

John and Ann Miller transferred their membership from West Richmond Friends Meeting to South Bend. Last fall, Chris Morrissey transferred his membership from California, and this summer, his wife, JaVaughn Fernanders became a member, as well. In addition, JaVaughn is to be congratulated on her new position as IYM Youth Coordinator!

Urbana-Champaign

By Mariellen Gilpin

We have had a healthy attendance at worship this summer and fall — triple the attendance we regularly had three years ago, before we moved into the new meetinghouse. We're looking around us and thinking, "How do we nurture all this growth?" and we're coming up with three overlapping circles: Spiritual Nurture, Building Community, and Nurturing Newcomers. With those overlaps in mind, we've reached out in various ways.

Quad Day and Adult Young Friends Quad Day is an institution at the University — all the campus organizations have a booth on the Quad and the incoming students all descend in droves to connect with the organizations of their choice. For a number of years, this has been an institution we have run with a lot of grayheads. But over the summer, Andrea and Tim Bretl invited our students to a potluck at their house, and those students contributed their creative energies to the Quad Day effort. They helped staff the booth, which helped attract students. They decided to host a potluck on campus for the students who expressed interest during Quad Day. One of our students made a flier advertising the potluck, with a picture of the Quaker Oats guy with the slogan, "Think this is all Quakers eat? Think again." Only one new student showed up at the special potluck, but he came to worship the next day, and our students are busy contacting the others on the

signup sheet to invite them again. We are blessed with all this energy devoted to attracting other young people.


Quaker Basics We had a series of four meetings before worship to explain some basic things about Quakerism: a session about silent worship — difficulties and solutions to difficulties — a session on the peace testimony, and two sessions on Quaker history, which we advertised as "350 Years of Quaker History in 45 Minutes." Peter Lasersohn did a great job with these talks on our history, clearing up confusions among oldtimers as well as newcomers. His talks were a real tour de force, and several of us have urged Peter to publish this summary of our history. IYM Friends can find Peter's notes for his presentations on the website: <http://www.quaker.org/urbana/>

Procedures Handbook While you're checking out our website, look for the *Handbook of Meeting Procedures*, which is undergoing approval by business meeting at this time. A labor of love by five devoted Friends, this nearly 40-page document was written to inform old and new Friends alike how the work of the meeting gets done. It covers everything from good manners in business meeting to

how to clean the toilets. Feel free to print the document and use it to start your own Handbook of Meeting Procedures.


Vacation Friends School We had between 9 and 13 kids on any given day of this week-long day camp, started by Brenda Koenig with Ellen Baranowski, plus at least that many adult volunteers (not all at once, of course). It was a wonderful opportunity for the kids and adults to get to know each other better. We played games, sang songs, baked, danced, collected moths, did arts and crafts, made paper, dressed up in costumes, relaxed in the hammock, played endless games with large empty boxes, and worked together in silence every day. Every day we talked about a testimony. A favorite

Think this is how
Quakers eat?



Think again.

See how real Quakers do lunch.
Come join us for a Fall semester kick-off lunch
with the Young Adult's group.
Room ??? Illini Union
Food served at Noon
Saturday, August 25



activity was “passing the squeeze” at closing circle. When asked, the kids said their favorite things about Vacation Friends School were: baking cookies, dressing in costumes, playing imagination games with boxes and, most importantly, playing with friends. The kids also really appreciated that they could choose most of their activities themselves (We always started the day with choosing activities).

Float Trips on the Middle Fork In June and again in September, Friends converged to canoe, kayak, paddleboat, or tube down the Middle Fork. We had a brown bag lunch together. Everyone had a great time, even though the water was really low in September. Nobody got too sunburned, although those in a tube sometimes had back trouble after sitting in an awkward position for three hours. Our new clerk, Sandy Bales, suggested the Canoe Outing, and we have decided it’s going to be a tradition. We are looking for other good ideas for community-building through shared fun.

Labor Day Parade The Unions sponsor a family-oriented parade on Labor Day, and this was the first year we have participated. The First Day School made a float based on a child’s wagon, and some of us joined the kids for the parade. Our subject was Immigration Reform, and our slogan was, “A Place at the Table.” The Jobs with Justice people marched right behind us. The friendly onlookers cheered us on, calling, “Go, Quakers!”

Friendly Eights In June we started small group potlucks for Friends to get to know each other better. There were four groups, one of them a restaurant group. Each group met on its own schedule. We all had such a good time we decided to scramble the groups with a new signup sheet, so we can all get to know other Friends and eat more delicious Quaker food. Or explore different restaurants together.

Spiritual Nurture Groups This fall we are starting worship-sharing groups, each group having

five or six members, and each group selecting its own schedule of meeting and taking turns designing a query for the worship-sharing. The first meetings of the Spiritual Nurture groups will be the week of October 15-19. We are looking forward to introducing worship-sharing to our newcomers as a way to get to know one another in a more spiritual way.

Friend in Residence We have invited Maurine Pyle, IYM’s Field Secretary, to reside in our community for a year, and Maurine is busy discerning whether and how she can come be among us. At the very least, she plans to visit us more often and longer. When she comes to see us, we work hard to book her up, rushing her from one Friendly session to another. She says she loves being treated as someone who has a function while she’s here. We look forward to an exciting year with Maurine, one way or another.

Peace and Service A number of new initiatives came from Peace and Service committee over the summer. First, a singer-songwriter from Tucson named Patricia Morrison contacted us, offering to present a fundraiser for us. We invited the community, and several Mennonites came. Her voice filled the meeting room with lovely music. A freewill offering raised \$430 for African Great Lakes Initiative and Friendship with Cambodia.

Also, Ned Stowe of Friends Committee on National Legislation joined us for worship one Sunday and talked to us about the work of FCNL. It was good to see our old friend Ned, who attended this meeting in the seventies and eighties, and who got his first job at FCNL based on a glowing letter Cam Satterthwaite wrote about him.

Finally, David Zarembka, his daughter Joy Zarembka, and two African Quakers came for an evening of conversation about the African Great Lakes/Friends Peace Teams effort to rebuild community after genocide. We had on hand and sold some copies of the AGLI book, *Seeking Peace in Africa*, and of Joy Zarembka’s book, *Pigment of Your Imagination*. Again, we reached out to the community with this presentation in our lovely new meetinghouse.

Upper Fox Valley

By Angie Reeks

This past year has been a busy and exciting one for Upper Fox Valley Quaker Meeting (UFVQM). We have welcomed four new, regular attenders to our meeting: Mike and Joni Bohne, Jennel Lampe, and Paulette Leonard. They all contribute greatly to the meeting.

UFVQM was well represented at the annual gathering of Illinois Yearly Meeting in McNabb with at least eight in attendance. We were also very well represented at the FGC gathering this summer with at least eleven folks (six adults & five youth) in attendance in Wisconsin.

Meg Nelson graduated from high school this spring and has since begun her first year of college at Shimer College in Chicago. She reports that she is enjoying this experience greatly.

Another young Friend and meeting member, Alia Hammerstone, attends Northern Illinois University. She has become a Resident Assistant in her dorm and has plans to teach history at the high school level upon completion of her schooling.

Our Second annual Old-fashioned Corn Roast and Pot Luck picnic for Metropolitan Chicago General Meeting was a huge success with 81 people in attendance including several from Blue River Quarterly Meeting (Peter Lasersohn, Sharon Haworth, their son Nathan, and Margie Haworth). This was held at the Pioneer Tree Farm and hosted by the Upper Fox Valley Quaker Meeting. John Hackman and some musician F/friends played providing us with great musical entertainment.

Our meeting continues with its study group. We have made several changes including studying the Bible. Recently we decided to move our meeting time to each Sunday at 8:30 AM and are currently studying the *Twelve Quakers And...* series.

Other Reports

ACFIA Update

By Grayce Mesner

A report for the Associated Committee of Friends on Indian Affairs (ACFIA) was written for the Illinois Yearly Meeting Minute Book so this report will just contain a few updates.

The Iowa Yearly Meeting has accepted the Mesquakie Friends Center as a direct mission. Victor and Brenda White will continue their work at Mesquakie but Iowa Yearly Meeting will provide guidance and leadership.

Kickapoo Friends Center continues to function under ACFIA, but details are being worked out to allow the center to become a mission of Mid America Evangelical Friends Yearly Meeting. The 2008 Annual Meeting will be held at Kickapoo Friends Center in McCloud, OK, April 3 - 5, 2008.

If you wish to be on a mailing list notify Jill McNamara - acfia1869@yahoo.com or at 403 S. Postlewait, Alexis, IL 61412.

Olney

By Grayce Mesner

The school year is off to a good beginning, with 32 returning students and 25 who are new to Olney. Both the junior and senior classes are again at full enrollment. There are students from 17 states in the U.S. and 11 other countries. There are a number of new teachers and staff who have enthusiastically jumped right in to life at the school, with plenty of seasoned staff and teachers to mentor them as they learn the ropes. All of the standard classes are augmented by a rich assortment of electives, including gardening, Quakerism, psychology, Trees and

Gods, Hip Hop and Culture, piano, chorus and ceramics.

During Homecoming the weekend of Oct. 13 and 14, the Saturday evening program was presented by the West Virginia University African Drum and Dance Ensemble, one of many groups in the WVU Division of Music's World Music Center.

For more information about Olney, visit their website at www.olneyfriends.org, call 740-425-3655, email to mainoffice@olneyfriends.org or write to them at 61830 Sandy Ridge Rd., Barnesville, OH 43713.

Opportunities

End-of-Winter Retreat 08

By Mariellen Gilpin

Do you wish you could help your meetings for worship reach a deeper, more spiritual level? Do you wonder how you can help someone in your meeting move a little closer to God's path for their life? Do you wish you could experience the power of prayer? Come to Camp Menno Haven, Tiskilwa, Illinois, March 29-30, for an experiential Winter Retreat on spiritual nurturing.

Our presenters will be: *Elaine Emily*, a longtime Friends minister from California, presenter of retreats and the 2007 FGC Gathering workshop on "Rediscovering Eldering" which the four of us (Brad Laird, Monica Tetzlaff, Sue Davison, and Mariellen Gilpin) attended in July 2007. Come meet Elaine, and be changed as we have been changed. (You can read Mariellen's account of her experience at FGC Gathering 2007 in this issue of *Among Friends*.)

Also, *Erin McDougall*, a Young Adult Friend (YAF) from Vancouver, British Columbia, currently attending Earlham School of Religion, will share with us the YAF dream of convergent Quakerism. YAF have experienced a deep unity of Spirit across the different branches of Quakerism and are working to reunite us after almost 200 years of suspicion.

Also present will be Elaine's traveling elder, Bob Schmitt of Minneapolis. He will be joined in his work by Maurine Pyle, IYM's own Field Secretary. These Friends' entire mission will be to center us all in Spirit by soaking us in prayer.

The Winter Retreat will begin at 10:00 am on Saturday, March 29, and end after lunch on Sunday. Friends are invited to plan on arriving Friday evening, so they can be fresh and invigorated by a good Menno Haven breakfast when we begin Saturday at ten o'clock.

As Jesus said of his ministry, "Come and see."

Come and see your old IYM Friends in a new light.

Come and see your love for new and familiar Friends grow in a few hours time.

Come and see your sense of your own mission among Friends blossom.

Come and see what all the fuss is about.

Come and see yourself change in profound ways.

This is a wonderful opportunity for IYM Friends to experience some of the same powerful worship experiences that so inspired and challenged your Winter Retreat Planning Committee members during FGC Gathering. Your view of Quakerism, and of your own power to help midwife a deeper ministry among Friends through focused prayer and spiritual nurture, will never be quite the same.

Menno Haven is a really nice camp: cozy heated bunkrooms with cozy heated bathrooms; motel-style rooms, each with one queen bed and one bunk bed, and a private bath—everything wheelchair accessible; food cooked by people who really understand how Quakers prefer to eat; comfortable meeting space overlooking the Illinois River Valley; an elevator in the main building.

All are welcome—Young Friends, Young Adult Friends, monthly meeting members and attenders, IYM Standing Committees, members of monthly meeting committees on Ministry or Advancement, old Friends, new Friends, friends of Friends, and all Friends who hunger for a closer walk with God. It's not just teens who enjoy Midwinter Quakes. Come and bring a friend. The more the merrier!

No one should decide not to come because of cost. We have some scholarship funds available for part or all of the cost, particularly if you are a Young Friend or Young Adult Friend. Those who can do so are invited to contribute a little extra to help those short of funds. And, the more Friends who let us know they'd like to come, the lower the cost for each of us. Y'all come!

Costs are likely to approximate about \$75 per person for Saturday night's dormitory space and meals. Alternatively, it'll cost about \$150 per person for meals and a single hotel room occupancy for Saturday night, \$110 for double room

occupancy and meals, or Friends can triple up in the hotel rooms and save a little, also. Coming Friday night will add another \$75 for a single room and breakfast, \$45 for a double with breakfast, or \$30 for dorm space and breakfast. These costs are approximate, based on fees last year. (Menno Haven has not yet figured the costs for 2008.)

Contact Sue Davison for more information, to request scholarship help, and to register. Rates per person will be announced via email shortly. Sue Davison, shrdavison@mac.com, 1301 Irving Avenue, Wheaton IL 60187, 630-665-

Subscribe to E-newsletter from American Friends Service Committee

The AFSC has a monthly "Toward Peace and Justice" e-newsletter. You can subscribe at <http://afsc.org/news/newsletr.htm>.

Get up-to-minute information of service projects. For example, the **2008 Mexico Summer Project for youth will take place from June 26-August 9, 2008.** Applications are being accepted now.

April 3 – 6, 2008 FWCC Gathering in Indiana

Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) will meet April 3 - 6, 2008 at Waycross Episcopal Camp in Morgantown, IN.

All Friends are welcome to join us for business, worship, workshops and fellowship with friends from the Americas. Pre-registration is requested. Online registration begins in November, 2007. For more information go to www.fwccamericas.org.

IYM is not too distant to assist the local arrangements committee, with hospitality for meeting attenders or in dozens of other ways. Please think about hosting Friends in your meeting before and after the event, or planning a tour, or putting together a yearly meeting display to help introduce Friends to our region, or taking a more active role with local arrangements.

Our midwest FWCC staffer, Susan Lee Barton, has created a list of 40 ways to help. Contact her at susanleeb@fwccamericas.org.

8661.

Simple Opportunities For Friends To Move Faith To Action: Living The Peace Testimony

By Dawn Rubbert

How many times have you encountered a situation – seeing someone homeless or disenfranchised, hearing of an unfair law, hearing of the dead in Iraq – and felt a nudge of the Spirit to do . . . something . . . but what? Some time ago I agreed to write an article informing St. Louis F/friends of ways we can, with little effort, be more active and effective regarding current peace and justice issues. Thought I would share this endeavor with the wider circle of IYM Friends. The suggestions below focus on ways you can be more active without leaving your home.

“Whether in times of war or times of peace the Quaker is under peculiar obligation to assist and to forward movements and forces which make for peace in the world and which bind men together in ties of unity and fellowship.”

~~Rufus Jones; *The Quaker Peace Position* ~~

The American Friends Service Committee

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) carries out service, development, social justice, and peace programs throughout the world. Founded by Quakers in 1917 to provide conscientious objectors with an opportunity to aid civilian war victims, AFSC’s work attracts the support and partnership of people of many races, religions, and cultures.

AFSC’s work is based on the Quaker belief in the worth of every person and faith in the power of love to overcome violence and injustice. The organization’s mission and achievements won worldwide recognition in 1947 when it accepted the Nobel Peace Prize with the British Friends Service Council on behalf of all Quakers.

The AFSC is directed by a Quaker board and staffed by Quakers and other people of faith

who share the Friends’ desire for peace and social justice. If you are interested in serving on the board or other AFSC committees talk to Dawn Rubbert.

AFSC offers several email subscriptions for Friends and others to keep informed regarding issues that the Service Committee is working on. There are also a number of topical newsletters to which you can subscribe, online. You can choose one or more of the following at the website below:

To subscribe to online newsletters go to <http://www.afsc.org/news/newsletr.htm>

- AFSC Monthly E-newsletter - Updates on our work and ways you can get involved;
- Faces of Hope Campaign News - monthly updates from the Middle East and action alerts to support peace in the region;
- Project Voice Update - monthly email about AFSC’s immigrants rights work;
- Wage Peace Campaign E-newsletter - bi-weekly updates on peace activism and resources

There are also printed newsletters available for those who do not use computers. Contact AFSC in Philadelphia (215 241-7000), in Chicago (312-427-2533) or in St. Louis (314-862-5773).

Learn more about AFSC programs in the US and overseas at www.afsc.org.

Friends Committee on National Legislation

The Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) is the largest peace lobby in Washington, DC. Founded in 1943 by members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), FCNL staff and volunteers work with a nationwide network of tens of thousands of people from many different races, religions, and cultures to advocate social and economic justice, peace, and good government

FCNL is also the oldest registered, ecumenical lobby in Washington, DC. A General Commit-

tee made up of some 220 Quakers from around the country sets the organization's legislative priorities and policies. FCNL's multi-issue advocacy connects historic Quaker testimonies on peace, equality, simplicity, and truth with peace and social justice issues which the United States government is or should be addressing.

FCNL offers email updates with action suggestions on a variety of legislative issues. You can sign up for any of the topics below at <http://www.fcnl.org/email/>

- weekly update of events concerning nuclear weapons, disarmament, and nonproliferation -- updates and information about work to build a more peaceful world and the peaceful prevention of deadly conflict
- weekly updates on civil liberties and human rights developments and information
- every two weeks — updates and action suggestions on legislation affecting Native Americans
- information of special interest to young adults about the issues FCNL works on and about upcoming events
- periodic updates from the U.S. Campaign to Ban Landmines (USCBL), a coalition of approximately 500 groups dedicated to a total ban on antipersonnel landmines. FCNL is the current coordinating organization of the USCBL.

Learn more about FCNL at www.fcnl.org.

Human Rights Action Service (HRAS)

For folks who are concerned, but lack time to respond to current issues. A subscription service that charges \$50 per year, HRAS is operated by St. Louis activist and war tax resister, Bill Ramsey, a former AFSC staffer of 20 years. Subscribers receive the following:

- a personalized letter or fax sent in their name to a government official or political organization in response to a specific instance of human rights abuse. You may preview your letters, if you wish, and are always encouraged to rec-

ommend human rights cases to HRAS.

- An informative *Buyers Guide to Human Rights* featuring advice on making wise consumer choices as well as updates on boycotts.
- A copy of the Human Rights Media Watch with in-depth analysis of the media's coverage of human rights issues to help you become a more critical newspaper reader and radio listener.

Subscribers may choose to receive print versions via regular mail or electronic versions via email.

For more information, go to <http://www.humanrightsaction.net/> or phone 314-725-5303.

Progressive Secretary (PS)

PS is a free letter writing cooperative. Jim Harris, founder and sole operator till mid-1999, describes himself as "a sixties activist and a Quaker." After treatment for leukemia left him partially disabled, he decided to devote himself to progressive service by using his computer skills and his knowledge of activism. Initially PS was financed by Jim alone -- he used his own limited funds to purchase the computer and software upon which PS's work is based. PS now gladly accepts contributions to help pay for equipment and the constant upgrades needed as the service grows. Jim maintains overall coordination of PS but concentrates increasingly on technical operations since being joined by Pat Murphy, also a Quaker, who coordinates letters. Pat is a long time activist, educator, and writer who volunteered for the AFSC, the Florida Coalition for Peace and Justice, and many other causes. An experienced administrator and writer, Pat retired in 1991 as Five College Professor of African Studies, based at Smith College, Northampton, MA. Pat now has degenerative mobility problems that force him to spend most of his time at the computer. Jim and Pat depend upon literally scores of volunteers to accomplish the work of PS; services include: sending out progressive email letters to Con-

gress, the President, and other officials on peace, ecology, civil rights and other issues. Letters are suggested by participants in the cooperative and are sent to you as a proposal. If you tell us to “send”, then the letters are sent to your Congress people and others. If you like, you can send the letters yourself. Letters are not sent without your specific approval; your name and email are never given out except to recipients of your letters.

Learn more at <http://ProgressiveSecretary.Org>.

Personal reflections

Statement of Environmental Concern: Towards a Personal Testimony of Right Relation with the Earth

By Adrian Fisher

In this time of global warming, oil depletion, and habitat destruction, it goes without saying that many people (and most Friends) realize that our way of life must shift dramatically. Something, many things, must be done. Environmentalism has even become trendy, fodder for slogans, light-hearted news features, and feel-good advertising. Yet if we who live in industrial nations rely on purely secular science, technology, and “buying green” to save us and our planet, without considering the divine spirit or our place in creation, we are also relying on cultural structures, beliefs, and habits of thought that have contributed to our present deadly dilemma.

In the secular push to somehow maintain our anthropocentric global economy, I believe we should not forget the other living beings and ecological systems with which we share our planet, on which our lives depend. It is true that humans must utilize creation in order to live. It is true that humans have dominion over the earth, whether we would or no. Yet humankind’s failure to live in right relation with the

earth has led to our mindless living upon creation in the relation of masters upon slaves—we have whipped, manacled, destroyed, and laid waste. Right relation with God, with our Inward Guide, requires that we live in right relation with the earth, that we re-define dominion, and re-reverence creation: for “there we see God.”

Our Western civilization is undeniably great — intellectually, artistically, and technologically. As a middle-class American, I admit I enjoy the benefits. I love my comfortable life. Other comfortable North Americans, including many Friends like me, might be tempted to see environmentalism as negative and even puritanical. Environmentalists, secular and Friendly alike, urge us to reduce our consumption, to restrain ourselves, to sacrifice ease, comfort, pleasure — and economic benefits; not unlike the owners of slaves who were asked to give up the ease, comfort, pleasure — and economic benefits of a way of life that exploited other humans. Many slave owners thought only in terms of the destruction of their existing way of life; they couldn’t, or wouldn’t, envision and carry out cultural changes leading to a different way of life. So it is with many of us today.

It has been said that the average middle-class American uses the energy-worth of approximately three hundred slaves to support a “normal” lifestyle. When the power goes out during a storm, or conversely, when utilizing the blessings of modern medicine, one realizes, perhaps briefly, what there is indeed to lose. One wishes there might be an easy way out without the necessity of rethinking and possibly changing every aspect of one’s life: perhaps calculating our carbon footprints and purchasing carbon offsets might suffice.

Many early Friends might have emphasized something else. They saw the built environment, human creations (palaces, cathedrals, luxurious clothes) and “forms” as impediments to being able to experience the Inner Light, to heed our Inward Guide. The things of “the world” were

human-created distractions from the inward experience of God. The “steeplehouse” was considered a monument to humankind, not God — often precisely *not* the place to encounter the Inner Light. By contrast, Meeting for Worship could be — and was — held anywhere, and could be most “gathered” when held out-of-doors. I personally have found a deep connection between experiencing the inner light and a sense of right relation with earth/nature, a short cut to the ineffable, if you will. This is not the same as nature worship, or animism; it is not propitiating the spirits of the trees, or hoping to avert earthquakes through prayer. Anyone who has spent time working in a garden, walking by a river through a woods, or traversing a hill while leaving off self-concerns and remaining open to one’s surroundings will probably understand. Thus it was that George Fox had a great vision on Pendle Hill, in surroundings vast and open to the sky.

Today, our climate-controlled buildings, our cars, electronic entertainments, out-of-season fruits and vegetables, our conveniences — could be considered the accoutrements of a great, modern steeplehouse. We, who are wedded to preserving our normal way of life, might only think in terms of destruction, of what we have to lose, rather than in terms of cultural change. In addition, for concerned urban Friends, who live within a human-built environment, enmeshed in the global economy, the temptation might be to feel powerless. Many of us might have limited daily relations with nature and perhaps thus with the Inner Light. But I have come to know through experience that to lose a sense of connection with the earth community is to substitute the human-built, technological environment — the part — for the whole of creation; or at least to behave as if one does. Once we lose the connection to all of creation and thus to God, it is easy, surrounded with human works, to forget that the earth is not also a human creation to be tinkered with, or replaceable if it breaks. The earth does not become technologically outmoded.

Since George Fox, Friends have long spoken and written about our responsibility to use creation wisely and in moderation, to reverence creation as “that of God.” Many have pointed out that heeding our Inward Guide, an aspect of the Presence we seek during Meeting for Worship, leads to, as Conservative Friend Marshall Massey recently wrote, “awareness and consideration of the lives and feelings and potential sufferings of ... other living beings”— in a sense of empathic, gut-level knowing and understanding, rather than greeting-card sentimentality or intellectual objectivity and analysis. This sense led to early Friends’ true appreciation of the natural world, to John Woolman’s and Joshua Evans’ care for animals as well as humans, to early Quaker schools stressing such subjects as botany, and to such early and influential “natural philosophers” as John and William Bartram.

Though there is no specific Friend’s testimony for right relation with the earth that I know of, for me such a testimony has come to be a synthesis of the others or even the primary one from which all others come, for to me it is a testament to right relationship with our Inward Guide. Right relation with the earth requires us to “keep low” ; requires stewardship, including knowing when to leave well enough alone; requires simplicity, the opposite of hubris, arrogance, and pride in the way we conduct ourselves; requires equality as we consider the earth community’s right to exist and live as equal to our own; requires peace as we extend the concept of non-violence to the environment; and requires integrity and honesty, because pretense can’t be involved when we live according to the logic of sustainability.

Secular environmentalists remind us of all the pertinent, extremely real, extremely human reasons to “save the planet.” Yet there are reasons of the spirit, as well, reasons that people of many faiths are embracing and acting upon, as readers of Roger S. Gottlieb’s *A Greener Faith*

will know. As a Friend, I believe humans are called by God to live in mindful engagement *with* the earth community, not *upon* the earth. I believe our civilization must not only look for new sources of energy, but also must undergo a change of heart, of spirit, of cultural values and ways of life. None of us truly own our portion of the earth, nor does humankind own creation

— we hold it in trust. In many ways our industrial culture (and by extension the global economy), though great, is a death-dealing juggernaut. I believe Friends are called to live by different values; we are led to seek responsible and sustainable ways to live, so as to pass on our trust, so as to generate life. As a Friend, I seek to live in right relation with the earth.

A Quaker Etiquette for Meeting For Worship with a Concern for Business

Brought to St. Louis Friends Meeting by Lynn Fitz-Hugh, University Friends Meeting, Seattle, Washington

1. Respect the meeting time. Come into the meeting promptly and stay to the end.
2. Maintain a sense of worship during meeting for business by centering, keeping focused, staying open to the Spirit, and holding the meeting in the Light.
3. Sift and season concerns before bringing them to meeting for business. Discuss your issue or idea with the appropriate committee or with the Meeting clerk to discern whether (and when) it should come to the meeting as a whole.
4. Come willing to change your mind. Allow for others to change theirs.
5. Listen carefully; listen “between the words.” Give full attention to what others say and how they say it, to understand their intent as well as their actual words.
6. Test your message before you speak: Does it arise from the Spirit? Does it add new Light to the discussion?
7. When you are ready to speak, raise your hand and wait for the clerk to call on you. Wait for the previous speaker to finish before you speak.
8. Address the meeting as a whole through the clerk. In meeting for business we come together to seek divine guidance for group decisions; it is not the place for private conversation or for debate. If you must disagree with someone, do so charitably, with love and respect. Ask yourself whether meeting for business is the proper place to express your disagreement.
9. Try not to repeat or to rephrase another person’s message. If you support what someone else has said, do so briefly -- for example: “I agree.” or “That Friend speaks my mind.”
10. Speak briefly and clearly. Speak so that everyone can hear you and choose your words carefully, remembering our testimonies of simplicity and truth.
11. Speak for yourself and from your own experience, without generalizing about what “everyone knows” or what “those people” think.
12. After you have spoken, let go of it. Your contribution has become part of the group’s progress toward discerning the Truth for this meeting at this time.
13. When the clerk or the recording clerk proposes a minute, respond thoughtfully. Either express agreement (nod or say “approved”) or raise your hand to comment if you are clear that a minute is not yet right. If you must stand aside or stand opposed, do so in love and humility.
14. Prepare to go home saying “we decided” rather than “they decided.”

my soul sings quietly today
as i do daily things
driving, washing, planning, talking
i hear my soul burbling joyfully underneath
i smile

people ask me why i'm cheerful
with the state of the world the way it is
i do grieve for the state of the world
but the state of my soul
is singing

— *Barbara Clearbridge*

sitting in meeting
deep in the absolute quiet
of listening within for God's word
aware of spirit light shining out through us like the sun on water
we're listening
and glistening

— *Barbara Clearbridge*