in worship. In truth, the connection to and trust in the Divine Presence to guide us and to order our lives sometimes seems to be a quaint and vestigial artifact.

This is a somber indictment and it is not made lightly. I am well-aware of my own failings in this concern and trust that awareness of these failings in myself will temper and clarify my vision for a revival of the right-minded emphasis on living experiential faith.

Our founders did not set out to create a new religion, new creed, new doctrines or even new insights.

The insights and leadings of those inspired women and men were in fact very old, even timeless. They named themselves a "society" because they considered themselves to be a society within a larger and eternal construct. They named themselves Friends quite simply because of words attributed to Jesus in scripture. (John 15:15 *I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.*)

Friends initially jettisoned the outward trappings of the church because these were considered superfluous and distractions from the direct experience of the Divine Presence that they named the Spirit of Christ. This Presence in their midst informed all else. Friends did not gather in worship to effect social justice. Those causes were some of the good fruits of lives ordered by living in unity with the holy, the infinite, eternal, and unchangeable Divine Source. Upon that foundation and attached to that living root the Society of Friends grew into an influential force in the world.

Religion can have many dubious and difficult constructs. Discomfort with credal and hierarchical religion is still very Quaker, and answering those concerns was a primary motivation for this new "society" that Fox and others formed. Many of that founding generation repeatedly excoriated the hypocrisies of the various churches with far more vehemence than we do today. That notwithstanding, they did it with love, even as they consistently proclaimed the Holy Spirit that inspired, motivated and informed their practice of Experiential Faith. It was unity with the Light and the direct correlation of that Experience with scripture that empowered their ministries. It was on that foundation that their interfaith encounters and interactions with the world were built. While scripture was not considered authoritative, scriptural fluency combined with the authority of gentle yet firm experiential witness was compelling and carried remarkable weight, even among those in opposition. It was once very difficult to ignore the Quakers.

Today, many Friends are uneasy with the spiritual, scriptural, proto-Christian and living root of Quaker Experiential Faith. Many Friends have abandoned this



A child blows out a match after lighting a candle at the Quaker Intentional Village in Canaan, NY. For more see page 6. Photo by Spee Braun.

foundation entirely. They come for the good social causes, and in some cases to appropriate a liberal quasi-religious platform to enable social justice. And, so our small remnant branch of Quakerism fades into deserved oblivion. When the root is unhealthy the tree begins to die.

Let us not judge Friends' "spiritual" journeys. This Friend is simply suggesting that our social justice causes will gain in impact and grow in power when we attribute those efforts to the Divine Light, while also nurturing that Divine Seed within those who may encounter us. Our ministry only has power when it originates in Experiential Faith and is nearly powerless when it originates in worldly concerns.

I share these thoughts because it is my hope that we will remember, seek, and trust the grace-filled stillness that is discovered in the silence of worship. I know that within this pure Stillness we experience Unity with the unchangeable Source, The Ocean of Light that flows over the impermanent and transient affairs of the world. That Experience does not just alter our lives, it reorders our priorities and gives us greatly enhanced power to help create the better world we all seek for ourselves and for humankind. Psalm 46:10 (*Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth.*)

NYYM CONNECT!

There is an easy way to connect with all that NYYM has to offer: **NYYM Connect!** At www.tinyurl.com/nyymconnect you can sign up to receive news from NYYM and Powell House, resources and newsletters for Young Adults, Families, and Aging Resources, Consultation and Help (ARCH), and manage your email list options.



Befriending Fear of Climate Change: Friends' Community-of-Practice Rekindles the Fire of Fox

We are standing at the threshold of a potential evolutionary leap in spiritual consciousness. In our lifetimes, a tipping point of the planetary population will have an unprecedented opportunity to let go of outworn ways of living that no longer serve us and our planet. We can help birth an emergent, more compassionate and environmentally resilient future.

Yet fear stands between many of us and that eventuality.

Quaker Pathways Forward—Rekindling the Fire of Fox, a Friends' community of practice emerged from the recognition that evolutionary leaps in consciousness don't happen by osmosis or external actions alone. Quakers from Bellingham, Washington to Tampa, Florida and from Ontario, Canada to Belize

have therefore come together to hone our inner vision, and re-center ourselves in the fire of early Friends who took the mystery out of mysticism and lived their lives as transparent conduits for the Light.

Among our intents are to: 1) dissolve debilitating fears including fear of ecological destruction, 2) learn to experience still-point consciousness (the realm of light)

on an ongoing sustained basis in our everyday lives, and 3) bring exponentially enhanced clarity into our meetings and activism.

Two (f)Friends, Howard Hawhee of Austin (TX) Friends, South Central Yearly Meeting (SCYM), and Christopher Sammond of Poplar Ridge Friends, NYYM share their community of practice stories below. —*Pamela Boyce Simms*

Don Beldur—Mr. Fear

Howard Hawhee
Georgetown Friends:
Austin, TX, SCYM

I've been trying to connect with my fear. We are invited in *Quaker Pathways Forward* community of practice conversations to personify, get to know, converse with, and even befriend our deep underlying fear.

I remembered a personage from early Spanish literature with a Basque name*, *Don Beldur (Sir Fear, or Mr. Fear)* and began to think of my fear as Don Beldur. The name borrows from the Basque language in which *bildur* means "fear." I'm able to see his vague form sitting before me in the dark.

Last Sunday a couple of hours before meeting for worship, some Friends were in a small group for worship sharing (Liz from my community of practice group was there too). A Friend who I very much admire for her spirituality and activism (*especially around climate change*) talked about how she was having trouble finding that of God in the president and how it was probably fear that was impeding her from doing this.

I then decided to talk about something I usually keep to myself—about how I have felt for most of my life that North American society is based on imperialism and genocide, and that whoever is President is by definition our War Criminal-in-Chief—so that although at one time or another the progression of destruction might have a prettier face on it, it's pretty much the same from one leader to the next. Therefore I really don't have any more fear with this president as the figurehead than I've had at any



A flock of sheep at the Quaker Intentional Village in Canaan, NY. Photo by Spee Braun.

other time.

The breakthrough for me came a couple of hours later when that same Friend came up to me and said something along the lines of "I have come to the same realization that you have about our society, but only recently. And I wonder how you have kept it together all these years emotionally and with sanity." I said that, well, first off, this was just my country, the country where I live, and here we are. We are where we are, it is just what we have to deal with, and that I have no illusion about being in a fundamentally different situation had I been born and raised in a different country.

I did remark though that a kind of dread has come over me for the past few years: I wake up in the morning with this sense of an impending—*something*. I told her that this dread seems to have settled on the environmental catastrophe both current and impending. This fear is newer and overtook me more suddenly when I was older.

The Friend apologized for disturbing me with this questioning, but I told her that she had made me realize that I really am very OK sharing about this, this source of deep dread over the fate of our species and our planet, and this sense of accepting what our society really is, that I have come to be at peace with, without accepting it or giving up on changing it.

I've now somehow gotten to where I can dialog with the older fear that was perhaps the awareness of living in a society predicated on destruction and subordination, and shows me the way to personify and dialog with my newer fear of planetary ecological destruction.

We spoke in our last community of practice discussion about each of us bringing our own uniqueness and exploring our unique fear in the group. I realized that this is what we are doing in our monthly community of practice group, in Sunday's worship sharing, and that this is what the Friend and I were doing last Sunday.

I have always known in my head, but perhaps am beginning to be able to feel with the rest of myself, that a community is possible around a cheerful, resolute, realistic response to impending global destruction and that we can build the emotional and spiritual basis for that among ourselves.

*Literary note: The passage is from what is probably the earliest work in Spanish for which we have an attributed author (Gonzalo de Berceo), entitled *Milagros de nuestra Señora* (Miracles of Our Lady.) The line is: "*don Beldur lo levava, ¡par la cabeza mía!*" roughly translated as "sir Beldur led him on, I swear upon my head!" *Beldur* borrows from the Basque language (*bildur* in modern Basque), and it means "fear." Unlike in other languages one doesn't say "I am afraid" (as we do in English) or "I have fear" (as in many other European languages), but simply "I am fear." Perhaps this also encouraged me to personify fear as don Beldur.

Our Generation's "Lamb's War"

Christopher Sammond
Poplar Ridge Meeting

During the Obama administration, our nation changed many of the structures of our society. Health care was made available to all. We agreed to structures limiting the worst excesses of the financial "industry." We created institutional changes which made discriminating against people of color, LGBTQ persons, and women more difficult. We committed to a framework of energy use hoping to avoid making the planet uninhabitable to humans, not to mention a wealth of other species.

While we changed the structures, we did not really change the culture. In fact, shortly after Obama's first election, forces on the Right quite intentionally worked towards a cultural shift in the opposite direction, actively denigrating empathy, and lifting up and celebrating selfishness as a cultural virtue, as expounded by Ayn Rand. This effort at shifting the culture gave birth to the Tea Party movement, and here we are today, with most of the structural shifts of the Obama years negated, and then some.

As I have held questions about how to respond to the divisiveness, the fear mongering, the racism, and the tsunami of lies and half-truths characterizing our nation's political life at this time, I have been clearly and deeply called to go deep, and to join the many, many people of faith who are seeking to bring about the necessary shift in culture, a shift in spiritual consciousness, which

continued on next page



is necessary if we are to survive as a species. And, like my Quaker forebears, I know that work to begin within myself.

Friends of the first one hundred fifty years or so understood themselves to be fighting what they called “The Lamb’s War.” They were playing the ultimate “long game” of seeking to bring the entire planet to the experience of the Inward Christ, the Seed, the Light, that all might be guided by that Life and Light which guided them. And, their first effort in that “long game” was indisputably to let that Light of Christ work upon their own souls and consciousness, showing them where they were out of alignment with that Light. They sought to be, and were, transformed, and then went on to lead transformed lives.

The current battle against fearmongering, xenophobia, racism, sexism, the active and intentional undermining of truth, and the denial of the perilous juncture we have come to as a planet, is our generation of Friends’ Lamb’s War. That spiritual warfare has as its goal not just an exchange of the players in the political landscape. It demands of us a change of heart inwardly, and a change of consciousness, a shift in culture, outwardly.

One of the ways I am being faithful to that call has been to participate in the *Quaker Pathways Forward: Reclaiming the Power of Fox* community of practice (I much prefer the original title “21st Century Quaker Revival,” for I see that is what is needed in Friends, and what the world needs from us.) In that program led by Pamela Boyce Simms, Quakers across the continent have been working toward a shift in consciousness; a shift in what energy we hold our body/mind/spirit moment to moment. We are using techniques from Pamela’s diverse toolbox, borrowing from neuroscience and contemplative traditions.

It has been transformative, and syncs well with my Quaker practice. My wife, Barbara, says she is living with a different person, and has signed up to be part of the second cohort of thirty or more.

In the early 1800’s, enslaving another person was thought by the vast majority of Americans to be right and good. People from

Africa were deemed not fully human, which made it conscionable to enslave them. Those who disagreed with this cultural norm were considered deviates. A change of consciousness was needed. In the early 1900’s, women were considered too feeble minded to make intelligent political judgments without the guidance of their husbands. The idea of women voting seemed utterly absurd and against God and (literally) mankind. A change in consciousness was necessary.

In the early 2000’s, the earth is still seen as a “resource” to be exploited and extracted from, and humans see themselves as outside of the rest of creation. The shift to where we know ourselves to be a part of the intricate web of creation, and that God calls us to nurture and preserve that web, is the shift in consciousness before us. This is our Lamb’s War. We may not realize its fruition in our lifetimes, but the call is before us, loud and clear.

For information on how to participate in the Quaker Pathways Forward—Rekindling the Fire of Fox: Community of Practice, email pbs9@georgetown.edu

Quakers and Climate Change

Susanna Mattingly
Sustainability
Communications Officer,
FWCC

We hear a lot in the news about how big businesses and governments are responding to climate change (or not as the case may be), but we tend to hear far less about the inspiring work being done by people at the grassroots. However, what we’re doing as individuals and as communities is no different than what happens on a much bigger scale with politicians or oil company executives—it absolutely matters.

Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) is undertaking an ambitious and exciting new project working with Friends around the world to strengthen our environmental commitment and amplify our voice through a positive, global Quaker sustainability movement.

In my role as Sustainability

Communications Officer at FWCC, I am working to help yearly meetings around the world take further action on the Pisac Sustainability Minute approved at the World Plenary Meeting in Peru in 2016, which asks yearly meetings to initiate at least two concrete actions on sustainability, involving young adult Friends in key roles.

FWCC is posing a supportive challenge to Quakers to take action so that life on earth will continue. This is a spiritual call as well as a material one, to act not out of fear or through accusation, but with hope and love. We recognize sustainability and care for the earth are integral to our faith and our Quaker testimonies as we strive to live in right relationship with all creation. As a community, we can make a meaningful contribution to stabilizing the climate and building resilience. The fact that I am writing this article is a direct result of the Kabarak Call for Peace and Ecojustice of 2012 and the Pisac Sustainability Minute of 2016 and the hugely significant commitment Quakers globally have made to sustainability and stewardship of the earth.

Small changes make a big difference and every action matters. As it was so beautifully expressed in the Kabarak Call for Peace and Ecojustice: “However few our numbers, we are called to be the salt that flavors and preserves, to be a light in the darkness of greed and destruction.”

We want to build an empowering movement that Friends everywhere can join, and to steer the movement away from the guilt and fear that dominates so much of the climate change agenda. The upsetting facts of climate change often seem to discourage people from talking about it at all. In fact, recent research in the UK has found that two-thirds of people surveyed cannot remember ever having a conversation about it.

We are collecting stories that celebrate Quaker witness from Friends worldwide to help inspire

others and gather our collective voice. You can find these stories on the FWCC website: fwcc.world/sustainability-resources. If you’re reading this and would be interested in sharing your story, please get in touch.

The Urgency of Now

I attended the COP23 UN climate conference in Bonn, Germany in November 2017. During the conference, I heard deeply moving and powerful stories from Pacific Islanders about the devastating impact

that climate change is having on their lives, homes, communities and cultures. Urgent changes are needed, not just for future generations, but for the sake of our common family around the world who are already living with the impacts of climate change today. The majority of Quakers in the world live in the Global South and this is the reality of their daily lives. But also here in North America, communities are still reeling from the spate of

devastating extreme weather events in 2017. We need to stop thinking of this as a future problem.

We have the tools and knowledge we need to take action now. So let’s ask ourselves, what’s next?

What’s next?

There are plenty of things we can all do in our lives to make a difference, from simply telling our stories or engaging a neighbor in a conversation about climate change, to lobbying our representatives or adopting sustainable living habits.

We can support and empower each other to have confident conversations with powerful people about climate change, be it our boss; a spiritual leader; a local or national representative; or the people who run our businesses.

We ask meetings and churches to reflect and ask, without judgment or guilt, what more could we do? The focus should be on doing what we can, not what we can’t, so we must each choose which steps work for us.

Whatever you choose to do, share it with us at the FWCC World Office so that your actions are celebrated and shared to inspire others. Join us in this movement and be the change and the inspiration you want to see in the world!



Sheep, Quaker Intentional Village in Canaan, NY. Photo by Spee Braun.



Friends serve themselves at a community dinner at the Quaker Intentional Village in Canaan, NY. Photo by Spee Braun.

An Earthcare and Culture-building Experiment: Quaker Intentional Village-Canaan

Dee Duckworth, Eric Bear Ludwig, Jens Braun
Interviewed by Pamela Boyce Simms

(continued from page 1)

pasture. Over time I cultivated my own relationship with the flock. I understood the creatures, the grass, the sun, and the mystical experience of oneness.

There were a lot of coyotes in the area from which I needed to protect the sheep so I decided to talk to the coyotes and make them feel welcome. I asked them if they would please not eat the sheep, and they didn't (for years). We would hear the coyote howls at night but they never came near the flock. Different creatures have their natures which need to be respected."

—Jens Braun, *Quaker Intentional Village-Canaan (QIV)*

Living in community with the natural world, with other species, and with each other is a gift worth cultivating. Strong spirited community is the bedrock of Quakerism and will prove increasingly essential to our thriving as climate change accelerates.

Intentional communities, groups of people trying to figure out how to live together cooperatively, offer a pathway out of an extractive, exploitative growth-economy. They cultivate wholeness through cooperation. They embrace those who are determined to self-liberate

from the corrosive mainstream and commit to resilient ecological and social practices that foster the unity of people and the planet.

The Quaker Intentional Village (QIV) in East Chatham NY, composed of seven households, is an experiment in external and internal environmental resilience-building. As community pillar Jens Braun states, "Ways of being have to evolve beyond current ones. Choices about how we live are made every day. We have been trying unusual, new ways of looking at things."

The Land Reveals Itself, and "Us"

The conversation begins with the land that sustains life. QIV members leave a chair empty which represents the land during their meetings. Land stewardship is an issue that provides ongoing opportunities for discernment. As community member Dee Duckworth puts it, "There is a dynamic tension between, a) community members' progressive understanding of the need to 'liberate the land,' listen to the land, understand what we are doing to the earth, and, b) clinging to the idea of 'property.'"

As a group the community has adopted the practice of referring to "the land" rather than "property." Yet there are individual members who fence off their closely held and tended property from other people as well as wildlife and pests. QIV respects, honors and holds the space for everyone's sensibilities.

Jens speaks of how QIV's use of communal spaces has been heavily influenced by permaculture—specifically the design

principle of "concentric land use circles," or zones in which specific creatures live and activities take place. Priority is also given to "increasing surface area" by forming high points and depressions in the land with slopes in between.

QIV land was formerly a dairy farm. It had been overcrowded with cows which depleted the pastures. So the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRCD) has helped with pasture management, and 15 years of rotational sheep grazing has gone a long way toward rebuilding the soil. The land is also under New York State forestry management, which safeguards tree and plant diversity and ensures that the best seed trees are kept as healthy as possible.

Building Resilient Internal Landscapes

"Community is total joy with lots of difficulties. I am moved to tears for the blessing of it. It has answered longings that I didn't know that I had and transformed me in ways I didn't know I would be transformed. Belonging is essential. We all need to be part of something bigger than ourselves. That feeling isn't the same in more distant vague types of community. The closeness of day to day interactions creates true community."

—Dee Duckworth, *QIV*

Accelerating climate change means that society will be adapting to environmental challenges in perpetuity. Truly transformational preparation for the ecological long haul starts with our *internal* landscapes. The trust-building that's possible in close-knit Quaker communities such as QIV can hold the sacred space for such transformation.

"QIV is a microcosm of the larger society with regard to its commitment to Earthcare. There are people who are still entrenched in the culture of the mainstream," remarks Dee Duckworth. Dee is committed to self-observing that has led her to separate out from that mainstream. She is downsizing and

plans to move from a 1,200 sq. ft. house to a dwelling that is a fraction of that size for both spiritual and logistical reasons.

As Dee prepares for that eventuality she marvels at how much "stuff" she has collected. Letting go of excess has prompted deep introspection and the painful recognition of complicity with consumerism. Initiating and sustaining the lifestyle shifts we are called to make as we move into a carbon constrained future requires a shift in consciousness.

Involved with QIV for over six years now, Eric Bear Ludwig's personal relationship to the earth motivated him to engage with the community. He recalls a seminal, sad moment while on a river in his native South Florida when he viscerally "felt the river's sickness." He gravitated to the QIV to address his deep dissatisfaction about the state of humanity's relationship with the Earth and all life. He knew that he couldn't make the changes he saw as being necessary as a lone individual.

Yet, while the ecological imperative is a key motivator for Bear, the trust-building inherent in QIV's authentic and sustained immersion in intentional culture-building is what nourish him. He notes that, "Over the years community members have learned how to 'be' together and have grown more spacious in dealing with discomfort." He cherishes how through Quaker process the community has built the capacity to work with dissent from which spirit can speak. The process has afforded Bear the opportunity to appreciate and trust others' concerns about his projects, and he only wants to move forward when whatever they are holding is clear for them.

Bear, Jens, and Dee agree that Quaker values lived consciously in harmony in the Earth, and most especially in close, day to day proximity with peers generates tremendous resilience. QIV exemplifies depth of commitment to self-transformation in service to the whole.



Natalie Lindop-Braun picks fruit from a tree at the QIV-Canaan. Photo by Spee Braun.



Urban Food Resilience and Community Healing

Callie Janoff
Brooklyn Meeting

Brooklyn is on an island. When inevitable climate disruption happens, we are at risk of losing access to the millions of tons of food that we import to our corner of New York City every day. That threat is real, but also abstract for us in the relative comfort of our quickly gentrifying neighborhood. Expensive “natural” markets are popping up, and old bodegas are getting face-lifts and restocking with organic processed foods.

Our neighbors who have lived here for 20-50 years—many older Afro-Caribbean folks—are either cashing out if they own their homes, or getting priced out if they don’t. We often feel like helpless perpetrators of social crimes. It can feel like a lose/lose proposition.

My husband, Randy, is a gardener. It is his genetic pre-disposition. When he first saw our weed-choked back yard he saw soil, and soil means food. Over the last twelve years he has developed an oasis of hardy kiwis, passion fruit, raspberries, and countless medicinal plants and herbs. When the tomatoes wouldn’t thrive in our shady north facing patch, he moved to the roof, turning the tar beach into a miniature desert farm with modified hydroponic containers that bear not only tomatoes but peppers, beans, peas, squash, melons, cucumbers, and eggplants. Even the front yard’s rosehips and redbud blossoms are harvested for eating in our kitchen.

Even with this bounty, our gardens are effectively a hobby. For the bulk of our food we turn to a local upstate farmer who partners with a local Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) cooperative. Our particular CSA also partners with a food justice not-for-profit located in New York City, so that the CSA can offer affordable sliding scale prices to our neighbors in every economic circumstance.

Two years ago this not-for-profit partner reorganized its mission. It threatened to pull funding and staff resources from our little endeavor. Members of the CSA came together

to form a core group of volunteers to take the reins. Randy and I had become quite attached to this source of food for our home, and for our neighbors, and stepped in to try to help. We joined this core group of volunteers to help run the distribution—the point of contact between the farmer and our urban community. We quickly learned there was much work to be done. But hurrah! The not-for-profit agreed to continue its subsidy in part because of our demonstrated commitment.

Even with this continued support, we now needed to transition from a group that was organized by an employee into a group that was organized by a core group of volunteers. The one thing we have in common is our commitment to the CSA. Other than that we are as diverse as our neighborhood. These last two years have been a real struggle for this CSA core group, but one that mirrors the struggle of our community. How do we make a home together when our race and class differences pit us against one another in an urban capitalist zero-sum game? Could we model a strategy for feeding ourselves on the premise that each of us contributes what we can and we all succeed?

Our little experiment quickly hit our primary obstacle: interpersonal conflict. One member would feel impatient with another’s way of doing something. Another mistook constructive feedback for personal attacks and became defensive. Another would become exasperated when they felt another was failing to act with cultural competency. Emails were misinterpreted, people felt hurt, disrespected, discouraged, and angry, and we all wanted to avoid dealing with the emotional fall out of our conflict.

All this came to a head over this last summer, just as I was coming to the Friends General Conference (FGC) Gathering for the first time. I had signed up for the weeklong conflict transformation workshop, facilitated by members of NYYM’s own Committee on Conflict Transformation. Over the course of the week among Friends I was able to connect the dots between climate crises, cultivating local resiliency, my capacity to tolerate and even meaningfully engage conflict, and my own grounding Quaker practice.

In Pamela Boyce Simms’ plenary message I heard a distinct call. Climate change and climate disruption threatens our life on earth, our very capacity to keep one another fed and safe. Though we may not have a way to reverse this, we can survive. That survival will depend on our local foodshed and our capacity to grow food close to where we live, like we do in our urban hobby farm. But even more critical will be our capacity to work together in groups like our CSA core group.

Growing my capacity to help transform the conflict of our group is an unambiguous step I can take toward healing for my community split by gentrification. This is only possible when I can listen deeply, the way I do when I am with you, my Quaker community.



Greenhouse at Seneca Castle Organic Farm.
Photo provided by Jill McLellan.

An Inconvenient Sequel: the Book and the Movie

Sunfire Kazmayer
Easton Meeting

In 2006 Rodale Press published Al Gore’s *An Inconvenient Truth: The Planetary Emergency of Global Warming and What We Can Do About It*. In that same year, Gore’s movie, “An Inconvenient Truth: A Global Warning”, premiered—showing the world the possibilities of floods, droughts, and other climate related catastrophes, all brought on by human activities that produced planet-warming greenhouse gasses.

Early last year (2017) Rodale Press published Gore’s *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power*, and a movie with the same name premiered in August of that year.

The movie gives a backstage look at Gore’s fight to solve the climate crisis. It starts with a video of melting polar ice sheets with a voice-over of criticisms of “An Inconvenient Truth” from climate-change deniers. The movie ends with the Paris Accord and the setback when a reactionary President withdrew the United States from that accord.

The book does not have the personal focus of the movie. The first of two parts covers the scientific evidence for climate change. It treats in depth the catastrophes covered in the movie, adds references to other events, and includes accounts of women and men working to combat climate change. The second part discusses actions to mitigate and possibly reverse climate change. We are encouraged and given suggestions on how to:

- Be an Involved Citizen
- Speak at a Town Hall Meeting or Forum
- Write about Climate Effectively
- Start a Petition
- Establish Yourself as a Climate Activist Online
- Magnify Your Impact with Press Coverage
- Talk to Children About Climate Change
- Talk with Climate Deniers
- Find a Career in Renewable Energy
- Make Your Business More Sustainable
- Run for Office
- Walk the Walk
- Eat with the Planet in Mind
- Vote with Your Dollars
- Create and Host Events
- Become a Climate Reality Leader
- Give Your Own Climate Change Presentation

To my way of thinking, the movie is best seen as an introduction to the book. I wish that every Friend would read this book, especially focusing on the second part. All Friends are probably already doing some of the actions Gore proposes. But let us each ask, “What additional leadings do I have about implementing actions in this book?” *The movie is now available to NYYM’s meetings and committees as part of a new DVD lending library sponsored by our Earthcare Working Group. Check out nyym.org/content/earthcare-working-group-lending-library.*





Healthy Planet, Healthy People: Reconciling Global Rules to Promote Food-secure Farming

Susan H. Bragdon

Representative, Food and
Sustainability,
Quaker UN Office (QUNO)

The health and survival of humanity and the planet are directly linked to the agro-ecological practices of small-scale farmers and agricultural biodiversity. Farming practices that are agro-ecological involve growing a wide variety of crops, and delivering on productivity goals without depleting the environment or disrupting communities.

Small-scale farmers are essential to food and nutrition security, climate resilience, rural livelihoods, critical ecosystem services, and the health of the global population. Yet small farmer innovation has largely been neglected or excluded from the conversation about the future of agricultural production.

The innovative activity most crucial to global food security is the ability of small-scale farmers to consistently create new and relevant plant varieties, maintain on-farm diversity, as well as mix new and traditional varieties. Such innovation and small farm management systems are critical to food security because these systems offer frontline responses to climate change.

Unfortunately most people don't know that:

- Small scale farmers produce upwards of 70% of the food consumed today;
- The agricultural biodiversity small farmers manage is an essential part of the alternative to industrial agriculture; and,
- Both are essential to our ability to adapt to climate change and continue to feed ourselves.

The modern, industrial agriculture system that emerged after WWII is a new experiment in our 12,000-year history with agriculture. This modern system of agriculture is a major contributor to climate change, the largest user of fresh

water resources and the biggest driver of biodiversity loss. An increasingly urban population, the emergence of "modern" agriculture, and supermarkets have lowered our food-literacy level and eroded our once direct connection to our food system.

Transformative policy change is blocked when people don't understand the fundamental relationship between small-scale farmers, agricultural biodiversity, Agenda 2030, and the achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the global community in 2015.

(On January 1, 2016, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development— adopted by world leaders in September 2015 at an historic UN Summit—officially came into force. Over the next fifteen years, with these new Goals that universally apply to all, countries will mobilize efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change, while ensuring that no one is left behind.)

Even more problematic, an ill-informed public enables those with power to use ideological myth and economic dogma to foment fear. As framers of the public discourse they have carte blanche to set the rules of the game in the form of economic instruments, trade rules, development bank loans, or grant conditions in ways that can have devastating impacts on a given country's choice of policy instruments.

The public and policy makers alike must be made aware of the small farmer's pivotal role. Mitigation and adaptation to climate challenges and building resilience into agricultural production requires a transition to agroecological approaches. Small farms and on-farm agrobiodiversity play central roles. The loss of on-farm biological diversity depletes the very resources that are the foundation of the ability to adapt to climate change.

Despite Agenda 2030 and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals designed to promote cooperation, governance nationally and internationally remains siloed. Agrobiodiversity is rarely mentioned in

official climate change negotiations and global discussions on food and nutrition security. Since constituencies are unaware of risks inherent in uniformity, ignoring agrobiodiversity gives "modern" mono-crop agriculture free reign. Crop uniformity is doesn't just increase vulnerability to drought or salinity. It also thwarts adaptation to the changing climate.

We must face inconvenient truths. It is not enough to pull into a farmers' market in an electric car and buy organic cheese directly from a local farmer. We have to have tough conversations if we are going to make meaningful change. We have to pay attention to what the SDGs make clear, that hunger is about poverty, inequality and other structural problems and not just the quantity or quality of food.

Addressing climate change requires having unpopular conversations about:

- How taxes are spent e.g., subsidizing corn to feed to cows and biofuels for cars, spewing methane and CO2 into the atmosphere while replacing diversity with monocultures;
- The policy tools taken away from countries to support their agriculture sectors;
- Why billions of dollars are spent on supplements and moving molecules around to reinsert vitamins into a crop rather than address the structural issues that caused cheap, nutrient-depleted processed foods to become the norm.

The silver lining in this situation is that once these problems are shared, it may be easier to have the tough conversations and create the alliances needed for solutions. While experienced unevenly, most people have been touched by climate change. The vast majority of people are aware and care, even if they are not sure what to do.

We have an opportunity to take advantage of common concerns resulting from the globalization of parts of the food system. The modern food system has essentially exported obesity which is now growing faster in developing countries than in any other part of the world. Diets are increasingly simplified, and the global

burden of disease is now primarily diet-related. The poor in rich and in poor countries are struggling with similar issues where the underlying causes are also shared.

New alliances of small-scale farmers or in support of small-scale farmers both within and between countries is more possible today than at any time in history. The agricultural biological diversity developed and maintained on-farm by small-scale farmers around the world is critical to the health of our planet and our people and we must ensure our laws, policies and actions from the global to the local level recognize and support these communities and resources.

*Views are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of QUNO.



Misty landscape at the Quaker Intentional Village in Canaan, NY. Photo by Spee Braun.

A Garden for All Time

Jeffrey Aaron
Assistant Clerk, NYYM

Once, I started a garden.

My shovel in one hand and my young daughter's tiny hand in the other, we two walked to the designated spot in the back yard. She was perhaps two or three.

As she watched, I turned over the first shovelful of earth and there in the upturned dirt an earthworm wriggled. I saw my daughter's eyes widen in surprise and I realized that she did not yet know of worms. This was something new and amazing.

So I reached down to pick it up but she placed her little hand urgently on mine. I understood without any words from her that she was worried that her Daddy could be injured by this strange thing. I hesitated, then reassured her, explaining, "Worms don't bite. They have no teeth." Trusting her Daddy's great knowledge, she relaxed a little and watched cautiously, with wide-eyed curiosity as I gathered the worm up into my hands so she could look at it closely.

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John Tornow, Jill McLellan, and their family at Seneca Castle Organic Farm.

Food Production & Post-carbon Fulfillment

John Tornow, Liseli Haines, Pat Kenschaft
Interviewed by Pamela Boyce Simms

John Tornow, Seneca Castle, NY, Liseli Haines, Clinton NY, and Pat Kenschaft, Montclair, NJ all radiate a deep, content, fulfillment that they each attribute to ongoing collaboration with the natural world and growing food.

“You can grow food on your own that isn’t full of a lot unknown chemicals. You can buck the system. You can pick what you need as you need it and also know that what’s on your plate didn’t abuse someone’s labor.”
—John Tornow

Grower-owners of Seneca Castle Organic Farm, John Tornow and his wife Jill McLellan have fed their family and shared fresh produce with their neighbors from their farm since 1981 when they moved to the Finger Lakes region. John is the grower. Jill, AVP veteran of Auburn Prison Preparatory Meeting, is the farm’s back-office organizer of the 4H club, Farm Club, Boys and Girls Club, Hobart and William Smith College volunteers who have helped out on the farm.

Surrounded by mono-cropping conventional farmers who grow for export, ethanol, or cattle feed, John and Jill grow dozens of varieties of vegetables on a portion of their eight acre organic farm. John distributes his produce locally, and has experimented with multiple on-farm ventures. Seneca Castle Organic Farm exemplifies the type of small scale farm innovation that the Quaker UN Office (QUNO) lifts up worldwide.

John has worked with whatever set of circumstances presented themselves and learned invaluable lessons. He’s gone from enriching the soil with horse manure provided by a friend who used to breed race horses nearby, to chicken manure and organic feather meal, bone meal, and blood meal inputs with a slow time release of nutrients. He has experimented with seed varieties and planting schematics. His three dozen-strong chicken brood

benefits from lessons learned when he used to incubate chickens.

Seneca Castle Organic Farm once had an apple orchard and produced delicious apple cider. However, while most orchards producing cider for commercial distribution use dwarf apple trees, John’s orchard had tall, standard-sized trees. He realized that, “getting on a ladder with a spray rig was too labor intensive.” He also couldn’t abide the extraordinary level of industry waste, or “the need to spray chemicals at just the right temperature, at just the right time in order to produce the marketable, standard apple.” Increasingly stringent industry regulations which required cider producers to pasteurize their product, an impossibly expensive feat for small producers, was the final straw. Seneca Castle Farm’s cider production ceased. John remarks, “Big Ag will tolerate localized production up to the point where it starts to cut into their money.”

The farmers’ market circuit was also part of Seneca Castle Farm’s evolution. John sold produce at nearby farmers’ markets for years. However, aside from the fact that he found himself picking produce in the dark in order to get to market on time as autumn approached, John was actually more interested in giving away food than selling it. Clarity that emerged from decades of farming is that, the fun is in the giving. So to that end, he and Jill now happily supply and/or donate an abundance of food to:

- The Catholic Charities lunch program,
- The Food Justice gleaning project,
- Their own roadside farm stand and a stand in Geneva,
- Agro Business Child Development, (ABCD) migrant children day care, and,
- The Center for Concern’s Shelter.

“I am such a happy person. Gardening is so much fun and the garden almost takes care of itself. There is such wonder, awe, and joy in watching plants grow, in harvesting and tasting. You get a deep inner satisfaction from the garden and it saves a lot of money.” —Pat Kenschaft
Mention high-yield suburban organic gardening to anyone in Essex County, New Jersey and Pat

Kenschaft will come up in conversation. Pat, a former professor of Mathematics and member of Montclair Meeting, is a master-gardener who attributes successfully managing a chronic health challenge for decades to her process of gardening and superb quality food.

Pat also holds the archival memory for the Cornucopia Network of New Jersey (CNNJ). CNNJ is a non-profit organization that encourages local food production and distribution and includes suburban gardeners throughout Essex County NJ. CNNJ members teach others how to grow a tremendous amount of pesticide-free food in small spaces and offer garden tours.

Pat minimizes weeding, watering and uses no pesticides by double digging, heavily composting, and mulching her garden which yields 45 varieties of vegetables, fruits and herbs year round. Winter finds Pat harvesting Chinese cabbage and kale in the snow and fresh salad greens from her kitchen greenhouse window.

Anyone who looks out at their suburban backyard with superlative quality food production in mind and wonder’s “What’s possible?” is advised to contact Pat Kenschaft.

“I’m always reaching to do more, to find ways in which I can live with integrity. It’s such a fulfilling way to live.” —Liseli Haines

On any given crisp October morning for the past six years Liseli Haines could be found finishing up the insulation for that particular year’s wall of her 150 year old farm house in Clifton, New York. The farmhouse walls previously had no sheathing, only fiberglass insulation between the clapboard and inside wallboard. The original insulation has been replaced, one wall per year, by dense pack cellulose and ecologically sound foam board. Last year Liseli concluded the six year project which has exponentially increased the energy efficiency of the family homestead walls through which frosty breezes once blew. The walls are now 7.5 inches thick!

In addition to the insulation project, a large garden, a low-to-no trash policy, her son’s chickens, and a solar array in Liseli’s cow pasture also support resilience-building.

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“You can hold it, too,” I said after a moment. Astonished but trusting, she held her hands out and received the worm thoughtfully. Tenderly I soon told her, “We should put the worm back in the ground. Worms don’t like the sun. We like the sun, but worms don’t. They dry up from the sun.” Yet another stunning concept from the deep well of information that was her Daddy. So we put the worm back into the soil and stood there for a short while, watching and absorbing—we two—this amazing phenomenon before us.

And as we stood there, I became aware through her silent sense of wonder, of the reality, just beginning to settle into her growing mind, that the Earth below our feet is not just dirt, no, not without life. On the contrary, it is teeming with life—the worms, the many other little creatures that Daddy sometimes lets walk across his hands on their many tiny legs, and who knows what other great mysteries? And through my feet in that special quiet moment that we shared I felt the pulse of the Earth, the pulse of life and I knew that that was what Quakers call that of God when they have occasion to be tender to it, and that it is there within all the creatures alive in the good earth and in the insects on the ground and in the birds singing and winging in the air and in the grass growing at our feet and in the trees and even in the soil and in the rocks. And in the seeds we had brought to plant which promised to sprout with life when we cared for them, to grow with our care into things of beauty and food for our bodies. And in us, like song and like breath in that unspoken moment that we shared, alone together—but really not alone at all.

Now she is in her 40s and has had two children of her own of that same tender age. And maybe once again it is time to start a garden. 🌱



Food Production & Post-carbon Fulfillment

John Tornow, Liseli Haines, Pat Kenschaft
Interviewed by Pamela Boyce Simms

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She has always heated with wood and has not used her back-up fuel supply since 2014.

Liseli's use of the land and the wildlife thereon is factored into arrangements with a Mennonite dairy farmer who rents her certified organic pasture. A beekeeper maintains an apiary on the land and a game hunter supplies the household with venison. Yet equally important to sustaining and nurturing the integrity of the land, is Liseli's longstanding practice of regularly visiting special locations, aligning, and simply "being" with the space.

New York Yearly Meeting need look no further than to its own members to get a glimpse of what superb quality, simple, and extraordinarily fulfilling lives might look like in a post carbon future.

places of sanctuary, care for environmental refugees.

Each approach's inspiration, strategy and tactics differ. But far from being contradictory each part of the work is complementary and interdependent. Quakers have sometimes split "contemplation" from "action" as if the two were opposed, as if the only choices were quietism or worldly politicking. But two millennia of Quaker queries and 350 years of Friends' testimony remind us that "faith and practice" are one.

That's what I always tell Friends when we are talking about Earthcare issues. Don't feel guilty. Don't feel overwhelmed. Work on what you care about—your local peace/ecojustice committee, interfaith or community-based environmental group.

For instance, if peace is your main concern, a little thought will show you that peace without a planet is impossible, and vice versa. How can peace be built? What can we learn of conflict prevention, and reconciliation, from AVP, and from the work of African Peace Teams? This will become

extremely important in a world where severe shortages of energy, food, water, and other resources are becoming extremely likely.

If your interest is gardening—can we develop local food sources, urban agriculture and permaculture? If quality of life must replace quantity of goods in a mass consumer society, then much of the joy of life must come from local artists: arts, crafts and community-building celebration—rather than mass media.

Developments—Timeline

2007: Quaker Institute for the Future's (QIF) book *Right Relationship* stated Friends' concerns for climate justice.

2012: The *Kabarak Call to Peace and Ecojustice*, approved by all varieties of Friends at the World Conference in Kenya, asked us to:

- See what love can do: to love our neighbor as ourselves, to aid the widow and orphan, to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable, to appeal

to consciences and bind the wounds.

- Teach our children right relationship, to live in harmony with each other and all living beings in the earth, waters and sky of our Creator, who asks, "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the world?" (Job 38.4)
- Do justice to all and walk humbly with our God, to cooperate lovingly with all who share our hopes for the future of the earth.
- Be patterns and examples, in a 21st century campaign for peace and ecojustice, as difficult and decisive as the 19th century abolition of slavery

The Kabarak Call was followed by a number of *Living Water Gatherings* which were expressions of the

ecological concerns of Friends worldwide, recognizing water as a precious and increasingly scarce resource. Local gatherings took place in 16 states across the U.S., Bolivia, Canada, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico.

2016: The Pisac Sustainability Minute

formulated at World Conference in Peru asks Friends to act on the Call, with each local Meeting setting itself two tasks for the coming year. *How can our lives speak?*

In response a number of Quaker bodies declared:

- We recognize the connections between climate change and global economic injustice as well as unprecedented levels of consumption, and question assumptions of unlimited material growth on a planet with limited natural resources...
- We seek to nurture a global human society that prioritizes the well-being of people over profit, and lives in right relationship with our Earth; a peaceful world with fulfilling employment, clean air and water, renewable energy, and healthy thriving communities and ecosystems.

The United Nations Reality: The UN has stated principles of respect for all humanity and the planet. In 2012, a number of organiza-

tions protested the "corporate capture" of UN climate action and Sustainable Development Goals. In implicit rebuke, *Stakeholder Forum, BioRegions and Earth Charter's Principles for the Green Economy* (2012) recalled the UN to its own declarations, from which it was straying due to deliberate underfunding and pressure from the great powers. Since then the UN's "Green Economy" program with its "market mechanisms" has been severely criticized for failing to protect human, women's, local peasant-fisher communities, and aboriginal rights—rights that were formally declared as its basic mission.

Interfaith and Alliance Opportunities

At Quaker Earthcare Witness' (QEW) urging, FCNL added to its mission of Quaker political action: "to seek a world free of war and the threat of war, a society with equity and justice for all, a community where every person's potential may be fulfilled....we seek an earth restored."

Similar principles are found in:

- World Council of Churches' 2012 *Economy of Life and Bogor* declarations
- A series of interfaith statements culminating in *Together for a Common Future* (2014)
- Francis' papal encyclical *Laudato Si*, the *Catholic Climate Covenant*
- **Creation Justice Ministries**
- **Northwest Earth Institute's** study circles
- **Food First**
- **Indigenous Environmental Network, Idle No More, Tebtebba Via Campesina**
- **UN Women's Major Group, ecofeminist WECAN, and Grassroots Global Justice Alliance** of people of color (itself the inheritor of a forty-year environmental justice tradition with roots in the US civil rights movement and African-American church leadership)—and many others.

We should inform ourselves and be ready to cooperate. They are people of faith, friends and allies in the great transformation. We are not alone.

For links to these organizations, please see the online version of *Spark* at nyym.org/content/spark-march-2018



Harvesting at Seneca Castle Organic Farm; see page 9.

Quaker Earthcare: Timeline & Alliance Resources

David Miller

Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW) Representative to the UN, Montreal, Canada

Earthcare organizational work is inseparable from ecojustice and personal transformation. This work may take the form of:

- **Education:** self-examination and conscience-raising, writing, workshops, exchanging information, interconnection, coalitions for common action, beloved community,
- **Agitation:** petitions, lobbying, non-violent protest, movement-building, voting drives and other forms of political action, divestment and reinvestment,
- **Construction of arks:** ecovillages and other intentional communities, native plantings,

Spring Sessions 2018 • April 6-8 • NY Quarter/Brooklyn Friends School

Welcome to Spring Sessions 2018!



New York Quarterly Meeting welcomes everyone to NYYM's Spring Sessions, April 6-8, where we will discern the yearly meeting's business and expand the life and witness of our Society. We encourage Friends to come and share the worship and fellowship of the gathered yearly meeting, to bring your meeting's concerns to the yearly meeting's attention, and report back the decisions of the sessions. Programs will be available for all of our children, including a Youth Program for our teens. We will begin on Friday with coffee & community starting at 7:00 p.m. at the Brooklyn Friends School, 375 Pearl St, Brooklyn, NY 11201. The Saturday and Sunday events will also be held at Brooklyn Friends School. Spring Sessions registration is available now—visit nnyym.org/session/spring-sessions-2018 for online registration and advance materials.

Registration deadline is Wednesday, March 28.

The NYQM Host Task Group looks forward to meeting you!

NYYM Committee Clerks: Please register by Wednesday, March 28, and remind your members to do so as well. Committees may meet on Saturday from 1:30-3:00 p.m. and 3:10-4:45 p.m. To request a committee meeting room assignment or display space, contact Melanie-Claire Mallison, MsMellie@gmail.com, 607-280-8182. Please cc: all meeting space and display requests to office@nnyym.org so that our registrar is kept informed.

Clerks of Monthly Meetings: Please be sure to forward any NYYM Spring Sessions email announcements to your Meeting's email list to encourage your members and attenders to participate. Keep in mind that those who feel led to attend may require Meeting assistance, both financial and physical.

Everyone! Below are details about the registration procedures, meals, fees, and lodging. PLEASE NOTE that this year, we are asking for a "Suggested Registration Fee" in an effort to make Spring Sessions even more affordable. Those who can pay more than the suggested amount are encouraged to do so, to help offset those who cannot. Please do not let money stand between you and attending Spring Sessions! Pay what you can for registration and request Equalization Funds for what you cannot pay. We need your presence to be complete.

Directions to Brooklyn Friends School (375 Pearl St., Brooklyn, NY 11201) will be online. For who-to-call-about-what, we have provided a list of the Host Task Group members, Helpful People, and their contact information below. Again, be sure to check the Spring Sessions website at www.nnyym.org for further information, including advance reports.

Sustainability: We ask participants to consider their environmental impact when attending any NYYM gathering. Carpool with other attendees from your area, for instance, using the most fuel-efficient vehicle of the group. Bring a travel mug and water bottle with you—some even bring their own utensils and plates! Bring a warm sweater, so that we don't have to turn up the heat in the entire building for the comfort of two or three people. Instead of printing out the advance documents, save them to your computer or tech device and read them electronically. If you do print them out, be sure to share! Return your nametag holder when you last leave the venue, so they can be used again. Whatever ways you can think of to lower your carbon footprint, to reduce and reuse, will be greatly appreciated.

Hospitality is available with local Friends for Friday and/or Saturday nights by request on a **first-to-ask, first-assigned** basis. Hospitality arrangements must be made in advance. If all available Friendly hospitality has already been assigned, we will send you a list of local accommodations. Indicate your needs on the registration form and please register as early

as possible. You must register by Wednesday, March 28, to request overnight hospitality, meals, and/or childcare. We will also provide a short list of recommended hotels, motels, and hostels on request.

We look forward to welcoming you to the 2018 NYYM Spring Sessions! **Whisper Buddies** is a mentorship program where those who want to learn about Quaker process get paired up with those experienced in Quaker process, with an emphasis on equality and friendship. Sharing happens in real time during meetings via notes and whispers. This is an excellent opportunity to learn more about Quaker process and make a new connection with a Friend. Friends of all ages who are interested in Whisper Buddies should check the appropriate box on the registration form.

HOST TASK GROUP AND SESSIONS INFORMATION

NYYM Spring Sessions
Friday-Sunday, April 6-8, 2018
Brooklyn Friends School
375 Pearl St., Brooklyn, NY 11201

NYQM 2018 Host Task Group:
Zachary Edminster, Hugo Lane,
Melanie-Claire Mallison, Melissa
Minnich, Benjamin Warnke

Host Task Group Clerk:
Melanie-Claire Mallison,
MsMellie@gmail.com, 607-280-8182

Audio-Visual: Brooklyn Friends School will provide AV support

Children and Youth Programs Coordinator: Melanie-Claire

Committee Meeting Space & Display Space Requests:
Benjamin Warnke,
bwarnke@alembiccommunity.com

Food Coordinator: Melanie-Claire, working with BFS

Friday Night Coffee & Community Coordinators: Melissa Minnich and Benjamin Warnke

Registrar & Hospitality Coordinator: Helen Garay Toppins,
office@nnyym.org, 212-673-5750

Transportation Coordinator:
Melissa Minnich,
mjmminnich@gmail.com

Whisper Buddies Coordinator:
Jillian Smith,
jilliankianasmith@gmail.com

Children's and Youth Programming at Spring Sessions!

Youth Program, Grades 7-12:

We will not have a residential program this time around, so please do request hospitality for your teens, but we will still have an amazing time exploring Brooklyn—the Brooklyn Bridge Park and Promenade, the Brooklyn Museum, and of course, Brooklyn Friends School. In addition, we'll take part in the ARCH Scavenger Hunt, and be Whisper Buddies during one of the Meetings for Business.

Children's Program, Grades 1-6:

This group will have an on-site program, exploring Brooklyn Friends School, discussing NYYM agenda topics, plus play and art projects.

Infants through Kindergarten:

Childcare will be provided on Saturday and Sunday with advance registration.

Medical Form: A medical form must be completed for all children and youth attending sessions in addition to the registration. The form is available on the NYYM website (see the Spring Sessions page at nnyym.org/session/spring-sessions-2018).

Parents: We hope you will come and bring your children. Please read the information online about the Children's and Youth Programs, so that you can see that plans are in place to care for your children, whatever their ages. Contact the Youth Program Coordinator, Melanie-Claire Mallison (607-280-8182, MsMellie@gmail.com), with any questions or needs that you foresee. Please register promptly, so that we know how many children and youth will be attending. Note that a filled-in and signed Medical Information Form is required for each child. For the younger children, please plan to bring your child's favorite snacks, a few toys, and a change of clothing. Finally, we always welcome Friendly Adult Presences (FAPs)! Again, contact the Youth Program Coordinator to volunteer.



Spring Sessions 2018 • April 6-8 • NY Quarter/Brooklyn Friends School

Registration for Spring Sessions 2018

Hosted by New York Quarterly Meeting at
Brooklyn Friends School, 375 Pearl Street, Brooklyn NY 11201

REGISTRATION DUE DATE: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28, 2018

Please return one form for each household to:

New York Yearly Meeting, 15 Rutherford Place, New York, NY 10003.

You can REGISTER AND PAY ONLINE: nym.org/session/spring-sessions-2018

Call or email Helen if you have questions: 1-212-673-5750, office@nym.org

ADULT REGISTRATION

NAME	
Address	
Home & cell phone	
Email address	
Meeting	
Are you a NYYM committee clerk?	Are you willing to be a Whisper Buddy?

CHILDREN AND YOUTH REGISTRATION

Please note, Children and Youth programs will be arranged only if registered by Wednesday, March 28. Parents may be responsible for any youth registered late.

Find the mandatory medical form online at nym.org/committee/sessions-committee

NAME	Age	Arrival day/time	Departure day/time

HOSPITALITY

Please request hospitality as soon as possible.

I will make my own housing arrangements			
I/we would like home hospitality for:	Fri. night	Sat. night	Can bring sleeping bag
I would like to be housed with:			
I am willing to room with another Fall Sessions participant:			
Stairs a problem	Allergies	Smoker	
Special Needs:			
MEALS	Vegetarian/vegan	Gluten Free	Allergies? (pls. specify)
Meal fees are for adults and youth 13 and older. Younger children are free.			
Meal fee			Total
Friday evening coffee klatsch, suggested donation \$5			
Saturday morning continental breakfast/coffee, suggested: \$5			
Saturday lunch: \$12.00 per person 13 and older			
Saturday dinner: \$18.00 per person 13 and older			
Sunday box lunch: \$12.00 per person 13 and older			

REGISTRATION AND OTHER FEES	Amount
Suggested Adult Registration Fee** (\$25 per adult/youth)	
Suggested Child Registration Fee** (\$15 for ages 0-12)	
AFTER 3/28: Suggested Late Registration Fee, add \$10 per adult	
Total Meal Costs	
Contribution to NYYM Equalization Fund	
Assistance requested from NYYM Equalization Fund (subtract amount)	
TOTAL	

Enclose check payable to NYYM or pay online at nym.org/session/spring-sessions-2018

Spring Sessions Schedule

April 6-8, 2018

New York Quarterly Meeting

All events will be held at
Brooklyn Friends School,
375 Pearl St., Brooklyn, NY 11201

Friday, April 6

7:00-8:30pm Coffee & Community
(there will be tea and hot cocoa too)
ARCH Facilitated Scavenger Hunt: A chance for folks to get to know each other—and share dessert!

Saturday, April 7

8:00-9am Registration and continental breakfast
8am-9pm Youth Program throughout the day
9:00-9:45am Meeting for Worship
10am-12pm Children's Program
10am-12pm Meeting for Worship with Attention to the Life of the Yearly Meeting
12:15-1:15 Lunch
1:30-5:00 Children's Program
1:30-3:00 Committee meetings [1]*
3:15-4:45 Committee meetings [2]*
5:00-6:00 Dinner
6:15-9:00 Coordinating Committee meetings

Sunday, April 8

8:30-9am Registration and continental breakfast
8:30-12:30 Youth Program all morning
9:00-10:00 Meeting for Worship
10:15-12:15 Children's Program
10:15-12:15 Meeting for Worship with Attention to the Life of the Yearly Meeting
12:30-1:30 Box Lunches (folks may stay and eat or grab a box and go...)
2:00-3:00 Memorial Meeting for Mia Kissil Hewitt at Brooklyn Meeting, 110 Schermerhorn St., 3 blocks from BFS

*Committee meeting space to be reserved by committee clerks

**PLEASE NOTE that this year, we are asking for a "Suggested Registration Fee" in an effort to make Spring Sessions more affordable. If you can pay more than the suggested amount, please do so, to help offset those who cannot.