

the Meeting,” this is a conference for Friends who are called to care and counsel in their Quaker communities. Participants will enjoy a unique opportunity to explore with committed Friends how we can build and nurture the Blessed Community.

Brochures, with complete information on workshops as well as registration information are available from Friends General Conference. Material will also be post on FCC’s website on June 1. Please contact Liz Perch at FCC (1216 Arch Street, #2B, Philadelphia, PA 19107; 215-561 1700; nurturing@fgcquaker.org) or Deborah Fisch (916 41st Street, Des Moines, IA, 515 277 2189; deborahf@fgcquaker.org) for more information.

A Book Review

By Robert Wixon

Many Friends have expressed concern about environmental issues.



Finally a balanced and thorough book has appeared: *Fate of the Wild - The Endangered Species Act and the Future of Biodiversity*, by Bonnie B. Burgess, University of Georgia Press. Athens GA, 2002.

Briefly reviewing, this book commences to summarize the clear-cut forests in the Pacific Northwest, the oil slicks from spills in the oceans and rivers, smog over major cities, piles of strip mine tailings, the greenhouse gases that are exacerbated by extensive logging of trees that consumer carbon dioxide and produce the oxygen that is necessary for life. The author procedes clearly and carefully into the history of Endangered Species Act (ESA adopted in 1973), ESA today, the importance of biodiversity, the protagonists and antagonists and the battles in the halls of Congress, the President’s

plans, the contribution by government bureaucrats, etc.

He reviews ecology - the science that supports the need to conserve biodiversity and addresses some of the scientific conflicts plus the social and political issues that have hobbled ESA. ESA has been considered as a biodiversity policy, but actually covers only a small fraction of the problem, namely the species on the brink of extinction.

We are struggling in the biodiversity crisis - not so much as a crisis of species, but a crisis of lifestyles, where strong national leaders who believed jobs and economic growth were the key to continued prosperity. “Human abuse of the earth is pervasive, but at the same time, the human species has awesome creative powers...”

Five mass extinction have occurred on the earth in the last 3.5 billion years; these so-called “dead end events” at 570 million years ago (mya), where 50% of the existing species died off, and also at 345, 290, 208 and 65 mya. Extinction translates into a permanent loss of biodiversity, but may be mitigated by strategies in conservation biology such as captive breeding, inventorying species, by education, protecting large areas and their connecting corridors.

The last two chapters by Burgess suggest several constructive ways that Friends, FCNL, FCUN and the reader may conduct a valuable role in the coming years.

Commentary: Quaker group defends acts of Dissent

This guest commentary, written by Mary Ellen McNish and Paul Lacey regarding recent reports of illegal police department surveillance,

appeared in the 3/21/02 issue of the *Denver Post*.

How does a Quaker organization that has been working for peace, justice and empowerment of the disenfranchised all around the world for 85 years respond when a police department labels it a “criminal extremist organization?” At first, it is tempting to celebrate the good company in which we find ourselves (Amnesty International, for example). But the matter is too serious for humor. The American Friends Service Committee was founded in 1917 to provide opportunities for Quaker and other youth to make a witness against World War I by engaging in relief and reconstruction work with victims on both sides.

Rufus Jones, one of the great American spiritual leaders of the 20th century and longtime chair of the AFSC board, called this “a service of love in wartime.” In 1660, Quakers published a declaration that remains the foundation of our peace testimony: “We utterly deny all outward wars and strife and fighting with outward weapons to any end and under any pretense whatsoever.”

According to the American Civil Liberties Union's Colorado legal director, the Denver Police Department is maintaining illegal files on peaceful protest groups, including the AFSC. The ACLU reported that the files were marked “permanent,” although a police spokesman said the information-gathering was a response to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

The AFSC is proud that we have led or joined in many of the important, nonviolent social movements of the 20th century. From our beginnings, we have grown in scope as we work

to transform conditions and that threaten what is precious in human beings. We assisted coal miners in Appalachia in the 1920s; gave moral and social support to Japanese-Americans during World War II; and worked with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in the modern civil rights and anti-Vietnam war movements. Those were not popular actions in their time and often dismissed as “extremist.”

Certainly there have been occasions when Quakers and others have challenged unjust laws in the only way that the American judicial system allows: by breaking the law and being taken to court.

Many Americans defied the Fugitive Slave Act to help African-American slaves escape their bondage. Many broke segregation laws, or refused to serve in the military in the American war in Vietnam. They were called criminals and extremists at the time. Today, many Americans honor their dissent and are proud to claim them as ancestors.

We do not want to suggest anything positive about true criminal extremism. When actions take violent forms, or when they involve suppressing the legal rights of others - that is dangerously extremist. The fact that AFSC's current work with immigrants might be represented as illegal is a frightening reminder of days past in this country, when those who did not support a popularly held position were labeled and attacked as criminals and extremists.

The present mood in the United States is reminiscent of dark times in our history when raising a question was unpatriotic and immigrants were made scapegoats. AFSC is among the groups currently questioning the Bush administration's current war on terrorism. We grieve

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— AFSC

for the victims and families of those killed on Sept. 11. But we call for justice, not war; peace, not vengeance and retaliation. Letting anger and fear guide our actions will not erase terrorism from the world. Causing more pain and devastation will not bring back our loved ones.

War only escalates the cycle of violence. It is not a lasting solution. A call for peace does not mean we should do nothing in response to terrorist threats to our country.

The AFSC supports following the rule of law to find those who planned the terrible acts of Sept. 11 and bring them to justice under international law.

We must work for true justice for all people. We must uphold the civil rights of all Americans, of immigrants to this country, and indeed of people all over the world. We must work hard to seek social and economic justice all over the world, to change government policies that foster gross inequalities and suffering. Let us not justify government-supported illegal and secret acts - extremism - as a means to deal with dissent.

Mary Ellen McNish is general secretary and Paul Lacey is clerk of board of the Nobel Prize-winning American Friends Service Committee, an organization grounded in the principles of the Quakers.

Ruth A. Seeley, Assistant General Secretary, AFSC (formerly of St. Louis Meeting)

Thoughtful writing: Everyone is a Millionaire

By Mariellen O. Gilpin

A friend has developed the idea of a microlife: one millionth of a lifetime. He says there are 3600 seconds in an hour, 86,400 seconds in a day; in a year there are 31,536,000 seconds. In three score and ten years there are 2,

207,520,000 seconds. One millionth of a lifetime – one microlife – is 2207.52 seconds. Allow yourself to sleep for 1/3 of that, and one waking microlife is 1472.688 seconds, or 24 minutes and 33 seconds.

Think about that next time you wonder if you should spend the next several microlives working late. Would it be better to cuddle your sweetheart, visit on the porch with a dear old friend, play checkers with a kid, experiment with hanging the moon on various branches of the pine, watch the cat play tiger on the front lawn? You fill in the blank. How will you spend your next microlife?

Praying for the Living

Mariellen O. Gilpin

My Quaker meeting was going through a rough patch, with some very dear Friends separating from meeting. A faithful remnant had been laboring hard to heal the rifts. Finally, at a business meeting we passed an important milestone in a return to unity.

I crawled into bed that night filled with gratitude, deeply aware of the hard work that still lay ahead of us. I thanked God and asked for help listening for continued guidance. I began thinking about the wonderful old Friends, some dead more than twenty years, who had loved the meeting with all their hearts. I felt sure, wherever they were, they too were full of thanksgiving over the milestone we'd passed that night.

It had long been my hope and intention that when I died, I would continue to pray for my loved ones who were still alive. I hoped that I would pray in new ways made much more helpful because of a new, deeper and wider perspective in death. And I knew without doubt our dear departed Friends had been praying for the meeting.

I addressed each of my old Friends by name, lingering over each one. My mind's eye was full of memory-pictures of each dear Friend, just as they had looked in worship: Fran's quiet joy, Marion's silent praying for the quality of worship among us, Scott's misty yearning for God, Jim and Becky's gentle conviction, Mahlon's modest loyalty and humor. I thanked them for their prayers for the meeting and asked them to keep on praying for us.

I finished my prayers and rolled over to sleep. As far as I was concerned, I was done.

Suddenly, my mind's eye was filled with another vivid memory-picture: Wilbur, sitting in his corner by the window, arms folded and head bowed, looking as if he were in the presence of all Eternity. Just the way he always looked. Wilbur, too, had been praying us through the hard patch, and wanted me to know it.

"Thanks, Wilbur," I said. "Keep it up. We need every one of your prayers." Comforted and supported, I fell deep asleep.

First Days With Helen

By Jayme Long

Mine is a mixed marriage. My husband is a member of Community of Christ and I am a Quaker. When we met we were both active in our respective faith groups. When we married, our ceremony combined elements of both faiths. And when we had Helen, it became very important to unite our faiths and our family as much as possible. But there are times when one of us takes Helen while the other carries out some duty at church/meeting. This is how I spend many First Days:

When silence begins, Helen and I go down to the play room. It is rather small but full of all types of games, toys, marbles, crayons, many treasures for a toddler. Eventually, Helen

grows bored with even these treasures and we go to look at the fish (or "bish" as Helen calls them) in the aquarium. She also likes to look at the many plants (or "mats") thriving in the windows of the lower level of the Interfaith Center. I usually pick up a broom and sweep the floor, a small gesture toward the continued upkeep of the Center. Sometimes we walk the labyrinth on the grounds of the Center. Or, more accurately, I watch Helen run around in the path of her choice, smelling the spring flowers that circle the labyrinth.

In the last 15 minutes we return to join the others for silence. Helen remarks that everyone is "night night." She whispers when I ask her to but then notices people outside the window and is compelled to greet them, saying "Hi kids," into our silence as the strangers pass by.

It seems cliché to say that it is easy to experience God when one is around children. But the tenderness evoked by my love for Helen comes as close as possible, I think, to God's love. I feel blessed to be able to experience it, on the giving end anyway, since the receiving end is so much more difficult for me. Being with Helen while the rest of the Meeting worships is different than being with her any other time. She and I have our routine, our spiritual practice you might say, on our First Days together. It just happens to include "bish," "mats," and people who seem to be sleeping while sitting up. I know she feels loved by the Meeting, and it warms my heart and draws me closer to these Friends. It strengthens my family, even when we are not there together.

2002 Illinois Yearly Meeting *Quaker Practice: Spirit-Led Lives in the World*

We welcome visitors, members and attenders to our annual gathering July 31 to August 4, 2002. The theme for the week is how Quakers lead spirit-led lives in the world. Each of our chosen speakers will address this theme in their talk or presentation. We have selected our speakers to highlight various traditions within the Society of Friends. We hope that all who come to our Annual Meeting will be enlightened regarding how all of these traditions affect Quaker Practice.

Roxy Jacobs, Illinois Yearly Meeting's Field Secretary, will be giving the Plummer Lecture. The Plummer Lecture is an annual lecture given by a member of Illinois Yearly Meeting, in which the member shares their spiritual life's experience and discoveries and insights as a Friend. The Plummer Lecture is the last main event of the gathering. It is given on Sunday morning after Meeting for Worship.

Saturday evening, August 3rd, we will have William Medlin, a Friend from Indiana Yearly Meeting, who will be tying our theme to Quaker history. He will be returning to the

IYM 2002 Workshops

Thursday, Friday, Saturday

Sharing Our Spiritual Journeys, Deb Fisch
Inreach, Outreach, Local Meeting Advancement, Jane Berger

Friends and Slavery Today, Bill Medlin

Thursday and Friday

Putting Faith into Practice, Joanne & Joe Elder

This I Affirm, Nancy Wallace & David Shiner

Friday and Saturday

IYM Site Envisioning, Carol Bartles



meetinghouse at McNabb after a long absence. He was there in August 1968 listening on the radio to police beating protestors in Chicago. While we welcome him back, we also hope that the background isn't as exciting as it was then.

On Thursday August 1st we will be hearing from Deborah Fisch, a Friend from Iowa Yearly Meeting, Conservative. She has worked extensively with the FGC Traveling Ministries program. She will share her reflections regarding working with Friends outside of their own monthly and yearly meetings, in the broader Quaker Fellowship.

On Wednesday evening, July 31st, we will be hearing from Joe and Joann Elder who will emphasize the role of Quakers in the world today with a talk titled "Quakers in the World Today, Our Actions in the World". The Elders are members of Madison Meeting, Northern Yearly Meeting.

Registration information will be coming out in mid - late May. If you don't receive information and would like to, please contact:

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IYM 2002 Program
Theme: *Quaker Practice: Spirit-Led Lives in the World*

WEDNESDAY:

- 2:00—3:30 Opening Session: Worship & Bus. Mtg.
- 3:30—6:00 Free time for committees & socializing
- 5:30—6:00 Singing on front porch
Early supper for children
kitchen volunteers
- 6:00—7:00 Dinner
- 7:30—9:00 Service Project for Kids
- 7:30—8:45 **Address by Joanne and Joe
Elder
- 9:00 New attenders Meeting
(Registration table)
- 9:00—9:45 Snacks

THURSDAY, FRIDAY, SATURDAY:

- 6:30—7 am Early Meeting for Worship
- 6:45—7:45 Breakfast
- 7:30 New Attenders Mtg. on Sat.
(Registration table)
- 8:00—8:45 Meeting for Worship
(Memorials are read at Saturday Meeting for Worship)
- 9:00—noon Meeting for Business / FUN
Program
- 12:00—1:00 Lunch
- 1:30—3:45 Craft tent/Recreation—all ages
- 1:30—2:15 *Worship Sharing (all together
in meetinghouse)
- 2:30—3:45 Workshops
- 3:00—3:30 Snacks for children
- 4:00 Games on the front lawn
- 3:45—6:15 Free time for committees &
socializing
- 5:45—6:15 Singing on front porch
Early supper for children,
kitchen volunteers
- 6:15—7:15 Dinner

THURSDAY AFTERNOON AND EVENING:

- 1:30—3:45 Recreation—TBA
- 7:30—9:00 Campfire
- 7:30—8:45 **Address by Deborah Fisch
- 9:00—9:45 Snacks

FRIDAY AFTERNOON AND EVENING:

- 1:30—3:45 Recreation—TBA
- 3:45 Women's Theology Group
Meeting for worship, business
and discussion
- 7:45—10 Dancing on front lawn
- 9:00—9:45 Watermelon served outside
during dancing

SATURDAY AFTERNOON AND EVENING:

- 1:15—3:30 Recreation—TBA
- 4:00 Area Planning Groups meet
- 4:30—5:30 Talent Show
- 7:30—9:00 Young Friends movies
- 7:30—8:45 **Address by Bill Medlin
- 9:00—9:45 Snacks

SUNDAY

- 6:30—7:30 Early Meeting for Worship
- 7:30—8:30 Breakfast
- 10:00—11:00 Plummer Lecture: Roxy Jacobs
- 11:30—12:30 Meeting for Worship
- 12:30—1:30 Lunch
- 1:30 Cleanup and Farewells

*Worship Sharing will be done in plenary sessions each afternoon this year in the form of Meetings for Worship with a concern for Monthly Meetings.
 **Each evening before the main evening program, one Quaker organization will be given 20 minutes to share information about their organization.



What does the future hold for the IYM property at McNabb, IL? The meeting house is 125 years old.

See reports by Finance Committee (page 14) and Site Envisioning and Building Committee (page 15).