

**YOUTH PROGRAMS COORDINATING COMMITTEE (YPCC)**  
**Action Item for Pacific Yearly Meeting Annual Session 2016**

YPCC has one action item to have considered by PYM: a draft minute of travel for Thistle West (formerly aka Hannah Mackinney) of Strawberry Creek Friends Meeting, who will be accompanying our Youth Program Coordinator, Alyssa Nelson, on her invited visit to Australia Yearly Meeting, along with Cathy Walling of Chena Ridge Friends Meeting (Fairbanks, AK, Alaska Friends Conference). They leave together the day after PYM Annual Session ends.

**PROPOSED MINUTE OF TRAVEL:**

Dear Friends in Australia Yearly Meeting,

We are delighted to introduce you to Thistle West (pronouns: they/them/their) and to affirm their gifts for spiritual accompaniment and building connections among people. Last summer, Thistle accompanied our now-Presiding Clerk, Diego Navarro, to Intermountain Yearly Meeting where he presented the keynote talk. Now Thistle will be accompanying our PYM Youth Programs Coordinator, Alyssa Nelson, and fellow elder Cathy Walling of Alaska Friends Conference for the first portion of Alyssa's travels among you this June/July 2016, including your Yearly Meeting in Tasmania, Silver Wattle Quaker Centre, and Canberra Regional Meeting, as well the Young Friends pre-YM camp. We expect that Thistle may also be moved into spoken ministry around their own spiritual journey as a Friend and young adult, which we hope enriches the exchange between our Yearly Meetings.

Thistle, age 18, grew up in the PYM community as the child of families who have been part of PYM and local meetings for three generations. Thistle started regularly participating in Meeting for Worship at age 7 and has attended Friends General Conference, "an association of regional Quaker communities in the U.S. and Canada working together to nurture a vital Quaker faith." These experiences have been significant parts of their conviction and choice to join the Society as a member of Strawberry Creek Friends Meeting (Berkeley, California, USA).

As a younger teen, Thistle served on our PYM Youth Programs Coordinating Committee and as co-clerk of Quarterly and Yearly Meeting teen programs. Thistle has followed a leading to promote gender and sexuality justice, once bringing Alyssa in to help put together a Quarterly Meeting interest group for teens and adults about trans\*

and non-binary gender identity; this coincided with Thistle and other teens advocating for change in Quarterly Meeting policy on binary-gender-segregated sleeping in the teen program and promoting non-binary language in the teen program handbook revision.

Thistle earned high school credit in Fall 2014 by attending the Woolman Semester, a Quaker educational community in Northern California focused on peace, justice, and sustainability. Thistle published an article about that experience, “237 Acres of God” in *Western Friend Magazine* (May/June 2015): “At Woolman, I often felt like a baby bird: thoroughly safe, but uncomfortably vulnerable, which I see as the ideal state for growth.” Thistle passionately finds The Sacred in different places and encounters, which frames how they see the world and shows them how they might help create positive change. They would like to come to better understand globalization, modern colonialism, and post-colonial discourse. To this end, Thistle has just finished their first year at Oberlin College in the state of Ohio, USA with a declared major in Economics and a double minor in Spanish Language and Middle Eastern & North African Studies.

We are delighted for Thistle to have this opportunity to share with and learn from you. We thank them for providing loving support to Alyssa Nelson’s ministry and look forward to hearing how Spirit continues to move in this journey.

In the Light,

[to be signed by PYM Presiding Clerk if approved]