

## **WILPF Steering Meeting Minutes 1/10/2013: 8:30 – 10 pm**

**Present:** Joan, Darien, Laura, Cheryl, Robin, Eva, Ellen, Marie-Louise, Rita.

A brief training about the conference call logistics opened the Steering Committee Meeting.

**Single item agenda:** National Congress in 2014?

**No decision made.**

Laura asked who wants to run for the board in 2014.

Laura: I'll be termed out: will continue as ex officio for one year.

Eva: Not planning to run but will be willing to stay on for 6 months.

Ellen: Planning to run again.

Darien: Not planning to run again. She explained that a term will be a staggered system to be implemented in 2014, which will be explained in the spring P&F.

Rita: Not certain.

Cheryl: Will run again, probably.

Joan: I haven't thought ahead.

Marie-Louise: Thinking of running

Robin: Not planning to run again, but glad to serve on the Development committee.

The president changed topic asking do we need or want to have a national face-to-face congress or what are the merits to have a multiple, regional face-to-face meetings? Ellen says, people don't have to prepare, find the resources and the time off for a 4-day congress. But she did say if it works – she is all for it.

### **Summary of thoughts and ideas discussed:**

- National Congress can be shortened to 2 ½ or three days, on a long weekend already or not.
- Regional meetings could replace the weekend model of a National Congress, or, plus a National Congress organize both.
- Connect the regional meetings with a virtual session the reaches branches. This will help the 61% of respondents who supported having a virtual opportunity.
- The President suggests we get creative and propose themes for regional and/or national congress. Certainly, says Laura, "involving members is a good focus."

### **After a lot of mulling over, there are still questions:**

- Where are "suitable sites" for National Congress or Regional Meetings?
- Why will a branch be eager to become a viable partner or sponsor?

- How many numbers are we expecting or proposing for attendance at a National Congress?
- Who are the branches that are eager to grow and do outreach to non-WILPF allies in their surrounding community?
- Branches could be given incentives to support the National Congress, not delegates.
- How to involve branches in the advance work?
- Will the Board do personal outreach to support these searches?

**Remaining persuasive arguments:**

- Regional meetings (a day-long) will help to reach 49% of the respondents who had never been to a WILPF Congress.
- Editors note: what are the demographics of the respondents this might not be the age group we are after if we look to our goals?
- Reduction in our carbon footprint is to be considered, either by having regional meetings, yet fewer members will travel long distances.
- Each region did its own organizing, no paid staff, and while there were differences in style, we grew in unity and understanding.”
- Laura supported the membership development committee to identifying leadership in each region in order to arrive at a date for the synchronous regional meetings by July 10, 2013.

There is time to write any message to be published in March 2013 e-news and/or the spring issue of Peace and Freedom.

Laura explained that there were two surveys in the last half year to help us in decision-making around the Congress.

- Marie-Louise and Rita gathered information about the priorities women had for a Congress: they are a) a special session for first timers, b) create partners (older/younger), c) Sleep in the same building.

Darien summarized the proposals she has received for a 2014 Congress: 60% positive. Also suggests 3 or 4 regional meetings beforehand. They could be connected through live stream video.

Robin and Cheryl suggested that maybe we should just have regional meetings and save money so more people could go to The Hague the next year.

Laura and Eva discussed the need to change the bylaws if we skip a triennial Congress. Eva said that we should realize that the bylaws may be requiring WILPF to do things we cannot afford.

Darien explained that as she saw it, the Congress would be smaller than the last Congress (104 participants). It would have a smaller carbon footprint. Local women would be encouraged to participate.

Laura said we should find out where the US Social Forum will be meeting in the summer of 2014. We might piggyback on that. Good idea.

**Laura asked the key question: Who is willing to work on planning the Congress?**

Cheryl: Willing, Marie-Louise: Yes and would be glad to ask the Boston branch to sponsor, Joan: Glad to assist with program, Robin: Could help with the Development aspects of it by focusing on the sponsors, plus would like to help plan it, Rita: Willing to help in some way but no not Missoula.

Darien: Could work on it in a small-contained way.

Laura: We need to start doing outreach now.

Ellen and Laura will work on protocols for the Jan. 15 call.

Darien as chair of nominations committee pointed out that the call for nominees for the 2014 board will/should be made through P & F. We need board members to be on the lookout for potential new board members.

In checkout, most everyone said that the meeting was productive.