

SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN FRIEND

Newsletter of the
Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting & Association of the
Religious Society of Friends

Seventh Month, 2003

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Monthly Meetings & Worship Groups

Anneewakee Creek Worship Group
Douglasville, GA (770) 949-8079

Asheville (NC) Friends Meeting
(828) 258-0974

Athens (GA) Friends Meeting
(706) 546-0056

Atlanta (GA) Friends Meeting
(404) 377-2474

Auburn (AL) Worship Group
(334) 887-9688

Berea (KY) Friends Meeting
(859) 986-9256

Birmingham (AL) Friends Meeting
(205) 979-7445

Boone (NC) Friends Meeting
(828) 263-0001

Brevard (NC) Friends Meeting
(828) 884-6683

Celo (NC) Friends Meeting
(828) 675-4456

Charleston (WV) Friends Meeting
(304) 756-3033

Chattanooga (TN) Friends Meeting
(423) 629-2580

Clarksville (TN) Worship Group
(931) 647-9284

Clemson (SC) Worship Group
(864) 657-2021

Cleveland (TN) Worship Group
(423) 479-4877

Columbia (SC) Friends Meeting
(803) 254-0626

Cookeville (TN) Preparative Meeting
(931) 268-2592

Crossville (TN) Friends Meeting
(931) 277-5354

Foxfire Friends Meeting (Johnson City, TN)
(423) 283-4392

Greenville (SC) Friends Meeting
(864) 895-7205

Huntsville (AL) Friends Meeting
(256) 837-6327

Memphis (TN) Friends Meeting
(901) 762-8130

Murfreesboro (TN) Worship Group
(931) 389-6340

Nashville (TN) Friends Meeting
(615) 269-0225

New Moon Worship Group
Barnardsville/Weaverville, NC (828) 626-2572

Oxford (MS) Friends Meeting
(662) 473-3670

Royal Worship Group
Blountsville, AL (205) 429-3088

Sevier County Worship Group
Sevierville, TN (865) 429-1807

Sewanee (TN) Worship Group
(931) 598-5031

Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting
Black Mountain, NC (828) 299-4887

West Knoxville (TN) Friends Meeting
(865) 694-0036

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From ESR

Looking to finally get started on a seminary degree? Or have an urge to dabble in theological education? Or perhaps ready for a continuing education experience? Consider enrolling in one or more courses with *ESR Access*, the distance learning program offered by Earlham School of Religion. Fall courses include *Introduction to Spiritual Formation, Christian Discipleship and Living in the Spirit, Educational Ministries in the Local Congregation, Introduction to Theology*, and many more. Application should be received by early July. Call Sue Axtell at (800) 432-1377 for more information today!

Online Historical Jesus Study Groups Forming

Having a hard time finding someone who knows enough to explore with you and isn't eye-rollingly on the other side of every issue from you? Just interested in having someone to share the journey with? Send your name, email address, and a brief statement of your interests and orientation (e.g. favorite or least favorite author, feelings about the Jesus Seminar...) to Alicia Parks (Sandy Spring Monthly Meeting, Baltimore Yearly Meeting) besichtigerin@yahoo.com and get matched up!

SAYMA List-server

To subscribe to the SAYMA list-server

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You can e-mail to sayma-request@kitenet.net

writing only the word

“ subscribe ”

in the body of your e-mail message. You can also subscribe on the web at <http://kitenet.net/cgi-bin/mailman/listinfo/sayma>.

You need to be subscribed in order to post messages to the list-server. In case of difficulties, you can reach a live human list-administrator at sayma-admin@kitenet.net

ECN & CFL

SAYMA's Ecological Concerns Network Compact Florescent Bulb Project ended on 06/06/2003 at Yearly Meeting. Here are the results of the year long project:

- Almost half of the meetings and worship groups in SAYMA participated.
- A total of 163 incandescent bulbs were replaced by CFL's in the homes of SAYMA families.
- Not all of the new CFL's were the 15-watt size, so the following numbers represent the minimum possible reductions in our atmosphere. The actual reductions will be greater.
- The switch over of these bulbs represents a reduction of 475 pounds of sulfur dioxide (creating haze and acid rain), 258 pounds of nitrous oxides (leading to ozone and acid rain), and 69,989 pounds of carbon dioxide (the leading greenhouse gas) from the air that we breathe.

How about that? Thanks to Bill Reynolds of Chattanooga Monthly Meeting for coordinating the effort and thanks to SAYMA Friends for holding themselves in a cleaner light.

From the Editors: Friends are becoming increasingly aware of the impact that our economic structures and policies have on our concerns for peace, justice, and ecological integrity. This issue brings perspectives on these issues from Atlanta Monthly Meeting, from Friends Committee on Unity with Nature, and from a recent Pendle Hill gathering that began an ongoing consultation on economics and ecology. We'll also have some news from our Sixth Month Yearly Meeting at Warren Wilson College, including a report from the Young Adult Friends.

Letter to the Editors

Your comments [on taking away the occasion of war in the FWCC Peace Conference report] in the last SAF were welcome.

I give up arguing about the wars we are in—too late for effective action. The Iraqi situation was so convoluted—going back to the United States helping create Saddam Hussein, then furnishing him with weapons of mass destruction for use against Iran, and giving misleading signals that encouraged his invasion of Kuwait.

If Quakers and others do not become politically active, organize for campaign finance reform, we leave the field to those with money to influence domestic and foreign policies, and that will tend to lead to more occasions for wars. Neither political party has a peace agenda, and I fear it will be years before peace and justice here and in the world do become an agenda.

I was disappointed in Scott Simon's self defense in the last *Friends Journal*, because he ignored the considerations of what leads us into armed conflict. He was (sadly) demonstrating the personification of the condition described by author Chris Hedges in his book, *War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning*. I think it useless to argue with Simon that the horrors he witnessed do not need to be stopped. I agree that they need to be prevented, and that preventive action should have been started 25 years ago.

So, what do we do now to prevent the violence that may come in 5, 10, 25 years? Change the system by working on changes many Friends groups are addressing. And that must be done by effective political engagement, or we will be regarded as a well meaning but irrelevant voice.

—Wib Smith

Poetry

The poem below appeared in *Quaker Life* in 2002. Over the next few months Tom Baugh's poems will be published in *Talking Leaves* and in the Canadian journal, *Wildflower*, among other periodicals. On Sunday July 13, Tom, in a service titled "The Poet and the Spirit," read his poetry at Christ Unity Church in Chattanooga.

WILL THEE PRAY WITH ME?

It has been many years now,
almost a decade has passed.
I don't remember where,
but scientists, technicians, resource managers all
gathered from throughout the Southeast.

It was the style then to travel on the weekend
in order to begin our meeting fresh.
I traveled with the rest, reluctantly, to somewhere in the
Carolinas
to gather for evening meal on a Saturday in spring.

Speaking of things lost when away from home
at table I spoke of missing First Day Meeting.
Across from me, a quizzical eyebrow raised,
"You must be Quaker" he said and I nodded.
"One of my lads is Quaker, I'll tell him you're here."

A coastal Carolina First Day Morning
and a line passing in front of food laden trays
of steaming eggs, and toast, and grits.
A hand on my shoulder and a soft voice that said
"Good morning Friend" and asked
"Will thee pray with me?"

Tom Baugh
White Oak Cottage

Charleston Friends Meeting is co-hosting the annual West Virginia (and nearby Ohio) Friends Gathering September 5-6. We will meet at Camp Hervida, near Parkersburg, West Virginia. The gathering is quite informal, a mix of worship, fellowship, and workshops. The theme of this year's gathering is outreach. SAYMA Friends are cordially invited to participate. Information and registration from Charleston's co-clerks, Ray Lewis (rlii@juno.com) or Steve Mininger (rloghouse@aol.com).

—Charles Schade

State of the YAFs Report

Being a Young Adult Friend is an interesting place to be. Being a YAF means being in transition in all areas of life. Most importantly, this includes new growth in spiritual development. But more mundanely, being a YAF means changes in geographical location, new occupational responsibilities, and new financial obligations. Taken together this means we, as Young Adult Friends, often feel like we do not have the time to search for the Spirit when we need it the most – and are just getting to know our spiritual sides most intimately.

But at this year's SAYMA, we sought to change that. In year's past, the YAF program was filled with great people, but woefully lacking of any kind of group organization. We wanted to do something about this, and had felt this way for several years. But for the last few Yearly Meetings, only about five or six YAFs would attend each year. Because of our small size, structured organization was not practical.

But this year we had twelve YAFs come to SAYMA, which is double our usual number. And we had twelve more Young Friends graduate into the YAF program. Suddenly we had the numbers to allow – and necessitate – a more developed program. During the 2003 SAYMA, the Young Adult Friends held their first official business meeting, which was very productive, even though we started without an official clerk! Thankfully, Valerie Potter did an excellent job at filling that role until we came to consensus that Trina Farmer would be our clerk for next year. We also created a Planning Committee to begin working on our program for the next SAYMA. And we discussed the possibility of YAF retreats that would meet at times outside of Yearly Meeting.

Clearly, these are some big developments for the YAF program. We approach these changes with a sense of excitement about our growth, but also with an understanding that we must shoulder more responsibility to make this growth positive. As we have made decisions about the future of the YAF program, we have gone back to look for the Spirit's guidance, both in silent worship and in daily contemplation at SAYMA. We are greatly looking forward to SAYMA 2004, and hope to see you there.

—Chris Duke, 14th of Sixth Month, 2003

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Welcome to Oxford Monthly Meeting

From the minutes of yearly meeting: *Friends united in welcoming Oxford Monthly Meeting as a member monthly meeting of SAYMA. We hope to send a delegation to visit and welcome Oxford Friends as SAYMA members.*

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Earth Charter Workshop

At Yearly Meeting, Susan Carlyle facilitated a workshop on the Earth Charter. Friends asked if she would distribute her outline for use in their monthly meetings and worship groups as they consider endorsement of this declaration of fundamental principles for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society in the 21st century.

This exercise can be completed in an hour. Here it is:

1. List our SAYMA testimonies (education, government, simplicity, equality, sexuality, peace, nurture of children) from *Faith and Practice* on separate pieces of paper or on a chalkboard.
2. Have available the Queries from the 1998 version of *Faith and Practice* that pertain to Friends in the wider community: Social witness and justice, Peace, Stewardship of the Earth, and Equality.
3. Present an overview of The Earth Charter (history, main ideas, how it can be used, etc) Stress that there are four major parts of the earth Charter (I, II, III, and IV) and that each part has principles that apply to that area. (5 minutes)
4. Divide your whole group into four smaller groups. Ask each small group to pick one of the four parts of the Earth Charter to examine. Ask these groups to spend some time together answering the following queries: 1) How is this part of the Earth Charter linked to the Testimonies or Queries in our Faith and Practice? 2) How might the principles of the Earth Charter move you to act in your life? (20 minutes)
5. Come back together to the large group and have each small group present their discussion points to the larger group. (30 minutes)

For more information: E-mail info@earthcharter.org

Website: www.earthcharter.org

SAF Submissions—Next Due Date:

10/01/2003

Submit meeting or worship group news, original articles, poetry, opinions, announcements, humor, and recipes (include your name and phone number) to SAFeditor@SAYMA.org or by mail: SAF c/o Susan & Kim Carlyle, PO Box 439, Barnardsville, NC 28709 (828) 626-2572

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For resource-saving, electronic delivery of the SAF, send your name, e-mail address and monthly meeting or worship group name to SAFeditor@sayma.org

State of the Meeting Report Excerpts

West Knoxville: Ministry and Nurture committee is currently exploring ways to address our lack of vocal ministry during most meetings for worship. Are we discouraged and turning inwards? Do we undervalue our reflections? Many of us felt that the high public point of the year was a celebration of the 350th birthday of Quakerism. Several visitors joined us for a big potluck, some of it in 1650's style, followed by readings, a George Fox/ Margaret Fell skit, and an historical review featuring a ten-foot-long candle-lit cake!

Swannanoa Valley: has had a challenging year, one where joys and sorrows, growth and loss, promise and disappointment have moved us closer to maturity as a community.... We approach the coming year with less unity than we would have wished, but with a firm faith that we can resolve our differences, aided by the spiritual presence that has sustained us during our struggles.... Our great task this coming year will be to find a way to reach unity in our enthusiasm for constructing a permanent home for our meeting. We are coming to a richer and deeper understanding of Quaker process through retreats, discussions and specially called meetings.

New Moon: continues to meet at the Barnardsville United Methodist Church on first day following the new moon.... We have grown with the addition of a family.... We have opened for discernment the question of whether we should meet more frequently.

Nashville: We have grown in our capacity to listen and hear the concerns of each other as we seek out new space for our faith community.... We are relieved to find ourselves in healthy financial condition and thrilled that our scholarship fund has been overspent in support of Friends.... We are sometimes challenged by Friends' unfamiliarity with the foundations of vocal ministry in the manner of Friends. In an effort to decrease "learning by osmosis", we have developed a new welcoming brochure that we hope will help all of us have a deeper understanding of how each of us is called to be a conduit for the messages and guidance of God.... Letting our lives speak our spiritual beliefs, Friends have participated in many social action events.... Others found their peace work to be more fundamentally focused, in seeking in their own lives and their families how to live in the power that takes away the occasion for war.

Memphis: We continue to build bridges among faiths in our community and among people working for peace. We gathered monthly through 2002 for multi-faith prayers for peace, hosting the July service with the Baha'i fellowship. We joined with other faiths in sponsoring Peace Walk 2002 and were strengthened by the presence of Thich Nhat Hahn in our community. We found joy in hosting an 8-hour peace vigil in our Meeting House.... Hosting Fall

Representative Meeting was a bridge between our local Meeting and SAYMA, encouraging new Friends to get involved with SAYMA.... We are paying more attention to how we conduct business meetings recently.... Vocal ministry is frequent and nourishing, and our newsletter continues to be a valuable bridge connecting us to each other.

Huntsville: Sponsoring a community-wide meeting at Holy Cross-St. Christopher Episcopal Church on "The On-Going Humanitarian Crisis in Iraq," Participating in the local "Community Intergenerational Peace Festival," at Oscar Mason Community Center, once again bearing witness to Quaker and other perspectives on peace-making.... Gathering and delivering blankets, clothing and other items for homeless persons as part of an interfaith & Huntsville Police Department collaborative project.... Currently, working on a fund-raising effort to benefit the Lakota people.

Greenville: We are proud and excited by our growth in attendance at Meeting for Worship and fellowship activities. A singing program, Bible study, and monthly potlucks add greatly to our cohesiveness. We plan to increase our fellowship activities and have created a committee to promote such opportunities.... We also provide community services for the homeless, prisoners, and needy families at Christmas time.... We started a mid-week worship group at Furman University.... The Furman worship group also took the opportunity to sponsor and moderate a forum ...entitled "America and Iraq: Collision of Cultures?"...attended by approximately 120 members of the local community.

Foxfire: moved into its new Meeting House...we invited nearby meetings to join us in a dedication of our new space with silent worship and a friendly feast...Five of us joined the world wide peace vigil in March. As we stood on our corner lawn with our candles in the twilight, we seemed to have a calming effect on the busy corner traffic.

Crossville: At the initiative of Meeting members, up to 40 others of the wider community participated in Wednesday afternoon silent peace vigils at the County Courthouse from October through March...The Meetinghouse was also use as the workshop space for the Quaker Spiritual Practice Center, a Meeting-sponsored activity that sponsored three experiential seminars this past year.

Cookeville: Our Vigil for Peace was our most sustained effort as a group. For six months, beginning in November, we kept a weekly vigil at the Courthouse in Cookeville. We were joined at times by various interested people, from high school age to W.W.II veterans. Sometimes the group was as many as 30 people. Some came for one Sunday, others joined us regularly. Our "vigil" was not particularly

(continued on next page)

State of the Meeting (continued)

silent—we were rather boisterous at times, waving at passers by and shouting "Thank you" to those who waved or honked their horns.... With a little nudging from Nashville, our caring Meeting, we requested and received a change of status from Worship Group to a Preparatory Meeting. We have been acting as such for a few years and we are happy to declare our growth in this way.

Chattanooga: Chattanooga Meeting's year has been exceptional—and this assessment comes from a clerk prone to look for the darker side. War in Iraq and its threat have overshadowed everything we have done, but we have risen to the opportunities presented. Meetings for worship have often been gathered and covered by Christ's spirit, enabling the group to reach depths that we are pleased to experience...As part of a world-wide protest, we sparked a march through downtown on March 15 that attracted almost four hundred participants, a huge turnout for Chattanooga.

Charleston: During the summer of 2002, we supported three Friends in their travels to the Middle East.... They returned with stories of the hardships faced by Palestinians under occupation, by Israelis threatened with suicide bombings, and by Iraqis suffering under economic sanctions. Their pictures and recollections helped Friends appreciate the urgent need for peace and reconciliation in that troubled region, while better understanding the difficulty of achieving it.... We continue to organize a breakfast in a local women and children's shelter, and a dinner at a men's shelter in the winter. Because our Peace and Social Concerns Committee Clerk is also a lobbyist at the state legislature, we are one of the smallest religious groups with a presence there.

Celo: has participated in and organized a variety of events relating to the war in Iraq.... We helped organize vigils at the county level with 10 churches. For the first time ever, there were three ecumenical services for peace with area churches.... Meeting continues to facilitate the connection of local immigrants with services and information through offering interpretation and research...We are pleased to report that we have met our goal of \$675,000 for a new meeting house.... We want to thank all of SAYMA who have contributed.

Boone: We participated with Appalachian Interfaith Alliance for Peace and Justice and other area churches in providing hygiene kits for Iraqi refugees through the American Friends Service Committee.... Hickory Ridge Homestead, an outdoor museum with authentic restored log cabins ...has become a favorite alternate site for meeting events. We met there for worship and a potluck... and for a couple of other events. We plan a "homecoming" of any former attenders of the Boone Meeting at this site for later in the summer.

Brevard: a called meeting for business approved, and published, a minute against the war in Iraq.... Many of our Meeting joined with others in the community for Saturday noon vigils (from October to the "end of the war") in front of the county courthouse to protest the war in Iraq.... we announced to the community that our Meeting is a resource for counseling those who are considering conscientious objection to participation in the military, and related issues.... Our Meeting is strong in spite of our small numbers and advancing ages.

Berea: Individuals in the Meeting have been active in local and national peace demonstrations, we have cooperated with local churches on building "peace cairns" to show symbolically the way to peace.... We took a major step when we decided that Berea Friends will actively seek to own a meetinghouse, but so far no suitable property has become available. Meanwhile, we are working toward incorporating and building the financial resources we need to build or buy a place.... Our annual membership review took the form of small sharing groups in which we drew time-lines of our lives and talked about the experiences that have made us who we are. Interesting discussions during the year have included thinking about the role of young people in the Meeting and a seminar on evolution versus creationism requested by one of our youth.

Atlanta: A Friend was led to raise the issue of a banner for the Meetinghouse to make our testimony visible. As we stopped to consider the feelings of the resident manager, we felt the danger that speaking out posed, and realized that other members did not have banners on their homes yet, either. So the yard sign project was born. In orders of 50, 100, 250 and eventually the thousands, we gave Atlantans a way to make their views visible, with Martin Luther King's words, "War is not the answer." FCNL asked us to distribute the signs nationally. The Meeting's own large banner now faces a busy street

Athens: we are considering holding a retreat about growing our meeting. We would like to have an outside facilitator for this retreat.... Another area of great emphasis this year was on promoting peace with Iraq. Our activities included publication of a Minute on Iraq in the local paper last August. Several Friends' anti-war editorials were also published in the local paper.

Asheville: In the past year our meeting has paid specific attention to its growth as a spiritual community. We have recognized that we are in a time of transition as many of our former leaders age...As we look to the year ahead there is a sense of going "back to Quaker basics" for guidance. We recognize a need to continually nurture our meeting for worship and vocal ministry as well as our meeting for worship with attention to business.

The Real Costs of “Free” Trade: An Epistle from Friends Committee on Unity with Nature

To Friends Everywhere: Those of us who are U.S. citizens have witnessed with horror and shame as our government has undermined international treaties and institutions, used an endless “War on Terror” as a pretext for permanently enlarging its powers, embraced a doctrine of preemptive war, and invaded Iraq. We are now faced with the prospect of another U.S. initiative, the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), that we believe will intensify social injustice and institutional and ecological violence, and lead to more physical violence.

Human activities damaging to the earth’s ecosystems continue to expand, and wealth increases for the already wealthy while conditions of life steadily worsen for many impoverished people worldwide. U.S. government policies and the international trade agreements they have promoted, instead of remedying these inequities, seem to be intensifying them. In truth, these agreements have primarily promoted the productivity and profitability of large corporations by reducing legal constraints on their activities. Although the agreements are promoted in terms of creating jobs and reducing poverty, there are now more unemployed and impoverished people. In addition, more land and resources have been diverted to the corporate industrial process, wealth and power are more concentrated, the biosphere is more polluted, and the ability of governments to promote general welfare has progressively weakened.

Expanding international trade already taxes the environment by increasing the use of fossil fuels and the rate at which fragile ecosystems are exploited. Treaties like the earlier NAFTA and the proposed FTAA exacerbate this stress by granting “rights” to corporations which supercede and can even nullify national and local laws intended to protect people and the environment. The proposed FTAA

would impose in this hemisphere additional “rights” for global corporate and financial interests that the community of nations has previously refused to grant through the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Friends Committee on Unity with Nature is concerned that the U.S. media do not provide full and accurate information about the effects of current trade and investment policies on working people, on the impoverished, and on local ecosystems in other nations and in our own. We are further concerned that the secrecy of the FTAA negotiations has severely limited public knowledge of and consultation on its process.

On a finite planet, policies that give priority to assuring

high returns on the speculative financial investments of the already wealthy cannot lead to either conservation or right sharing of the Earth’s resources. Right sharing, conservation, and restoring the Earth’s ecological integrity must become the priorities of public policy.

We believe this issue is as urgent as the new doctrine of preemptive war, and one that Friends cannot in good conscience ignore. We are grateful for the leadership of the American Friends Service Committee in the Interfaith Working Group on International Trade and Investment and support the principles advanced in the

statement, “An Interfaith Statement on International Trade and Investment” (see last page).

We ask monthly meetings and individual Friends to inform themselves as fully as possible about the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas, and to seek Divine Guidance in considering how to fulfill our obligations, as citizens of the United States and the world, to promote peace, justice, and the restoration of the earth’s ecological integrity.

FCUN Vision and Witness

We are called to live in right relationship with all Creation, recognizing that the entire world is interconnected and is a manifestation of God. We work to integrate into the beliefs and practices of the Religious Society of Friends the Truth that God’s Creation is to be respected, protected, and held in reverence in its own right and the Truth that human aspirations for peace and justice depend upon restoring the Earth’s ecological integrity. We promote these Truths by being patterns and examples, by communicating our message, and by providing spiritual and material support to those engaged in the compelling task of transforming our relationship with the Earth.

Peace Witness: The Peaceful Pedal Cab—An Alternative to Violent Energy

SAYMA Friends (Swannanoa Valley and Cookeville meetings and SAYMA’s Ecological Concerns Network) supported an unusual, but quiet and practical, peace witness at Friends General Conference Gathering this year. A pedal cab (bicycle rickshaw)—an alternative to the fleet of gasoline-powered golf carts—provided on-campus transportation for Friends. The intention was to raise awareness of the links between energy use and ongoing international hostilities. Friends’ response was overwhelmingly positive. As driver, I enjoyed meeting Friends and engaging in conversation. It was a delight to give rides to the Junior Gathering youngsters one evening—I told them that the vehicle was powered by cookies. One golf cart driver asked if I held ill feelings toward her because she drove a stinky, fossil-fueled vehicle. I said that I greatly respected the necessary efforts of the volunteer drivers, but added, “Drive that golf cart as long as you can.” —Kim Carlyle

Eco-Consultation Gathering Report

Pendle Hill
Wallingford, PA, USA
Third First Day, Sixth Month, 2003
To Friends Everywhere,

We greet you as 29 individuals, belonging to 19 monthly and 11 yearly meetings. Many among us are or have been actively involved with organizations such as the American Friends Service Committee, Canadian Friends Service Committee, Friends Association for Higher Education, Friends Committee on Unity with Nature, Quaker Eco-Witness, Friends Committee on National Legislation, Friends General Conference, and Friends World Committee for Consultation.

We have gathered at Pendle Hill to explore a concern we all share about economic policies as they relate to issues of peace, justice, equality, and restoring the earth's ecological integrity. We believe the human-earth relationship in all its aspects is inseparable from our relationship with the Divine. We are convinced that the current economic system should be of urgent concern to the Religious Society of Friends. It is intensifying economic and social inequities throughout the world, causing structural and physical violence, driving many species to extinction, and leading our own species toward ecological self-destruction.

Through our worshipful deliberations, we have come to unity in urging all Friends, especially those in the United States and Canada, to make individual and corporate commitments to learning more about certain fundamental aspects of current economic policies and institutions as they relate to Friends historic testimonies. Specifically, we encourage Friends to ask themselves the following:

In light of Friends' Testimonies, what is God calling us to do about the continuing and increasing marginalization of so much of the world's population, the extinction of species, and other environmental degradation? How do we integrate our human community within the natural world so as to provide for the physical and spiritual needs of future generations?

What changes in the institutions of economy and governance are needed to promote effective stewardship of the natural environment and caring for people and communities? What is it in nature and human knowledge that an individual or corporation should have the right to own?

How best can we promote the values expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Earth Charter? How can we promote understanding and awareness of the consequences of increasing global interconnectedness and the urgency of addressing the dangers and opportunities that these present?

As we earn, spend, and invest money, as individuals and as meeting communities, how can we live in the "virtue of that life and power" that leads us to treat all humans and the Earth as a manifestation of the Divine? Are we aware of the true cost of our consumption? Do we take into account our concerns for social justice as we earn, spend, and invest money?

What information, tools, and skills do we need to equip ourselves to work effectively for public policies that restore Earth's resilience, increase social equity, and strengthen community?

How can we engage with others in ways that help us discern God's will for us, at this critical stage in Earth's history, as we labor with these concerns?

Quaker Eco-Witness, a project of Friends Committee on Unity with Nature, and the Environmental Working Group of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting have collaborated in bringing us to Pendle Hill. They will also collaborate with us in preparing a collection of short articles, questions to help clarify Friends' understanding, and queries to encourage Friends' individual and corporate discernment about the concerns we raise. We have agreed to pursue a number of tasks designed to create and draw together existing material on economics and ecology as resources for our meetings and wider communities. We hope you will make use of these materials when they become available in the late fall or early winter.

Participants:

Will Alexander, *Redwood Forest, PacYM*; Angela Berryman, *AFSC staff*; Peter G. Brown, *Montreal, CanYM*; Kim Carlyle, *Swannanoa Valley, SAYMA*; David Ciscel, *Memphis, SAYMA*; Alan Connor, *Ann Arbor, LEYM*; Gray Cox, *Acadia, NEYM*; David Damm-Luhr, *Cambridge, NEYM*; Steve Davison & Christine Lewandoski, *Yardley, PYM*; Ed Dreby & Margaret Mansfield, *Mt Holly, PYM*; Elaine & Phil Emmi, *Salt Lake, Intermountain YM*; Rachel Findley, *Strawberry Creek, PacYM*; Walter Haines & Mary Lou Peck, *Bennington, NEYM*; *Tom Head, *Multnomah, NPacYM*; Maureen Heffern Ponicki, *AFSC staff*; Keith & Ellen Helmuth, *Central Philadelphia, PYM (sojourning)*; Marya Hillesland, *FCNL Intern*; Leonard Joy, *Strawberry Creek, PacYM*; Stephen McNeil, *Strawberry Creek, PacYM*; Anne Mitchell, *Toronto, CanYM*; Susan Nelson, *Cleveland, LEYM*; David Ross, *Nottingham, BYM*; Ned Stowe, *FCNL staff, Sandy Spring, BYM*; Sarah Waring, *Barton-Glover, NEYM*; Marcy Wenzler, *Bloomington, WesternYM & OVYM*.

* Instrumental in planning Gathering but unable to attend.

Green Friends Sponsor Paradigm Change Study Group

To Friends everywhere:

A study group sponsored by Green Friends of the Atlanta Friends Meeting met weekly for two months to consider the auspicious topic "The Global Economy and the Environment: Discreet Steps to Paradigm Change."

Initially we pooled all our resources—reading material and videos—and made an agenda for an 8-week study group series. Each week a different person facilitated the discussion and we began by sharing an excitement or a burden that was heavy on our hearts. Two members reported on readings relevant to that week's topic.

Summarizing the discussion, we listed the specific problems that arose, potential solutions, and actions that could be taken. We ended with an evaluation of that session. We found that our discussions were focused and balanced with everyone participating fully.

We considered:

- § the spiritual basis of the current environmental and economic crises,*
- § how our own consumption and lifestyle contributes to the problems,*
- § why living simply is not enough,*
- § an historical perspective,*
- § the hydrogen economy, and*
- § a vision of a positive future.*

We concluded that the world is on a dangerous trajectory, that the world is increasingly more violent, that there is increasing competition for natural resources, that the gap between the have and have-not nations is ever increasing, that our fossil fuel-dependent lifestyle is not sustainable, and that the U.S. is the key to solving these issues.

As the one remaining superpower, the U.S. has become entrenched in arrogance and has been steadfastly unwilling to cooperate with international efforts to address the pressing global issues. The U.S. has adopted an attitude of "exceptionalism," as if we are exceptions to all attempts at the development of a global rule of law.

Our Judeo-Christian culture separates God from Creation, nature from home. This basic disconnect has reduced our natural resources to commodities to be used in the ever present pursuit of profits. The problem is a very deep one, requiring basic cultural changes. Competition and natural selection are very much a part of our culture, but these approaches are focused upon individual persons and individual species. Instead we must focus on holistic ecosystems and the relationships among species.

We need a whole different way of thinking about how the human species fits in with the rest of creation. We must expand our cultural awareness at a deep level, shifting from a physical, mechanical approach to an ecological one. We

need an awakening in which nature becomes an integral part of our lives, of our economies, of our spiritual life.

What can we do to bring about such a cultural awakening? We listed things that are already being done—intentional communities, eco-theology discussions in the established churches, study groups like this one, deep ecology programs, new and full moon rituals, hiking groups, nature programs, family activities, environmental education, public service advertisements.

It is especially important to involve the children—they are our future.

We had great hope in the development of fuel cells for the use of hydrogen as an energy source. Hydrogen is equally distributed all over the earth, so its use can be more equitable. Systems for distribution of natural gas will also work for the distribution of hydrogen. We can work for development of natural gas as an intermediate solution while the fuel cell technology is being developed. We must make certain that this new technology develops as a renewable source of energy.

Some specific actions that we identified include:

- 1) Encourage citizens to invest in natural capital,*
- 2) Encourage power companies to offer renewable power,*
- 3) Encourage citizens to buy green power when offered by power companies,*
- 4) Buy local and organic produce,*
- 5) Buy hybrid cars or electric cars,*
- 6) Share cars,*
- 7) Encourage the corporations that are investing in the development of fuel cell technologies,*
- 8) Work for legislation and incentives to encourage environmentally sound commodities,*
- 9) Work for local programs such as Decatur's "pay as you throw" program,*
- 10) Give cloth bags away in front of supermarkets, and*
- 11) Encourage each other in ecological accountability.*

Many of these solutions will cost more and some of us are not willing to pay more. We have to change our depression mentality, change our values so that we are willing to pay more for environmentally sound commodities.

Change is often crisis-driven. Our task is to prepare the way to respond when crisis occurs. There are critical factors that once changed, waves of change push us into a paradigm change. We must identify those critical factors.

Political Approach: We need positive political leadership. We must labor with our politicians, both those who have presented themselves to run for office and those already in office.

(continued on next page)

(“Paradigm” continued from page 9)

Public Policy Changes: We need to develop a coherent set of needed public policy changes and lobby for them. We can work with Friends Committee on National Legislation. We must also work at local levels to affect needed public policy changes.

Envisioning the Future: We can easily get into a frenzy with a long "to do" list as we try to affect change. But we can affect change without doing anything, by merely focusing on a positive vision and allowing our energy to emanate out into the world. It is important to act, not from anger at present conditions, but from love with a positive vision.

We did a guided meditation in order to envision a positive future 25 years from now, a future in which the global economy is sustainable, resources—both natural and financial—are equitably distributed, and all persons are guaranteed a minimal life-sustaining income. All industries are designed as closed systems in which waste from one process becomes product for the next. The earth and its biodiversity are included and honored in all religious practices. The population on earth is stabilized at a level that the earth can support. The air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat, and everything else in our environment are free of polluting substances. A culture of cooperation predominates. We envisioned the Green Party in power in the U.S. and other countries. All nations are working cooperatively so everyone's needs are met. The population is stabilized and decreased. Women have as much power as men and total control over their bodies. There is a right not to have children if women so desire. Racism is eliminated so that everyone can be themselves. Global warming is under control. The destruction of rainforests is halted and forests are regenerating all over the world. Another generation has passed. Our extended families live in close proximity so we can walk to see each other. The spaces are interactive. Populations live in decentralized villages, well spread out, instead of in large cities. People are content not to be flying all around the world. Work is accomplished via networks so that travel is not necessary. Energy is available to all. Everyone has a guaranteed income to meet basic needs.

With best wishes for a positive future,
Judy Bender, Susan Cozzens, Nikki Frye, Sarah Gill,
Julie Hix, Bill Jenkins, Kathy Johnson, Judy Lumb,
Bennett Stark, Austin Wattles, Pat Williams

Excerpts from

An Interfaith Statement on Trade and Investment

In an age of increasing economic integration and interdependence between the nations and peoples of the world, mounting global inequities have come into sharp focus. While technological and other advances have made it possible for segments of humanity to achieve unprecedented material prosperity, large numbers of people have become mired in poverty, hunger, and disease. In the midst of growing disparities and injustices between and within countries, governments and international economic institutions have increasingly sought market-driven policies, particularly the expansion of international trade and investment. This limited approach has too often served to aggravate the problem. We see the need for a broader, more holistic understanding of human economic activity.

It is our belief, as members of diverse faith communities, that moral and spiritual principles can provide guidance in the search for practical measures to address the profound ethical issues raised by international trade and investment. In this spirit, we offer the following five principles, each accompanied by our observations and visions for the future.

PRINCIPLES:

1. International trade and investment systems should respect and support the dignity of the human person, the integrity of creation, and our common humanity.
2. International trade and investment activities should advance the common good and be evaluated in the light of their impact on those who are most vulnerable.
3. International trade and investment policies and decisions should be transparent and should involve the meaningful participation of the most vulnerable stakeholders.
4. International trade and investment systems should respect the legitimate role of government, in collaboration with civil society, to set policies regarding the development and welfare of its people.
5. International trade and investment systems should safeguard the global commons and respect the right of local communities to protect and sustainably develop their natural resources.

*Approved by the Interfaith Working Group on Trade and endorsed by more than 40 religious organizations.

The entire statement can be found at
www.mcc.org/us/globalization/partners/interfaith.html

SAYMA Calendar

09/06/2003: Representative Meeting—Columbia, SC

10/01/2003: Submission Due Date for SAF

12/06/2003: Representative Meeting—Atlanta, GA

06/10-13/2004: Yearly Meeting—Warren Wilson College