

## **Peace and Concerns Standing Committee Report to Annual Sessions 2014**

Peace and Concerns Standing Committee (PCSC) has continued meeting jointly with Support and Outreach Standing Committee (SOSC). This allows us to have more Friends in attendance, thus having more Friends to consider concerns, to hear reports from the working groups and granting groups under our respective care, to hear reports from representatives to other organizations, to thresh issues as they arise and prepare minutes as appropriate, and to consider requests for funding or endorsements.

Our meetings have often been attended by 7 to 9 members of the two standing committees, plus members of working and granting groups – so when we close with a holding of hands around the table in Room 4 at Arch Street, we can complete the circle. This may seem trivial, but it is a morale booster to be able to literally feel the circle of love.

The standing committees appointed Anne Creter as liaison to the PYM Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) Network under PCSC care. She participated in the FCNL Annual Meeting and Lobby Day in Washington, DC, and is involved with the working group's on-going activities.

In the fall, at the request of Interim Meeting, the standing committees drafted a Minute based on various Minutes from monthly and quarterly meetings, mostly related to the Newtown, CT, mass shooting. Worship and Care Standing Committee intended to participate in the process but were easy with the draft we prepared, which we then forwarded to Interim Meeting, which was not prepared to receive it as written.

We worked hard to re-establish PYM's Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) representation with the United Nations Department of Public Information after a hiatus of about three years. An annual review was submitted to re-activate PYM's official status and interested committee representatives were selected: Loretta Maldonado, Yolanda Covarrubias, and Walton Burwell. Formal acceptance from the United Nations-Department of Information (UN-DPI) is still pending. The standing committees determined this was an important peacebuilding association for PYM to maintain. We also have a liaison with "Peace Day Philly" (UN-designated International Day of Peace) and encourage Friends' involvement on the 21st of September each year.

Efforts concerning climate change and global warming continue apace under the able leadership of the Eco-Justice Working Group. We continue to support the campaign to end PNC Bank's investment in companies involved in mountain-top removal mining in West Virginia; this endeavor is being led by Earth Quaker Action Team. This spring we

approved a "line of credit" of up to \$1,500 to enable the working group to hire interns for the summer. We also approved the use of money from the Fund for Sufferings – and sent our approval to Interim Meeting – not only for members of PYM but also for non-Friends involved in nonviolent direct action at the Federal Building in Philadelphia (in response to the Keystone XL pipeline), which resulted in thirty arrests. Also there are plans forming – encouraged by Friends from Bucks Quarter – to participate in a march to the UN on September 20, 2014, at the time of the UN gathering on climate change as part of preparation for a major summit in 2015.

The International Outreach Granting Group (IOGG) provides small grants to assist American Friends and other individuals who travel abroad as well as international visitors who come to the United States on Friends concerns. Their visits and projects seek to further international understanding, peace and other Friends' concerns. Grants are generally \$300-500. During the 2012-13 Program/Fiscal Year, the IOGG approved grants totaling \$8,830 to assist 19 individuals to travel internationally. This included 11 females and 7 males; one additional person was unable to make the trip as planned. Most recipients were over 18 years of age.

The Indian Committee reported that they supported just one project of eight at the amount requested (roughly \$33,000 requested and only \$8,600 donated), and had to tell another four worthy requesters that they could not support them at all. Among those to whom they had to deny funding: the Winnemem Wintu Tribe of California for their Mt. Shasta women's coming-of-age ceremony, so necessary for a sound sense of identity to a Native woman; the White Earth Land Recovery Project for a children's garden encouraging the cultivation of native plants and food sustainability for Ojibwe families in Minnesota; and Someday Productions of Philadelphia for an art camp to introduce urban Philadelphia youth and Navaho in Thoreau, NM, youth to each other's cultures. They hope that in future years they will have the funding to be somewhat more generous.

End Modern Slavery Working Group reports that the current efforts grew out of local concerns about forced labor and have grown to have worldwide visibility relating to products made by adults and children and to human trafficking especially in relation to the sex trade and domestic servitude. Friends have made significant contributions to the movement to address modern slavery. There is a National Human Trafficking Posting Hotline and significant efforts to publicize it, but laws are on a state-by-state level. Pennsylvania, for example, has no legal definition of modern slavery. Therefore, SB 75 has been introduced in the Pennsylvania Legislature to begin to address this. We are encouraged to push for its passage. Many products we may buy are "slave products": sugar, coffee, chocolate, oriental rugs. In southeastern PA, a shelter called Dawn's Place assists those rescued from slavery – with a year-long program to help young women move from abuse and captivity into a much healthier life. We are encouraged to explore

the website [slaveryfootprint.org](http://slaveryfootprint.org) to see how slavery impinges on our daily lives.

We co-sponsored the Christmas Peace Pilgrimage 2013, with active support from Friends at Newtown Meeting. Facilitated by a member of the standing committee, we agreed to cosponsor a Peace Conference at Pennswood Village in Newtown, Bucks County, on Friday, September 19, 2014, entitled "Older People Promoting Peace." The purpose is to inspire and catalyze efforts by older adults to initiate and lead peace initiatives. It is being held essentially on the International Day of Peace.

We welcome other Friends to join with us on the Standing Committees and on any of the various working and granting groups under our care. We can also involve Friends in short-term projects.

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