

WILPF US Triennial Congress, Workshop

Creative Communication: Using creativity to inform, inspire and involve WILPF members and allies in our work for social change, with music, theater, documentary film, street performance, puppets, banners, chalk, art, and more!

Discussion leaders: Candace Perry, Janet Fitch, Anne Hoiberg

Report submitted by Candace

Friday, July 28, 2017, 1 – 3 pm

We began the workshop with a large and enthusiastic group of 20. By way of introduction, each participant shared an artistic/cultural/literary experience that inspired or informed her social justice work (an example for me was attending the 1983 Breadloaf Writers' Conference, where several writers read their works about the nuclear threat, and these readings broke through my denial, inspired me to become active in the issue, especially as it pertained to children's fears). It was fascinating to see how the arts had impacted us all.

While some technical issues were being resolved, we used old-fashioned markers and paper to brainstorm all the forms of creative communication we could think of. The list was huge, including graffiti, fortune cookies, bumper stickers, chalk drawings, films, stories, plays, books, paintings, documentaries, cartoons, songs, and much more!

We then shared a clip from Jan Maher's play about WILPF, "Most Dangerous Women" (MDW), and we read a few pages from the script. Jan sent the most recent edition of the play to us, and participants were very excited to be able to take these home to their branches and communities. Janet led us in a discussion on the use of documentary film as a tool for effective civic engagement.

We shared specific projects done by branches over the years, specifically the Minnesota Metro 20 year project, details in the Fall/Winter 2015 *Peace & Freedom*, which we gave as a handout. Janet shared the gun violence toolkit ideas which she is currently creating. Candace talked about a past project of the Cape Cod branch, a Peace and Justice Theater Festival. A more in-depth look at a project was presented by Anne Hoiberg of the San Diego branch, who presented a rich and informative slide show on the Women's Museum of California.

We also discussed and gave a handout for the Joan Patchen Fund, a project which specifically funds creative projects for WILPF. The mini-grants were also discussed. We encouraged participants to use the arts for activism, a WILPF tradition!