



# BRIDGING THE GAP

The Quaker Intentional Village Project Newsletter

## LATEST NEWS

Summer 2012, Issue #33

The beginning of summer finds the households of QIVC branching out of our fall-winter-spring routines of school and work. Two of our teens are home from Westtown School and enlivening the land with their cheerful energy. Some of us are going to nature camp and sleep-away camp, enjoying family trips, picking strawberries, and swimming in local ponds on hot afternoons; gardens are being tended and harvested, CSA produce is being enjoyed (wait...MORE lettuce?), and we have daily sightings of swallows, deer, and rodents both picturesque (bunnies) and lumbering (woodchucks). Paul's two pigs of 2012 are happily rooting near his garden, which is—as usual—impressively extensive. A new electric fence protects it from the aforementioned rodents.



The longer days allow for walks after dinner, playing on the lawn after potluck, and a beautiful firefly display over the fields at about 9 pm most June nights. Two of us got together late one night recently to make at least 12 cups of garlic-scape pesto

as a break from editing and studying. Despite summer's tempting fun, we continue to tackle the challenges of our chosen vocations and careers: publishing papers, divorce mediation training, getting at least a C in pathophysiology, helping troubled kids, developing systems for non-profit organizations, and preparing grant proposals. Challenges at home include sick little ones, chronic illness, and (a positive challenge) integrating a new baby into the house. The residents of East House added baby Seraphina to their family early in June and we are looking forward to getting to know her (and help out by holding her).



Aidan's exuberant expression!

A local alternative paper, the *Hill Country Observer*, recently featured an article about us, which you can read at <http://www.hillcountryobserver.com/news043.htm>.

## PROJECT ROUND-UP: WHAT'S UNDERWAY ON THE LAND?

Lots of visions are coming to life, most of them gradually, on the land around us at QIVC. The greenhouse attached to the Farmhouse (which was once a screened-in porch) has been dismantled, dis-floored, and rebuilt literally from the ground up with thermal mass under the floor to collect heat from the sun. Big raised beds for gardening rest on the new floor and eventually the glass walls will be in place again.

A curved path leading away from the greenhouse to the east and to the west is on hiatus from taking shape...we will see what will come of it eventually.

Behind the Farmhouse, our old bulky brick grill and chimney has been partially dismantled and re-envisioned as the base for a cob oven (the envisioning was led by our intern Sky Loth). So far, no oven, but the space is cleared, the plan has been made, and it will happen eventually.



## **PROJECT ROUND-UP, CONT.**

Two piglets are growing and rooting around down by the big gardens, overseen by Paul Nowak, who will have lots of ham and bacon this winter. The garden keeps expanding, courtesy of each year's pigs who clear a patch of land and unearth all the rocks.

Jens Braun is gearing up to install some permanent fencing for his sheep, to be used in concert with the movable electric fencing so that the sheep *stay in when Jens is away*. Wish us luck on this one.

Dan Michaud built a beautiful brick mosaic patio outside his family's house, accented with slates. All the more impressive when you realize that Dan being Dan, it was most likely built between the hours of 10 pm and 2 am.

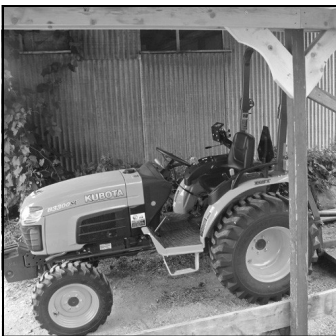
The Harris-Brauns have finally built a woodshed west of their house. No birds have built nests under its roof, which is odd because starlings, sparrows, *and* barn swallows have taken up residence in the eaves of the actual house. This summer's project is to load the woodshed full of firewood.

The Scheible/Hanleys are building a French drain (gravel trench) on the north side of their house. Like the path and the oven, it too is waiting for inspiration to re-strike.

Recently Jens erected a hoop house (greenhouse) by the big gardens. It is in a spot with major thistles for ground cover, but Jens has cleared most of them somehow. We think he just talked nicely to them until they moved on.

Will and Jesse Harris-Braun now have a wall dividing their rooms, thanks to Eric. The wall is faced with whiteboard material so both boys can doodle and make notes. This project required unearthing a pre-framed doorway hiding underneath the boards of the hallway wall.

Elias and Jasper Hanley are looking forward to building a sandbox this summer with their dad Pat.



Jasper, age 2, was one of the most excited when our new community tractor arrived one day in June. People of all ages came out to watch as Eric Harris-Braun drove it up the road to its home at QIVC. Taking an ancient, distorted, and broken brush hog that some friends had asked us to take off their hands, Jens led the project to weld and pound it into workable shape. Some youth helped one afternoon by keeping a roaring fire going until the metal piece in the flames became red-hot. (They were ready for a swim after that!) Then the brush hog was attached to the tractor and taken to the upper meadow, where it was put into operation. This vision of brush hogging our own fields was first conceived over a decade ago and now we can celebrate.

While it often takes us quite a long time between starting and finishing a project, a look around shows that in the long view we are steadily adding to the wealth and beauty embedded in the land around us.

### *CLIPPING*

#### *What Jesus was About*

*"I guess I tend to associate the gospel with humanity relative to how people are acting more like "kingdom people," regardless of their religious affiliation or non-affiliation. It seems to me that Christ wasn't so fixated on whether other people loved him or not (though this was certainly mentioned, but not so much as a prerequisite of acceptance into what he was about). I think Jesus identified with those who were simply what he was about himself (making his god's world a better place), not so much, if at all, dependent upon whether someone loved and devoted themselves to him."*

*Chris Hill,  
EmergentVillage.com*

—Ellen Harris-Braun

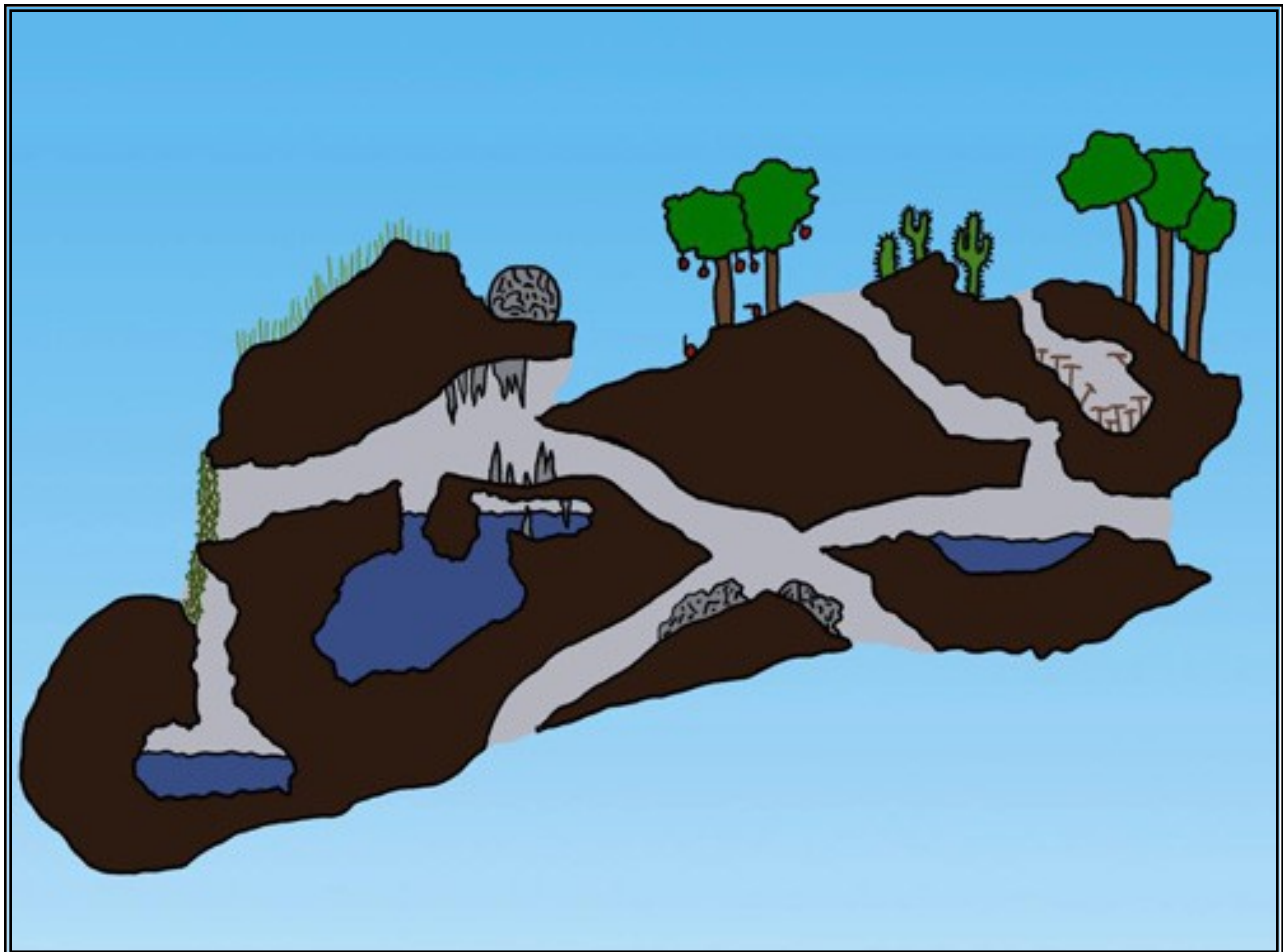
## ***FLOATING I LANDS***

Will and I started a series of artwork that we are posting on Facebook. They are 2-D representations of floating islands. I draw them on our new whiteboard wall, we take pictures of them, upload them to the computer, and Will colors them and adds the finishing touches on his graphics tablet. Some things our floating islands include are: mushrooms, trees, meteorites, rocks, stalactites and stalagmites, vines, grass, cacti, water, and lava. They are so far uninhabited, but have extensive cave systems. I was inspired to draw these islands by a picture of a cross-section of a diseased artery, which looked very funky. I started drawing them as doodles on my art notebook at school and have put them in my schoolwork portfolio and have drawn them extensively on my wall.

—Jesse Harris-Braun

Originally (on the wall) the pictures are drawn in black Dry Erase marker but once we take the pictures and put them on the computer, I create a new layer and use the original photo as a guide to trace the image. Then I fill the spaces with colors and make a gradient background for the sky. I use the same color palette for each picture. We will be releasing new pictures every week via my Facebook account and Google+.

—Will Harris-Braun



## **PASSION NIGHTS AT QIVC**

In pursuing the ideals of the Quaker Intentional Village Project, we have much to learn from others who can teach us practical skills and inspire us by sharing their knowledge and their principles for living. With this in mind, Jens initiated "Passion Nights" at QIVC last year:

*The idea behind Passion Nights is to provide a set event where folks can come by QIVC and share with us on topics they are really excited about. In Ecuador, I grew up in a house where people stopped by – my mom and dad often had people over, and they were good at getting them to share about their lives. Interesting things would come out of these conversations – things you might not expect. There is also stuff we want to know about, for example, keeping track of the range of changes each season brings. If this is a passion of someone's, let's invite them over and learn.*

The idea has taken hold at QIVC and we have had a number of Passion Nights to date. The format is usually for the person to talk for 20 minutes or so, and then open up the discussion for questions, responses, and comments.

Janice Goldfrank came twice to share her thoughts on phenology, which is the science dealing with the influence of climate on the recurrence of such annual phenomena of animal and plant life as bird migrations and plant flowering. First, she came with Claudia and Conrad Vispo of Hawthorne Valley Farm and Farm-scape Ecology to talk about her work as a naturalist with a passion demonstrated in her online nature calendar describing 19 yearly seasons ([www.naturecalendar.net](http://www.naturecalendar.net)). When she came to QIVC the second time, she took us for a walk on our land pointing out what we could expect to find in the current season. This walk brought together a motley crew of interested folks ranging from our oldest member, Paul, to five-year-old Elias. All enjoyed hearing Janice say, "We should be finding this, because it is this time of year"—not just going out to see what you see, but being prepared to see what was ripe in that micro-season.

Thomas McCosker, a young, interesting friend of the community who sojourned with us for many months in 2009-2010, talked about his decisions about how to pursue life. He shared with us his quandaries—dealing with the need to make money, yet finding a way to nurture his extreme passion about working with his hands. This was not a "how to" evening, but one of quandaries shared and discussed.

Friend of the community Nadine Hoover came to visit as well. Part of her passion is connecting and nurturing relationships, so we did some grounding exercises, some playful exercises, some serious ones, all interactive. It was the AVP (Alternatives to Violence Project) approach, as well as her work in trauma healing, but also Quaker understanding—a deep understanding of Quaker practice, tapping into the source.

Guy McPherson, a former professor of Evolutionary Biology and Ecology at the University of Arizona (<http://guymcpherson.com/>) came and spoke about his understanding of the dire ecological outlook for our planet and humanity. He shared with us his lessons learned from teaching poetry in prison and focusing on sustainable homesteading.

One very hands-on passion night was given by Chris Templin, another Canaanite, who is an animal trapper. He brought many different types of traps, and showed us how they are set and how they work. He talked about when, where, and how to use them. He also passed around different bait scents that were quite odd but apparently work well, for example, artificial apple scent, like you might find in a Jolly Rancher. Chris also shared about the laws of New York State in regards to trapping and transporting

## **PASSION NIGHTS AT QIVC, CONT.**

animals. With the way our rabbits and groundhogs here at QIVC feel very willing to partake of our gardens, this passion night left us better aware of one way to deal with “pests” while also raising questions about our human tendencies to want to control the natural world’s appetites for the purposes of satisfying our own.

Art Brock shared about his lifelong passion of growing and enabling community, and how this grew into his current work that he shares with Eric on the MetaCurrency project. From starting a student-run school, to an employee-run business, he shared how he’s been working on enabling groups to create new and empowering “social DNA,” both as social processes and as technical infrastructure. As an example of the latter, instead of evaluating how a community (or business) is doing by charts and graphs and data to be processed by someone with power, he shared with us the image of a fish tank, a way that different sectors of a community could be represented simultaneously (such as by different fish), so at a quick glance everyone else in the community would have a heads-up on how everyone is doing (hiding in the coral, swimming vigorously, lying belly up). Tools like these could give us at a large scale the same kind of emerging-view-of-the-whole that we naturally have in small groups. He talked about new ways of reading what is happening within communities, and developing ways of speaking about health and wealth together—well-being. For more on Art, you can see his website at <http://artbrock.com>.

Jean-François Noubel shared with us snapshots into his many passions, which though seemingly disparate, are fully interrelated in his life. Some examples include how his passion for rock-climbing led him to scale various cathedrals, how his passion for the gift economy has led him away from use of national currencies, how his passion for martial arts allows him to integrate into his body his awareness of power and energy, and how he sees a focus on joy as superseding a need to dwell on morals, ethics, and duties.

Future Passion nights are likely to include younger presenters such as Will on Minecraft and Elias on avian ecology. Do let us know if you would like to come and share your passion with us!

*After Passion Night with Jean-François Noubel,  
Emilie Michaud shared this as her resonance with  
what he said ...*

### **Monet Refuses the Operation**

By Lisel Mueller

*Doctor, you say there are no haloes  
around the streetlights in Paris  
and what I see is an aberration  
caused by old age, an affliction.  
I tell you it has taken me all my life  
to arrive at the vision of gas lamps as angels,  
to soften and blur and finally banish  
the edges you regret I don't see,  
to learn that the line I called the horizon  
does not exist and sky and water,  
so long apart, are the same state of being.  
Fifty-four years before I could see  
Rouen cathedral is built  
of parallel shafts of sun,  
and now you want to restore  
my youthful errors: fixed  
notions of top and bottom,  
the illusion of three-dimensional space,  
wisteria separate  
from the bridge it covers.  
What can I say to convince you  
the Houses of Parliament dissolve  
night after night to become  
the fluid dream of the Thames?  
I will not return to a universe  
of objects that don't know each other,  
as if islands were not the lost children  
of one great continent. The world  
is flux, and light becomes what it touches,  
becomes water, lilies on water,  
above and below water,  
becomes lilac and mauve and yellow  
and white and cerulean lamps,  
small fists passing sunlight  
so quickly to one another  
that it would take long, streaming hair  
inside my brush to catch it.  
To paint the speed of light!  
Our weighted shapes, these verticals,  
burn to mix with air  
and changes our bones, skin, clothes  
to gases. Doctor,  
if only you could see  
how heaven pulls earth into its arms  
and how infinitely the heart expands  
to claim this world, blue vapor without end.*

## ***Wealth, Currency, and What We Value***

Recently we had a workshop on “Valuation of the Farmhouse.” Our Farmhouse is the space other communities often refer to as their Common House. Although our Town Assessor had given us her estimate of its value in dollars, we are interested in other aspects of its value to us and to those who visit us.

Our intention as individuals and as a community is to participate in the kind of economy that brings us together, instead of dividing us. A synonym for economy is wealth, but few citizens of the world participate in the wealth represented by the dollar. In fact, it could be argued that this dollar economy has created more poverty than wealth—certainly in terms of numbers of people who can access its wealth. One of our members, Eric Harris-Braun, along with his colleagues and recent residential guests of the Farmhouse Arthur Brock and Jean-François Noubel, has been helping us imagine and utilize different “architectures” for thinking about wealth.

A specific opportunity for us to utilize values other than federal currency to assess our wealth arose in our discussion of how we, as a community, value a guest’s overnight stay in our Farmhouse. The conventional valuation might be arrived at by looking at what local places offering overnight stays charge—from \$40 a night for a sojourner at the local Quaker Conference Center to \$235 a night at a lovely Inn a few miles from us. Since we don’t want to set ourselves up in the model of a business, we plan to put some kind of donation box in the Farmhouse and let guests know it is there if they feel moved to contribute.

But in thinking about other sorts of currency (something that is in circulation as a medium of exchange), we discussed the value to us of someone staying in the Farmhouse, of having it kept warm by fires the person builds in winter, of the participation in our committees of longer-term residents, of the availability of some of our Farmhouse residents to hang out with our children when needed or to run into town on a quick errand when no one else can. We considered the enrichment brought to us by an intern who asks us questions that engage us in talking about community in ways we have felt but never quite articulated, of residents who can listen to one of us when we are most in need, of colleagues/friends who bring entirely different ways of living (e.g., totally in the gift economy) and then interact with us in all the small ways of everyday living, allowing us to experience first-hand a different vision of how the world works.

Though we as individuals and as a community are still solidly enmeshed in the consumer economy, the process of articulating different kinds of value, of wealth, and naming them as *currency* in the same way the dollar is *currency* helps us begin to imagine how we might extricate ourselves and live in ways that acknowledge the value—the wealth—all living creatures can contribute.

—Dee Duckworth



# One Photographer's First View of Chicken Processing at Home... Missing the Hot Water Dip to Loosen Feathers!



Feet first carried to the slaughter



Head first into the cone



Paul pulls her head down



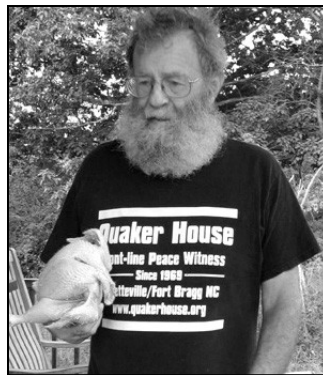
Here the photographer's squeamishness is evident with a plant obscuring the knife at her throat - the cut was quick and sure though



Left is the set-up: chicken bleeding out in cone while another is de-gutted by Evan with Paul watching



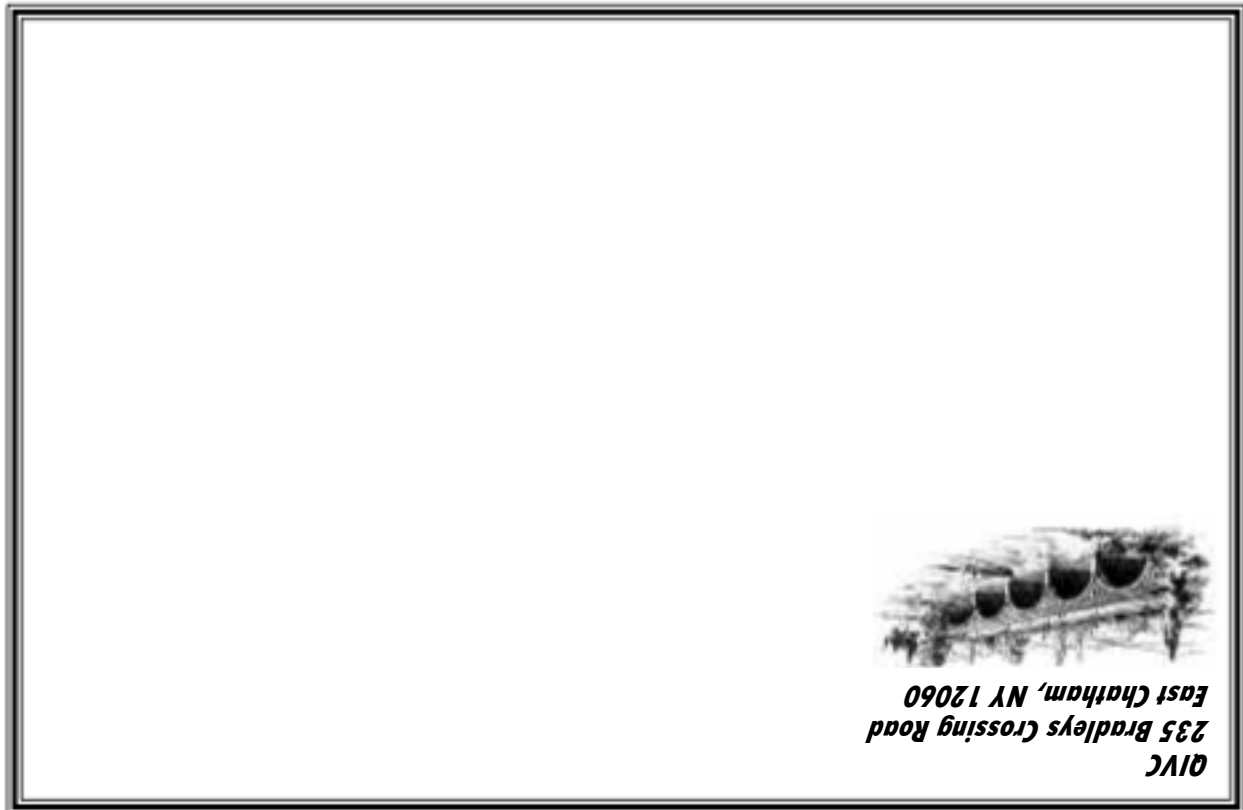
And this is how to defeather - just pull 'em off!



Football-like, Paul carries chicken to kitchen for final processing



Et voilà! Organic, local chickens!



We believe community can be a means to advance the following five intentions:

1. To increase the mindfulness, spiritual focus, and God-centeredness of our lives by finding and living with others who share these goals and thus will reinforce, on a daily basis, our desire to live in worship.
2. To strengthen our family life both by creating a “village” setting in which to raise our and others’ children, and by caring for our elders. This includes an emphasis on leaving behind cultural obstacles that interfere with providing the time and energy that a healthy family life requires.
3. To examine carefully our participation in the national/international consumer economy and begin to build the critical mass necessary for viable business networks and sources of goods and services more appropriate to our Quaker testimonies,
4. To focus on a lifestyle that is environmentally sound and that attempts to give back to our planet as much as is taken from it.
5. To include a good measure of joy, fun, outreach, and service in our lives as we strive to meet these objectives.

We believe that our communities' success in achieving these five objectives will be aided by memberships diverse in race, age, ethnicity, sexual preference, and economic situations, and therefore it is our aim to gather communities whose members are diverse in these ways as well as others.