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Cover Letter

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"One [fundamental]
understanding brings
one-hundred
understandings."
-Chinese saying

For the last seven years of my life, I have been involved mostly in community organizing and advocacy work around urban design and land use planning issues, mostly as a volunteer. I gained a passion for how community design affects community-building during the seven years I spent living in Asia, first as a Peace Corps Education Volunteer in Nepal, and ultimately as an English teacher in China.

While I feel I've been engaging in important work over the last many years, I've come to realize that I really just miss being an educator, something I've always enjoyed and felt very effective doing. I generally believe I'm at my best when I'm working to help others understand things about their world or themselves, be it science education, *Tai Ji Quan* (T'ai Chi), or English.

When I recently stumbled upon the Yosemite Institute Field Educator positions and Educator Development Program, I felt an inspiration that I haven't felt for a long time. Here in Humboldt I've been feeling that I'm not doing what I should be or am best at, which is education, so it seemed a perfect opportunity for me, on multiple levels. I could re-enter education, reconnect with natural science and nature, do something I love, and move to, and learn more about, my father's childhood home.

My father was actually born in Yosemite, and, with his passing in 2006, I inherited the old family home in Mariposa. I've been working to clean it up for the last few years, at one point moving down with the goal of setting things up so my wife and I could move there permanently (she was in a credential program at HSU). Unfortunately, so far we've been unable to make that move, but the thought of moving into and restoring my father's childhood home and experiencing intimately as an educator the places he loved, like Yosemite, remains inspirational to me.

You will note that, in terms of being an educator, I have significant and diverse experience. I've taught all age-groups, from kindergarten to adult, both domestically and internationally, cross-culturally, and in different languages (I taught science in Nepali as a Peace Corps Volunteer).

While I have had no specific experience in outdoor education of the sort I understand the work of the Yosemite Institute to be, I believe my cumulative and diverse education and experience more than makes up for that fact.

I've organized events for the organizations I've worked for, so I would expect trip-planning logistics to be somewhat similar. While I haven't been on a back-country backpacking trip in decades, I did do significant trekking in Nepal, including to Everest Base Camp. I've written enough formal lesson-plans to be able to ensure students have a productive experience. I organized a trip for myself and one of my long-term Tai Ji students to train for a month in China (where I studied Tai Ji Push Hands). I acted as translator and guide for him, as he had no international traveling experience. I've been in enough classrooms to understand classroom and group management. I've worked with enough different types of people to be able to understand the diversity of students I could be working with. My undergrad was in biology and botany, my Masters interdisciplinary. As a dedicated Vipassana meditator, I've also done the hard work of intensively looking within to develop myself personally such that I can see beyond my own reactions to situations, stay focused and calm, be easy to work with, and better see things as they are.

I really feel I would be perfect as a Field Educator, and I hope you do, too. I realize I stumbled upon this after all the deadlines, but I submit this anyway, with the hope that an opportunity might present itself.

Thanks so much for your consideration,

Scott M. Menzies