

Pacific Yearly Meeting Western Friend Representative Report to Annual Session 2021

Western Friend is a growing and changing project which, like everything else, was tipped one way and another during this year of pandemic. Its governing Board consists of three appointed members from each of three Yearly Meetings—PYM, IMYM and NPYM-- and meets normally three times a year in weekend sessions hosted by monthly meetings, and at other times online. Of course, this was a year of Zoom meetings all around, and the Board thus missed out on its regular visits to monthly meetings and the resulting opportunity to experience a bit of each of the Yearly Meetings it represents. But on the other hand, there was energy and creativity at work in the Board and at editor Mary Klein's desk. Western Friend's financial condition remained strong, subscription numbers held steady, and new and continuing additional features broadened the reach of Western Friend: the new "Extra Extra" online bulletin allowed Friends to easily share news about their meeting life and concerns, the "Western Friend Connect" feature made zoom rooms available, hosted a weekly worship time, and offered a number of presentation and discussion sessions [Quakers in Public Life, with a panel of Friends presenting their experience, will be offered August 7th and 12th] and "Western Friend Discussion Community" allowed Friends to initiate and participate in online discussions of current concerns. Yes, much more than a magazine, though the magazine continues to provide a forum and common reading for Friends in the West and beyond. If all this is new to the reader, a tour of the web site will provide a review of these features and many other resources—back issues, memorial minutes, books for sale, annual session photos, and more.

The three appointees from Pacific Yearly Meeting: Nancy Wilkinson from Strawberry Creek Meeting, Kate Connell from Santa Barbara Meeting, and Jim Anderson from Chico Meeting, are active and engaged Board members and will be glad to talk with Friends about this work—seek us out. Our Yearly Meeting contributes generously each year to support the magazine and the many other dimensions of Western Friend. In addition, of course, subscription fees provide a good portion of the needed financial support, as well as do many individual and monthly meeting donations. Indeed, the widespread support and generosity of PYM Friends is an expression not only of a recognition of financial need, but of a sense of community investment and personal connection to this work. Like many Friends' undertakings, this one is part of a relationship, a covenant, a community at work in reshaping the world. It depends on faith, imagination, the sharing of resources, and the vision of a great people gathered. Much of the work in ministry represented by it is invisible, but the many fruits shared are rich and provocative, pleasing and eye opening, an important part of who we are.

The annual report of Western Friend is included in this set of documents also, so a thorough review of the work, finances, and resources of the project are available there. Many from our Yearly Meeting have published in Western Friend, the memorial minutes of those who have left us are there for review, and photos of the annual sessions you have attended will provide pleasing occasions for a re-visit. We encourage all in our yearly meeting to enjoy, appreciate, support, and participate in the work of Western Friend.

-- Jim Anderson

The PacYM Representatives on the board of directors of Friends Bulletin Corporation (publisher of Western Friend magazine) are Nancy Wilkinson, Kate Connell, and Jim Anderson (convener).