

Emergency Pandemic Board Meeting 4/16/20

Attendees:

Board: Darien De Lu -President, Jan Corderman -Treasurer, Eileen Kurkoski -Secretary
Shilpa Pandey - Membership Development Chair, Nancy Price - At Large Board Member (and
Chair, Earth Democracy Issue Committee),
Joan Goddard - Program Chair, Marybeth Gardam - Acting Development Chair (and Chair,
Women, Money and Democracy Issue Committee)

Issue Committee Chairs:

Ellen Thomas - Disarm, Odile Hugonot Haber & Barbara Taft - Middle East
Mary Bricker-Jenkins - Poor People's Campaign,
Cindy Domingo & Leni Reeves - Cuba and the Bolivarian Alliance,
Setou Ouattara, Martha Collins & Valerie Young -Advancing Human Rights

1. Check in *Darien De Lu* (Name, What are you feeling about the pandemic?)

2. Solidarity Actions: Theme Discussion *Marybeth Gardam*

Originally we talked about having solidarity on women's vote and looking at candidates for the 2020 election, but the pandemic is more central now. The virus made us change our priorities.

Ideas: People's Bail Out Not a Corporate Bailout, Getting Behind a Global Cease Fire

We plan to discuss the Solidarity event on a Program Committee call in May 5 and consider covering it on a One WILPF call, as in the past. This will be a trial, to see if Program Committee discussions and planning work well.

Other ideas:

Eileen: Health Security for ALL: Health Care, Clean Water & Air for All, No Nukes

Marybeth: From list in recent agenda: Together We Rise (It will take all of us standing up to make a better future), No One is Equal Until All of Us are Equal, War Budget vs Peace Budget, The Power and Importance of the Women's Vote in 2020, The Global Cease Fire, Equity as the Starting Point for Equality; Equality for All Through Equity for All. Fund the People – No Venture Capitalist and Corporate Bail Out!

Darien cautioned about terminology on a People's "bailout"...and suggested we may have to have a virtual gathering for our solidarity event this year.

Odile suggested Solidarity with those in prison and in immigrant camps

Joan: We want to decide on this by next month and don't have much time now, so we might want to continue sharing ideas by email. Ideally, ideas will be universal and of this point in time.

Marybeth: the Women, Money & Democracy Committee has talked about a "Listening Post" – interviewing people with a recorder, as they talk about how this virus and economy has affected them. This is one way to do a virtual solidarity event.

3. Making the most of Sign-Ons, Endorsements, Co-Sponsorship *Joan Goddard*

We were referred to the summaries Eileen sent out, of WILPF's 2019 and 2020 sign-ons and endorsements, and Darien's updated April version. Questions proposed:

What are the benefits of sign-ons, particularly for national WILPF? Issue committees can also sign on. How can we best put these to good use?

Discussion:

Jan: They show our values and let others know about them. We need to archive them and get them on Facebook and our website. We should consider what action we could do to support the sign-on.

Nancy: They are valuable, and we do many for Earth Democracy; it lets others know what we support, and we find out who else is supporting the same issue. Sometimes it's important for national to sign through issue committees, and national alone should be signing some.

She likes the guidelines, keeping records of them, and the suggestion of posting sign-ons on Facebook and on issue committee websites. Let branches know about the sign-ons. Branches can sign on, too.

Joan: We might want to look at when it's appropriate for branches, issue committees and national to sign on. Should branches sign on to what issue committees sign onto?

Marybeth: It increases our visibility and strengthens our collaborations; it helps build confidence in WILPF among our branch members.

Eileen: This is a great way for us to show we support and work with these other organizations. There are so many problems that no one organization can do a job alone; we must collaborate. A billionaire was trying to go it alone thinking his money could make him a leading presidential candidate; it didn't work. Also, some grantors like to know who we support/collaborate with.

Odile: Our members seldom know what we sign on to.

Darien: We have a collaborations page on our website; we could put sign-ons in eNews or eAlerts.

Valerie: Sign-ons are very important, especially if you want to collaborate. Locally we can send our sign-ons and collaborations to the branch leaders; this may be an incentive to get involved with an issue committee & One WILPF calls. This would stimulate conversation and create opportunities for more collaborations.

Joan: Expanding on Val's point... if branch members know the organization we signed on with, or search out that organization in their local area, they could build collaborations with them locally, and this may lead them to be involved with an issue committee.

Nancy: At the top of eNews, we can list the title of the sign-on, with a link that contains the text. She asked us to consider: sign-ons are endorsements, not collaborations, which means much more.

When we present information to branches we may want to consider what could be done about it. We seldom do, but WILPF can also initiate sign-ons. Ex. We might want to do one for HR 2419. We have not used this tool very often or effectively. We would get the email addresses of those who sign. It would get more attention if we posted to Facebook or Instagram.

Darien will send out a explanation sheet of sign-ons and collaboration.

4. Planning for Special Actions During the Coronavirus *Nancy Price*

Introduction: There is a lot going on, on line, and people are paying attention and discussing issues. How do we want to engage in a 'new normal' with our feminist perspective? There may be several phases as to how the pandemic will play out. We can prepare to spread our message with solidarity events on line and then in person. We can have our own sign-on letters, continue One WILPF calls, etc.

We have important themes to focus on: Impact of the virus on the poor, prisoners, people on the border, immigrants. On climate. Do we want to push for the US to re-enter the Paris Agreement? There's the ban nukes bill, HR 2419 and the human rights for Palestinian children bill, HR 2407.

Do we want to re-shape the UN global cease fire message by Secretary General Guterres? What do we want when there is peace? Do we want women at the peace table? Should we push, “Listen to Women for a Change”?

Cindy likes the “Together We Rise” theme, because it’s not good to focus only on one issue. Social, economic and war issues are being covered, including the climate crisis. People are paying attention. The poor are affected but middle and upper class less so. Capitalism brought this on, and, unless we change our paradigm, none of us will rise.

Because we are the oldest peace women’s organization, we have to cover both issues. Women are affected more in war. We have to call for peace in every war, because that’s the only way to get the money we need to transform society. This is a huge task but a huge opportunity. People are open to change because of all the suffering nationally and internationally.

Jan liked the previous two ideas and added using a video about “concentrated animal feeding operations” (CAFOs), “Right to Harm”. The film describes low wage workers, immigrants, working with the animals and having an over-abundance of cases of COVID. A news release reported Tyson foods has over 100 of their workers with the virus. We could show the film and converse after, about the issue. Due to California’s proposition 12, the state refuses to buy pork from pig farms with stalls too small to allow the animals to turn around – as of January 2022. The Iowa Attorney General, on behalf of corporate agriculture, is suing California about the proposition. (WILPF and others showed the “Right to Harm” film on 4/24 with special permission to honor Earth Day.)

(A side conversation about not using the word illegals in connection with immigrant workers came up: no person is illegal.)

Nancy added that No. Carolina also had an issue with CAFOs. She added a comment about food waste: Florida is throwing away milk and millions of eggs and plowing under fields with good food in them. The government is no longer buying up this extra food and sending it to the poor, as in the past. This is an important Food Security v Corporate Food issue to return to.

Val stated that now, many Americans are experiencing what poor communities have experienced for years – lack of health care, low wages, etc. We have service workers being pushed over the edge. We must lead with intentions to cover all these issues and try to come up with some solutions.

We also have to focus on voting. Val talked of the Speakers Bureau Project and the director of it in the Michigan Democratic Party, Abigale Belcrest; they are establishing webinars on state voting law as a way to get more people to vote. (All states have Speakers Bureau Projects, and this could be a collaborative event between states.) They want to make it more acceptable for all people to vote by mail. The webinars can be customized to suit the population you want to reach. We can do recordings and put them on social media, conference calls.

Because everyone does not have a computer, we can make flyers, leave them at places of worship, connect with community operatives and grassroots organizations. We need to build trust so the message is received. Val will soon be getting more information about the voting webinars from director Belcrest.

Martha talked of the gender pay gap: women earn only 82 cents for every dollar men earn, and Black and Latino women earn even less. Martha wants to do something with WILPFers in the

south with Women, Money and Democracy, with the Screwnomics book. She wants to capture the stories of the women not getting equal money.

In regards of the agricultural dumping of food, she said her work organization just contributed \$1 million to support dairy farmers in Wisconsin. In Milwaukee they have been working with Move to Amend, to overturn corporate personhood.

Odile noted that this virus is global, and this is a good opportunity for us to join in global unity. It's a good time for Medicare for All. The most affected are in countries at war. Peace and cease fires are very important. We have to consider immigrants and prisoners.

Marybeth followed up on the voting issue. We need to encourage voting by mail, which is very much like the long-standing absentee ballot. Food security is overall security and is a part of homeland security.

Nancy wrapped up. Next week is Earth Day with lots of virtual activities. There have been many good thoughts but we have not decided on strategies and tactics. So she suggested we have another meeting in two weeks.

Over the next month, the heavily funded, bipartisan National Election Defense Coalition is rolling out a voters rights and reform agenda, putting out and demanding an election plan to make votes secure. It will be pushed out on many social media platforms.

Jan added that another initiative we have is the Poor People's Campaign, which in WILPF is led by Mary Bricker-Jenkins. Jan encouraged all to sign up for the June 20, assembly on the PPC website (a link to which is at <https://wilpfus.org/news/latest-news/join-largest-digital-and-social-media-gathering-nation%E2%80%99s-history>) . Then you will be invited to their calls. The next call is April 30. One of their issues is voter registration.

Darien Re the call Nancy suggested in two weeks. Joan G said the next regular Program meeting is May 5. Because many of the topics brought up are part of issue committees, that call will address both planning for special actions during the coronavirus and solidarity plans.

5. Getting the most out of our Peace and Freedom magazine *Darien*

Our plans to put a March edition out fell behind due to the virus. Wendy suggested a new date for the May deadline and to put some focus of this P&F issue onto the pandemic. How should we proceed?

Leni announced that long time member, Ellie Bluestein died. Leni thinks we should not focus on the pandemic because everyone is focused on it. We should talk about something else that deals with our mission.

Darien said we would be responding with our perspective on what the pandemic means. Not all articles have to fit the theme.

Odile agreed people will be tired of info on the virus; we need to focus on solutions and change.

Joan – With the next P&F deadline tentatively set for May 15, people have enough time to get articles to Wendy.

Cindy - Big problems offer big opportunities. We know we have a very interconnected world. This is a way to link into the theme and look into the future. Cindy agreed with this.

Marybeth – Whatever theme we come up for P&F would be good for our Solidarity action, to amplify our message for the rest of the year.

Nancy – Notes of this call may help all those on the May 5 call, even those who did not make this call. It would be helpful if we created a time line for planning and the activities. Do we want to list items fairly soon – sign-ons, webinar, calls to Congress on bills? We need decisions soon.

Darien – Our Steering Committee later this month may be able to help facilitate a decision.

6. Finances during the Pandemic *Jan*

Income: 60% of our income comes from member donors. We have dues, grants, and other forms of income. How much do you think the contributions will drop in 2020 and 2021, because of the virus, etc.?

Expenses: 25% goes to direct program costs, like paying members going to important meetings and providing mini-grants. Our expenses decreased this year because the Commission on the Status of Women was cancelled.

We have some reserves, including a mutual fund with \$109,000 even with recent losses. We have \$66,000 in CDs. She asked us to discuss what we thought of our financial future.

Marybeth thinks the financial report was good; there will be fewer donations and expenses this year. However, we were cautious about our estimates for this year.

Eileen thinks people's nervousness will continue. Many people will continue working from home until most people around the world are vaccinated. The wealthy will probably get the vaccine first. I think our finances will come out equal. We will not be spending as much money along with getting less.

Joan Our membership is a little more financially comfortable than average. A lot of members, being older, were not working prior to the virus. The government pandemic aid checks some people are getting may go to us or for local needs.

Marybeth suggested checking the document on finances in the covid 19 period, sent out by PDF, our fiscal sponsor, Peace Development Fund. It suggested ideas to insure we have more resilience, such as working out a temporary deal with your landlord, if needed, and not taking on unnecessary expenses.

Jan will send the document PDF shared to all on this call.

7. eNews Guideline Changes and Statistics on Hits *Shilpa/Darien*

Key Points/Proposal: It's important to have strong opening sentences, "grabbers", and send the eNews two times; send it twice to those who did not open it the first time.

Overview: The Enews is sent to approximately 3,500 recipients, 2,900 arrive. There's an average 22% open rate and fewer open individual articles to read more than the first few sentences.

Written eNews guidelines were sent to the issue committee chairs; there are to be two writers for better editing, and an eNews section for short issue committee updates.

Joan found the statistics interesting and noted there is a big difference in some months. It will help if we go back to a number of Enews months to see if there is a pattern in openings, reading articles, time of year, etc.

Darien – 10% means 70 people read the eNews but far fewer opened articles, so we must make sure the most important information, the key points, are in the first two lines.

8. Closing

Caution: Be careful of our words. As a peace organization we should not use certain words, like *fighting* the virus or *war* on poverty.

There are no illegals in our country. Both *illegals* and the N word dehumanize people.

Reminders:

-Steering Committee: Tuesday, 4/28/20 at 8:15 PM EST

-Val will send updated info re the Speakers Bureau's Voting webinar that may be shared with branches.

-Jan will send the document from the Peace Development Fund (PDF) to all of us.

-Darien will send Leni the Guidelines for writing Enews articles.

-Darien asked for help from everyone who wants WILPF to sign onto an initiative to follow the guidelines.

-The next P&F deadline is May 15.