NPYM 2014 Annual Session
NPYM Representatives to FCNL Report

Representatives: Steven Aldrich, Olympia Monthly Meeting, convener
Pat Shields, Bridge City Monthly Meeting
Dorsey Green, University Friends Meeting
Laurie Childers, Corvallis Friends Meeting
Maurice Warner, Salmon Bay Friends Meeting
Leslie Hickox, Multnomah Monthly Meeting

Your six NPYM Representatives to FCNL began the year with a roundtable meeting at the 2013 NPYM Annual Session. Plans were made to support the following actions:

- Participate as FCNL General Committee members in the 2013 FCNL Annual Session to revise the FCNL Policy Statement and Lobby Congress (see http://fcnl.org/about/govern/policy/).
- Involve Friends from NPYM in the effort to reduce military spending (FCNL advocates reducing the military budget over the next decade by $1 Trillion. FCNL is also supporting efforts to persuade Congress to repeal the Authorization for Use of Military Force [AUMF]). For a complete list of FCNL’s current Legislative Priorities see: http://fcnl.org/about/govern/priorities/113/.
- Contribute to the FCNL Priority Setting process for the 114th Congress (2015-2017) which will be finalized by the 2014 FCNL Annual Session
- Meet with US Senators and Members of Congress to build relationships that support FCNL lobbying and educational efforts
- Continue organizing through participation in the 2014 NPYM Annual Session

2013 FCNL Annual Session:
Building Community while writing a new Policy Statement

“Strength through Integrity, Compassion through Simplicity” was the theme of FCNL’s 2013 Annual Session. Five of your representatives joined Jonathan Brown and Tom Ewell, former Yearly Meeting Reps and continuing FCNL activists, in Washington DC to lobby our Members of Congress and US Senators, and then attend Annual Session.

Reza Aslan set the tone for the session with his plenary address, asserting the historical Jesus was a radical political figure who sought to overturn the status quo (see http://fcnl.org/about/history/reza_aslan_talk/).

Oregon US Senator Jeff Merkley received the Edward F. Snyder Award for National Legislative Leadership in Advancing Disarmament and Building Peace for his leadership in promoting a sensible strategy for ending the U.S. war in Afghanistan and for leading this effort for successive years. Senator Merkley’s actions were supported and encouraged by FCNL through lobby training for local constituents (see “Persuading Oregon’s Senators to reduce military spending . . .” below) and also with background issue research (For more details see: http://fcnl.org/about/history/merkley_snyder_peaceAward/).

It is often a great challenge for a group of Friends, each individually led by God, to all see how God is manifested in the community they create together through unity. FCNL
brought 200 General Committee members together at its annual session last November and asked us to find unity to finalize a Policy Statement that will guide the organization and its 28 full-time employees. This Statement provides the foundation upon which FCNL builds to support Friends’ efforts from around the county to influence federal policy in support of Testimonies to End War, support Equity and Justice, help everyone reach her or his full potential, and be good stewards of our Home (Earth).

Small worship groups met for contemplation and consideration of each section of the draft the FCNL Policy Committee proposed after it seasoned submissions from worship groups and churches from all corners of our nation. Then we all met in a plenary session to share some more. The Policy Committee was sent away to write new drafts, and the process was repeated. After much discerning—and maybe too much editing—we reached unity. You can find what God led us write at [http://fcnl.org/about/govern/policy/](http://fcnl.org/about/govern/policy/)

**Increasing knowledge, skills, and confidence to support lobbying**

NW Friends give high marks to FCNL’s “Lobby Leader” training, a phone-in time for those in need of support to improve or increase lobbying efforts. These regular conference calls help participants develop greater confidence and knowledge to become more effective lobbyists.

Pat Shields reports her actions to reach out to other groups to widen our lobbying network came out of this training and that she has now instigated discussions with Physician for Social Responsibility and Ecumenical Ministry of Oregon about mutual support for common concerns.

In addition to the phone based Lobby Leader training, FCNL Network Building Associate Kathleen Phillipson assisted lobbying efforts with several trips to the Northwest to support Friends’ efforts to meet with and persuade their Member of Congress and Senators of the opportunities reduced military spending creates for increased peace and avoiding war.

**Persuading Oregon’s Senators to reduce military spending and to avoid US military intervention in Syria**

Kathleen met with the Corvallis Fellowship of Reconciliation in September to do lobby training. Laurie Childers reports that freshly trained lobbyist, including Laurie, went with five Veterans for Peace activists to Eugene the next day to lobby Senator Merkley’s foreign affairs aide via video conference. Their goal: convince the senator not to support US military action in Syria. The next afternoon, Senator Merkley announced he was opposed to military intervention in Syria.

Then, a mere four days after Kathleen's training, six of those trained went to Eugene to lobby Senator Wyden's Field Representative, about reducing the military budget 10 percent ($1 Trillion) over the next 10 years.
Friends in Northwest Oregon build relationships with elected representatives and also advocate for peace

Friends from Northwest Oregon also visited Senator Merkely.

Coordinating with Leslie Hickox, Representative from Multnomah Monthly Meeting (MMM) and Mike Huber, Representative from West Hills Meeting in Portland Oregon, Pat Shields organized four, and participated in three, lobbying visits with members of Congress. The primary purposes at each visit were to establish a relationship with and influence each member of Congress to consider FCNL’s positions on issues of national concern. The immediate focus was on lobbying for the repeal of the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force Act (AUMF). Working with a Minute developed in the Portland area Shared Security discussions (the FCNL and AFSC initiative). Prior to each AUFM congressional vote, all informed members of congress about the initiative and asked for support of its repeal.

Five Friends from MMM and Bridge City Friends Meeting (BCFM) visited with 1st District Representative Bonamici, to begin developing a relationship. Representative Bonamici later voted to repeal the AUFM.

3rd District Representative Blumenauer was not able to join a meeting the group scheduled, so they meet with his aide, Mike Caudle. At this meeting, attended by ten Friends, a suggestion was made for a Town Hall meeting with the Representative and local Quakers to be held at Reedwood. We continue to hope that such an event can be scheduled.

Representative Blumenauer also voted to repeal AUFM.

The visit with 5th District Representative Schrader included seven Friends from West Hills, BCFM and MMM where the same issue was discussed. The Congressman considers himself a social liberal and a fiscal conservative. He voted against the repeal, stating he is concerned about national security.

Going forward FCNL asks that we focus on the Senate with this issue, since it will likely be an amendment to the Military Authorization Bill being considered in that body this summer.

Educating Friends in Olympia, even when failing to meet with our Senators

Kathleen Philipson met with Steven Aldrich in a Tacoma coffee shop where she briefed him on current FCNL efforts to reduce the military budget and shared printed materials prepared to support those efforts. Steven used what Kathleen shared to support a Soup and Seminar on the issue with Friends from the Olympia Monthly Meeting. All then planned on meeting with Senator Murray; however, several email exchanges proved
insufficient to the effort of getting meeting dates from the Senator’s office. Kathleen’s repeated offers to help set up meetings were declined: it seemed like a simple process. It now appears multiple phone calls and emails are sometimes required to set up such meetings, and we would be well served to accept the increased assistance offered by FCNL when initial attempts to schedule do not succeed.

**Continuing to focus our efforts to change the world:**

**Establishing FCNL’s Priorities for 2015-2017**

Those who attend the 2014 FCNL Annual Session will lobby their congressional representatives and senators, then work together to define FCNL’s priorities for the 114th Congress. Priority setting began almost a year ago when Monthly Meetings met to recommend five priorities each to the FCNL Policy Committee. Dorsey Green and Steven Aldrich facilitated efforts with University Friends Meeting and Olympia Monthly Meeting respectively to contribute to the FCNL priorities development process.

Steven facilitated a round table discussion for Olympia Monthly Meeting to discern how Olympia Friends were led to use FCNL in support of their Testimonies. Connections between oil companies, military consumption of petroleum products, and the military’s role in protecting access to oil were highlighted. Concern was shared about the limited support to house the homeless and the fact it is very difficult to benefit from the structures we create to support health, jobs, family, and education if you don’t have a home. The roles money plays in the federal decision making process to continually increase power, control, and opportunities for those with the greatest amounts of wealth were also explored, as were concerns about increased restrictions on the exercise of the right to vote. Everything was written up, emailed to participants for review, then forwarded to FCNL on the web based form they provided.

**Increasing FCNL capacity: Involving more younger people**

Younger Friends were well represented at the 2014 Spring Lobby. Unofficial counts are that seven attend from Washington and four from Oregon (many of these younger Friends may be members of Northwest Yearly Meeting).

We invite all young adults (18 or older) to consider traveling to Washington, DC for FCNL’s 2015 Spring Lobby Weekend, scheduled this year for March 14-17. We invite older Friends to seek out young adults and call their attention to this opportunity. Spring Lobby Weekend is intentionally scheduled to coincide with spring break for many college students.

During the winter, 2014, there was an effort to find young adults from NPYM who were interested in going to the FCNL Spring Lobby Day, and to raise funds to send them there. Since no cost housing is available, and registration is only $25, the main expenditure is for the plane tickets needed. It was suggested that we raise the issue at the 2014 Annual Session and start the process earlier. We invite people pledge to donate frequent flyer miles or funds. More information is available at [http://fcnl.org/events/slw/](http://fcnl.org/events/slw/).

**Increasing FCNL capacity: Service on committees**
NPYM may have more of its members serving on FCNL committees than any other Yearly Meeting. Dorsey Green is past FCNL Clerk and current Capital Campaign Committee member; Jonathan Brown, a former FCNL intern, is also a member of the FCNL Capital Campaign Committee. Tom Ewell is a past Field Committee Clerk. Pat Shields is a member of the FCNL Development Committee and participates in their meetings via telephone. Steven Aldrich serves on the FCNL Policy Committee.

In addition to committee work, Pat Shields is now traveling with a concern for advancing the work of FCNL and carries a Traveling Minute from BCFM. In this ministry she has developed a presentation, “Profile of Patience, Tenacity, Friendly Persuasion and Success”. So far, this forty-five minute presentation has been given three times with about forty Friends attending from Quaker Voluntary Service, Lower Columbia WG and South Mountain Meeting. Appointments are set with, Boise Valley and Central Oregon and Umpqua/Florence WGs. Mountain View is likely to be visited this autumn. Interest has been expressed in inviting other faith communities to join in these presentations.

The focus of the effort is the history, mission, current efforts and successes of FCNL. Pat reports that she is finding that Friends have a wide range of knowledge of, and involvement with FCNL. For example: Some Friends ask if FCNL are the folks who work to build connection with other Quakers. Others use FCNL materials to lobby with their local member of Congress. One group has designated a Meeting Contact with FCNL, and LCWG has used the Minute for AUFM in it’s lobbying with Representative Buetler.

Pat also reports, “About half of attenders we come in contact with sign up for emails from FCNL.”

Steven Aldrich participated at the Policy Committee meeting in April to season priority recommendations received from Monthly Meetings, Worship Groups, and Churches and write a first draft of FCNL priorities for the 114th Congress. Additional meetings are scheduled for September to finalize a Committee recommendation for consideration by the FCNL General Committee at its Annual Session in November, 2014.

We look forward to continuing to work with the assistance of FCNL to help NPYM friends develop stronger relationships with our Congressional Representatives and US Senators to increase the impact of Friends’ Testimonies on decisions made in Washington, DC. Thank you for your support and your participation.

-Your Representatives to FCNL