

## **PYM INDIAN COMMITTEE REPORT- FY July 2003- June 2004**

Established in 1795, the Indian Committee is the oldest PYM committee in continuous operation. In supporting the many projects that come before it, the Indian Committee places high priority on those that directly support Native American communities and the development of leadership and self-sufficiency in those communities.

During FY03-04 the Indian Committee had 15 members and attenders (we have no paid staff support for the work of the Committee). An average of 100 volunteer hours per month are contributed to the work of the Indian Committee.

### **Support of Local Native American Initiatives**

The committee supported the request of the Piney-Lenape Band, Delaware Nation of New Jersey, funding computer upgrades. The computers help in genealogical research and in linking Lenape people who are geographically scattered.

### **Support Nationally and Internationally to Native Peoples**

Projects this year have focused on preservation of traditions, and support of local economic initiatives and indigenous rights.

A funding request was granted to assist Lakota youth to attend the Youth Peace Journey - a pilgrimage for peace to a sacred site in Colorado which involves both youth and elders.

Eight Wabanaki youth and two elders (Penobscot, Passamaquaddy, Mik'mags and Maliset tribes and bands) were supported to travel from Maine to Washington, D.C. in order to attend the opening of the National Museum of the American Indian in September, 2004.

The committee approved a request for funds from the "Surviving Roots Project". This project entailed the creation of a documentary film by three O'odham women and youth about the impact of living on the U.S-Mexico border. The funds allowed the O'odham to travel to New York City in order to attend the Indigenous Issues Forum at the United Nations in May 2004, where they presented their work.

The Shoshonean Women's Cultural Guild was granted funds to assist with expenses for an Honoring Ceremony and Oral History Workshop in Nevada. The workshop is the beginning of a longer oral research project to link youth and elders.

The Torreon/Starlake Chapter of Navajo in New Mexico was supported for expansion of the Torreon Community Store. This is a grass roots project which acts as a thrift store and offers employment in an area of extreme rural isolation. The store is expanding and requested funds for a furniture annex.

The committee also sent funds to the American Indian Law Alliance toward the organization and implementation of the Third Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples, and related gatherings of Native Americans from North and South America around this event in May 2004.

### **Work with Friends/Other Friends Organizations**

The PYM Indian Committee has continued to work with the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) Native American/Native

Peoples Task Force, and other Friends Indian Committees. A national Quaker/Native American conference (Gathering of Friends and Native Americans) was held in Colorado in May, 2004, and three committee members attended. During this past year, the Indian Committee continued to keep in touch with FCNL and express its appreciation for FCNL's attention to Native American issues at a time when the nation was focused on the war with Iraq.

The committee approved sending funds to the FCNL Native American Issues Program in view of its reinvigorated work to keep Friends well informed about Native American issues.

The American Friends Service Committee (Latin American & Caribbean Region) was supported with funding for workshops in Colombia for the Indigenous Guard of the Nasa People who provide a non-violent presence in Indian communities threatened with armed conflict

The committee also assisted AFSC with funding for the Gathering of Friends and Native Americans, held in Boulder, Colorado, in April/May 2004 – especially to help bring Native American participants to the gathering.

The Quaker Bolivia Link was supported to work with the Pallcapampa and Colani communities to build an irrigation system for these two Indian communities in Bolivia.

The committee supported Project Lakota, headed up by Friends from Missouri monthly meetings. This organization enlists volunteer Friends to work with Lakota Indians to build and repair homes on the Pine Ridge Reservation, and our contribution was used for building supplies.

A funding request from the Germantown Friends School was supported to update a Lenape curriculum and artifact collection with the intention of making it more accessible to GFS students as well as other schools. Lenape will be involved in the evaluation of the work done to be sure it is correct in content.

### **Outreach**

The Indian Committee has its own website, linked to the main PYM website, at [www.pym-indiancommittee.com](http://www.pym-indiancommittee.com). It contains information about the Indian Committee, and has weblinks to resources about American Indians, such as news articles, publications, and suggested readings.

We participated in the "Seek and Find" activity at Yearly Meeting, where we displayed literature and distributed Algonkian story cassettes and study guides. The Indian Committee is considering providing speakers about Native American issues to the wider Quaker community for such events as Quarterly Meetings, Young Friends, and Yearly Meeting. We have an ongoing effort to create a list of smaller, Native American-related projects that could be accomplished by monthly meetings. Committee members are encouraged to make the Indian Committee brochures available at their own monthly meetings, and to be available to speak at Friends Meetings and Schools.

Prepared by Carol Ann Gray