

# **Unity with Nature Committee Report for Pacific Yearly Meeting's Representatives Committee**

February 27 to March 1, 2015

Warm Greetings! May this moment find you walking in the Light and in Unity with Nature.

Unity with Nature Committee [UwN] had a very productive three day retreat in Berkeley in the fall of 2014 with the theme of "Greening: Bringing it All Back Home." We shared our concerns, witnessing, and inspirations. [See highlights below.] Members Shelley Tanenbaum, Rick Herbert, and Catya de Neergaard brought good news and ideas from Quaker Earthcare Witness [QEW]. [See the accompanying report by PYM's Representatives to QEW for more details.]

**We have three requests we hope Friends will thoughtfully consider.**

## **1. Key Funding for PYM's Representatives to Quaker Earthcare Witness**

PYM sends two delegates /representatives to QEW and has traditionally supported their travel expense needs. QEW has two working consultations a year around the country. **Providing representatives is a major way that PYM and other Yearly Meetings support the work of QEW.** In FY 2013-2014 and FY 2014-2015 the budget for QEW reps was reduced from \$2500 to \$1000, which is inadequate to meet the basic expenses of the two working delegates. The FY 2014-2015 budget is already zeroed out. **We are asking for a line item augmentation for the QEW rep line item in FY 2014-2015 to cover sending the two delegates to Ann Arbor in April. We will bring cost figures [probably around \$1400] to Rep Com and will ask that the Ann Arbor travel and conference fee expense be fully funded.** [Please see Appendix A for a fuller discussion of this issue, included an historical chart of budgets and actual expenses for the last seven fiscal years.]

## **2. DIY carbon tax for PYM's annual gathering**

UwN proposes a new program of voluntary carbon offset fees as a part of the PYM registration process with a suggested fee based on type of travel to and from annual session and number of people. We will provide a user-friendly calculation form to help Friends figure out the carbon footprint of their travel to annual gathering. Friends could then decide what DIY tax amount would suit their situation.

We would like to work with the Arrangements Clerk to include this in the registration materials for Walker Creek to be collected in PYM registration process. Funds thus collected would go into UwN's special projects fund

(which is administered by PYM) for a variety of Earthcare projects such as UwN's mini-grant program.

### **3. Offering of a Simple Meal at Walker Creek**

Similarly, we hope that Friends will be inclined to again support this opportunity for awareness and thankfulness. A simple meal can also be nutritious and delicious. Monies that may be saved by simplicity can be donated to an Earthcare project, and we invite the Yearly Meeting to seek unity on the best destination.

#### **Highlights of Unity from our October 2014 Retreat and Phone Conferences since Annual Session 2014**

1. We came to unity to ask Jose Aguto, point person for environmental and earth care action for FCNL and a very inspiring speaker, to lead a workshop [IG] at PacYM 2015. In harmony with the Presiding Clerk, we are very happy that he will also be able to give a talk at a PacYM 2015 plenary.
2. Through our liaison with monthly meeting list, we are encouraging monthly meetings to consider a divestment minute. We sent information about fossil fuel divestment as a strategy to slow climate change, Strawberry Creek's divestment minute, and offers of educational materials and links related to divestment to our list.
3. We approved our proposed revision to our Charter from PacYM and shared it with nominating committee. Please see Appendix B.
4. We nominated Muriel Strand to the Earthlight Board.
5. We recommended interest groups to College Park Quarterly [CPQ] gatherings. For spring 2015 at Ben Lomond, we are proposing a workshop combining Non-Violent Communication with Earthcare queries about our embodied connection with the earth to be facilitated by Robin Keeler and Cedar Rose Selenite.
6. In addition to Jose Aguto, we are proposing for annual session 2015 an interest group on "*Greening the Meeting, Greening Our Lives: Sustainably Living the Earthcare Testimony*".
7. We gave a mini-grant of \$200 to Casa de los Amigos toward their brilliant rain catchment system.
8. We went thoroughly over our line items in the PacYM budget and brainstormed ways to fundraise for our projects. Among other initiatives, we will again be offering crafts for sale and the dime-a-gallon project at annual session 2015.
9. We are asking Finance Committee to fully fund the QEW Representatives line item in the proposed FY 2015-2016 budget and beyond. UwN is in a process of discernment about how much this should be.
10. We are seeking ways to further support green Friends and green Witnessing in Monthly Meetings. We are seasoning having a Green retreat, workshop and consultation for UwN liaisons and other interest Friends. Topics and activities might include slowing climate change, fracking, the fossil fuel divestment initiative, transitioning to a new global future, greening the meeting, permaculture, species and habit preservation and restoration, silent Worship in Unity with Nature, walking the land, experiential embodiment in and listening to nature, food justice, water justice, and eco-economic justice.

You are invited and encouraged to talk to the members of Unity with Nature Committee with any questions or concerns: Shelley Tanenbaum and Rick Herbert from Strawberry Creek MM, Catya de Neergaard from Berkeley MM, Muriel Strand from Sacramento MM, Alice Rosenthal and Cody Lowry of Orange Grove MM, Meagan Malachite Fischer and Cedar Rose Selenite from Chico MM, with Friend of the committee, Joyce Pointe from Appleseed MM.

We would welcome new working members to UwN committee in this perilous epoch where the earth and all her life forms need our wise caretaking and Friends around the world are increasingly coming to Unity to help.

~ Submitted by Catya de Neergaard and Muriel Strand, co-clerks of UwN Committee

## Appendix A:

### More Information about Unity with Nature Committee's Request for an Augmentation to the QEW line item for FY 2014-2015

*“Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW) is a network of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in North America and other like-minded people who are taking spirit-led action to address ecological and social crises from a spiritual perspective, emphasizing Quaker process and testimonies, including continuing revelation. QEW has grown over the last 25 years out of a deepening sense of spiritual connection with the natural world.”* [www.quakerearthcare.org](http://www.quakerearthcare.org)

As you may know, PYM's UwN Committee appoints two representatives / delegates from PYM to QEW. QEW has two in-person consultations a year. Both have working groups and standing committees which representatives are expected to join and participate in. Providing representatives is a major way that PYM and other Yearly Meetings support the work of QEW. QEW meetings are held in various locations around the country. The next two are in Ann Arbor in April and at our Ben Lomond Quaker Center in October. Due to various circumstances, the amount which had been regularly budgeted for the QEW reps under PYM's allocation has been substantially reduced to the point where Representatives' expenses are not met. In FY2013-2014 the budget for QEW reps was reduced from \$2500 to \$1000, as you can see in the chart. This drop was sustained in the following fiscal year.

Circumstances probably include the fact that for a time, PYM's Rep to QEW was Shelley Tanenbaum, who has become the QEW General Secretary. As General Secretary, her travel expenses were paid by QEW, so the need for this support was temporarily reduced. Additionally, it is probable that historically one of the Reps donated her travel expenses to PYM, something not possible at this time, hence need is now greater. Also, new co-clerks were unaware of this trend, and so failed to clarify the history of, and need for, PYM support in this area. And of course, travel costs vary by time and location.

Therefore, UwN committee requests PYM's renewed support for the QEW representatives expenses of travel and conference fees. **We hope that Pacific Yearly Meeting will re-commit to supporting our representatives in attending the two yearly QEW steering committee meetings – including the April 2015 meeting in Ann Arbor, Michigan - without facing**

**undue hardship.** We have begun fundraising in various arenas, but time is short.

PYM's current representatives to QEW, Rick Herbert and Catya de Neergaard, have taken on responsibilities within QEW that call for their participation at the April meeting. Rick is the new Representative from QEW to FCNL, and Catya is the new clerk of QEW's Spiritual Nurturance Committee.

To the best of our knowledge, UWN's budget history is as follows:

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>
2008-2009	\$1600	\$558
2009-2010	\$1600	\$681
2010-2011	\$1600	\$1600
2011-2012	\$2500	\$1329
2012-2013	\$2500	\$1594
2013-2014	\$1000	\$1000
2014-2015	\$1000	\$1595 *

\* In addition to the budget, two gifts, one from the presiding clerk's discretionary fund of \$500 and one anonymously of 94.60 were used to send the two delegates to Pendle Hill for the fall 2014 Steering Committee meeting. There is nothing left in the FY 2014-2015 budget.

**We are asking for a line item augmentation for the QEW rep line item in FY 2014-2015 to cover sending the two Representatives to Ann Arbor in April. We will bring cost figures [probably around \$1400] to Rep Com and will ask that the Ann Arbor travel and conference fee expense be fully funded.**

## **Appendix B**

*Note: this proposed Charter from PacYM was revised by Unity with Nature Committee on 10/25/2014. It is based on UwN's 2005 Charter from PacYM.*

### **Unity with Nature Committee's Charter from Pacific Yearly Meeting (Proposed Revision of October 2014)**

This committee acts on behalf of Yearly Meeting on spiritual concerns related to the environment. It strives to keep alive in the consciences of Friends the spirituality of and the kinship with all creation. It has the function to educate, inform, inspire, and give Witness about earth care and the environment.

The Committee may have several subcommittees such as: (1) Sustainability, (2) Service projects and internships, (3) Nature experiences and outings, (4) Education and interest groups.

The committee has nine members, serving three-year overlapping terms, with three members appointed annually. Two Pacific Yearly Meeting [PYM] representatives to the national Quaker Earthcare Witness [QEW] (formerly named 'Friends Committee on Unity with Nature') are members ex-officio, if not already members of PYM's Unity with Nature Committee.

#### **Tasks**

- Appoints PYM's representatives to QEW
- Supports publications such as Earthlight Magazine and QEW newsletter.
- Encourages and supports QEW and other Friends' environmental initiatives such as Friends Committee on National Legislation [FCNL], Friends Committee on Legislation in California [FCL-CA], and Quaker Institute for the Future [QIF].
- Nominates candidates for Earthlight's Board of Directors
- Provides means for communications among PYM Friends concerned about the environment and with Friends similarly concerned nationally and internationally
- Proposes and conducts interest groups and nature-oriented worship at Quarterly and Yearly Meeting sessions.
- Encourages change toward sustainable lifestyles by Meetings and their members and attenders.
- Raises funds to further its work.

#### **Goals and Projects may Include:**

- Sponsoring an internship program for Young Friends
- Responding to queries such as recommendations for books and other educational materials related to care of the earth
- Proactive educational programs such as the mini-grant program
- Proactive educational and fundraising programs such as the dime a gallon carbon credit program
- Seasoning concerns arising out of Witness, we nurture the process of taking those concerns towards a minute at annual session.

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