In the alphabet soup of Friends’ organizations to which North Pacific Yearly Meeting appoints representatives, Western Friend is unique. Western Friend is a regional organization with the mission “to build practical and spiritual connections among Western Friends in print, online and face-to-face.” The three appointed members from NPYM are Directors of the Board for Friends Bulletin Corporation, which does business as Western Friend. This small Board of Directors consists of nine members, three each from Intermountain, Pacific and North Pacific Yearly Meetings. As Directors we are responsible for the mission, fiscal health, and staffing of Western Friend. These duties challenge each of us to serve Friends in the West by building community within and among our three Yearly Meetings. It is a spiritual calling for each of us and we seek together on the WF Board of Directors to use our gifts and talents to carry forward the work of Western Friend.

In the year since NPYM Annual Session 2013, Western Friend has successfully raised sufficient funds to undertake a complete re-design of our web presence. This “work in progress” will be rolled out for public use later this year. Many Friends in NPYM are graciously giving time to help “beta test” the features of the new website. Rick Seifert was instrumental in the fund raising effort for this project, and as convener of the development committee has supported the executive director/editor in pursuing new and expanded revenue opportunities for the ongoing operations of Western Friend. Our goal is to significantly increase financial support for Western Friend so that we can offer increased communication resources to all our communities, be they worship groups, monthly meetings, quarterly meetings or yearly meetings.

One communication tool we are particularly excited about is the online meeting room, which WF has set up and used to offer several workshops as well as committee meetings in a virtual “face to face” setting. All of us have participated in several trial uses of the meeting room, and Alan Mountjoy-Venning has shared many practical pointers about using this online technology. His input has been invaluable to all the board members who have never used meeting rooms before. Leni Skarin (a somewhat technology challenged grandmother) is particularly excited about the potential for this meeting room to give many groups visual access to one another for long distance meetings, discussions, workshops and trainings.

The publication of Western Friend magazine continues to be a core function of our work to connect Friends. The use of themes for each magazine issue has generated many articles which both inform and challenge us to live our lives as Friends in a world that needs our witness, our testimony and our leadership. Many of these articles have generated lively discussion groups within monthly meetings, and we encourage all to use the magazine as a resource for adult religious education programs. The addition of “pages for all ages” has made the magazine and equally valuable resource for childrens’ programs as well. Leni Skarin is especially eager to see the archive of all past is-
sues of Friends Bulletin/Western Friend set up on the website with a searchable index. We are actively pursuing funding to support creation of this feature.

We have each tasked ourselves to pursue outreach to meetings and worship groups in addition to our own so that we can learn about the desires and needs of Friends throughout NPYM. A new program of “Community Builders” will be launched this fall so that we can facilitate more sharing and communication among worship groups and monthly meetings all across the West.

We are all grateful for the opportunity to serve Friends in NPYM and look forward to a new board member joining us in the fall as Rick Seifert becomes an “emeritus board member” continuing his work in community building for Western Friend.

Rick Seifert 2012-2014
Leni Skarin 2012-2015
Alan Mountjoy-Venning 2013-2016