

## **Dianne Blais**

**Position:** Co-president - full term, ends January 2028 - with Jan Corderman

Fairfax, VA

Line of work/profession: Computers. I worked for the government for 5 years and then as VP of a small company for almost 2

How long have you been a member of WILPF US? (minimum of 24 months of continuous membership is required) since 2016, I believe (8 yrs)

For each of these application questions, please use 1-2 paragraphs to answer. The content of this page will be posted on the WILPF US website.

1. WILPF US is a mission-driven membership organization. What does that mean to you?

Jane Addams went to Europe and formed WILPF hoping to stop WWI. We WILPF members have a similar mission – we want change to a peaceful world. Jane is a model for me: she was mission-driven as WILPF is today.

2. Please describe your involvement in WILPF, including a brief summary of work at the level of branch, national, and/or international:

As convener of the Jane Addams branch, I forward all branch listserv emails onto the JA members and hold a monthly meeting. I am WILPF US's former secretary, have been involved with 4 Issue Committees (Disarm, WSD, AHR, Cuba and the Bolivarian Alliance) and am on the Bylaws, Communications and Membership Committees.

3. Why are you interested in filling this position?

I want WILPF to become known to the world. I like Jan's vision of what WILPF US can be. I believe I can help in making necessary changes in WILPF US that will not only help WILPF US but all WILPF.

4. Please describe your other non-WILPF work or involvement that you believe helps qualify you for this position:

I am a wife, mother of four and was a foster mother to over 100 children.

Much of my volunteer work has helped me to manage situations and people:

When my children were in school, I had numerous leadership positions in PTAs and Scouts.

I have been involved with AAUW since 1984 and the LWV since '2000. I was voted in as president of my local AAUW branch multiple (8?) times and as State co-president of both

AAUW and LWV. I also have been active in NOW, GFWC, and university boards.

I ran for both the Va. and US House of Representatives. I have since been involved at the local, state and national levels of the Green Party.

Because my major goal in life now is World Peace, I've been involved in numerous efforts associated with the WILPF US Disarm Issue Committee. I'm also recently involved with World Beyond War, the Founding Mothers, and Project Enduring Peace.

5. What skills can you offer in this position?

More than my skills, is the amount of effort I put into any job I take on. Hopefully my interpersonal skills, common sense and goals for a peaceful world combine to make an exemplary leader.

Approximate length of time in WILPF: 8 years

My first activist action was in high school when a guy (who I later went to the Prom with) and I organized activities for the first Earth Day – April 22, 1970. I was, and still am, deeply concerned about our environment.

I concentrated on studying/working, traveling and dating through my college and single years. It was when I had a baby and did EVERYTHING to make this little creature happy (stop crying) that “caring for others” became my priority. I often showed this via food but now it is trying to end war.

I like being a co-president - it makes the job more fun! I've been a co- many times (in AAUW and the LWV, etc) and holding meetings/conferences are better when you can plan, laugh or cry with someone who understands what you're talking about.

One of my first demonstrations in DC was against the war in Iraq. There are now SO MANY things to protest about that barely a month goes by without me demonstrating in DC. I'm glad for this close proximity to the capital for this and other reasons.

I was happy to host the WILPF US board at my house a couple of years ago. We timed this national board meeting with the Poor People's Campaign March on Washington. This was the last time that the board met in person! I believe in-person events are important and Jan and I will work to bring back in-person WILPF US meetings.

### **Candidate Statement**

Goals of mine are simplicity, member involvement, and, of course, a peaceful, wonderful world.

Life is complicated! Let's make things as simple but as fun and effective as possible.

WILPF sometimes gets bogged down with procedure or petty items while there are more important matters that should be dealt with. Three examples of what, I feel, are rather petty that are affecting me now:

1) The “Candidate Application Process & Standards” lists numerous rules of the five items which must be “submitted as separate documents”.

2) Although both Jan and I will both be very involved with WILPF as co-presidents, according to the bylaws, we only get one vote at board meetings! Really? It seems to me that if a board member is present at a board meeting, they should get to vote how they think. I’m sure that we will mostly agree but ALWAYS!?! This could be an (unnecessary) problem.

3) “Candidates may not post to the large (20 or more recipients) listserves.” Really? I NEED to post to the Jane Addams branch (almost 600 members) and want to post to the Branches and Disarm listserves! As long as I don’t “campaign for any candidate for any WILPF US position” (as stated in the next protocol), shouldn’t I be able to post about an upcoming meeting or webinar?

These are examples of getting too much in the weeds!

WILPF members also tend to look at the past rather than imagining a different but hopefully better future or way of doing things. I want to be open and creative. We need to utilize technology that will help make WILPF known to attract and enthuse members. Younger people don’t want lots of rules and complicatedness.

WILPF US needs to increase our presence and effectiveness. This is challenging but necessary – not only to continue but grow.

### **Activist Bio**

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## **Letter 1**

Letter of Recommendation for Dianne Blais' application for Co-President on WILPF US Board of Directors, November 2024 election. By Cherrill Spencer, co-chair of DISARM/End Wars Issue Committee

I unequivocally recommend Dianne Blais as a Co-President, with Jan Corderman as the other Co-President, for the full term starting in January 2025, for the following reasons.

I first met Dianne Blais at an anti-war rally at the Pentagon on 21st October 2018 when I recognized her as another WILPF member by the WILPF banner she was proudly carrying and we marched together for the rest of the event. I was visiting Washington DC (from where I live in Palo Alto, CA) for a physics meeting and had decided to join the Women's' March on the Pentagon on my free day. The last time I was demonstrating with Dianne was during the No to NATO rally outside the White House in 96 ° F weather on July 7th this year. Dianne is a join-in-person activist. She has attended many demos and rallies and spoken at some of them since she joined WILPF. She understands the importance of demonstrations goes beyond making a public statement about an issue but also, they provide the opportunity to develop and strengthen coalitions with other like-minded organizations and enhance the visibility of WILPF.

Dianne's activities with WILPF extend beyond demonstrating, I have had the pleasure of working with her on the Ad Hoc Bylaws Committee (in monthly meetings since May 2022) and the DISARM/End Wars Committee (for several years). Dianne shows her deep institutional knowledge of WILPF US during our Bylaws Committee meetings and analyses the pros and cons of amending some sub-section of the bylaws, always with the purpose of making WILPF a better-governed organization.

Dianne has been a member of the DISARM/End Wars Issue Committee for several years and since August 2023 she has been our elected 3rd co-chair with Ellen Thomas and me. Dianne is often the facilitator of our twice-a-month DISARM meetings (we meet via zoom) and she is skillful at facilitating our meetings and keeping us on the agenda which are skills a President must have. She and I have worked on our ongoing campaign "Promote Peace via Treaties" for some years, and she helps write materials on treaties and shows her understanding of the diplomatic processes for avoiding wars in the first place and how to bring them to an end using diplomacy. Dianne's work on treaties aligns with one of the major missions of WILPF which is important for a President to be informed about.

Dianne has been involved with the Jane Addams virtual branch for over four years and has been its convenor for most of that time. I am not a member of the Jane Addams (JA) branch because I have a local branch that I belong to, nevertheless I appreciate that she opened up their monthly meetings to all of WILPF US when our ONE WILPF meetings came to an end. She invites interesting speakers on a variety of topics to talk at the JA branch meetings and allows all the issue committees to make announcements on their activities which shows her interest in all the issues that WILPF US is working on. It is important that our President be familiar with all our issues, and I see that Dianne has that broad knowledge and is willing to learn more about them from appropriate experts.

Dianne has already been a Board member as she was Secretary of the Board for a term and knows well about being Board member and that means she would be able to start functioning as a Co-President right away. In my dealings with Dianne I have observed that she does what she says she will do in the required timeframe.

It has been a pleasure to think back on my dealings with Dianne Blais over the past 6 years as I have written this letter of recommendation, and I urge you to vote for the Co-President team of Blais and Corderman.

Signed by Cherrill Spencer, WILPF member since 2012.

## **Letter 2**

Letter of recommendation for  
DIANNE BLAIS  
for Co-President of WILPF US

From Ellen Thomas, Co-Chair  
WILPF US Disarm/End Wars Committee

I first met Dianne Blais when she and I lobbied together in Washington DC in support of the Warheads to Windmills bill introduced by Eleanor Holmes Norton. She was a new WILPF US member, then running for Representative of her Congressional district. She immediately joined the Disarm/End Wars Committee and became a very helpful member, and has been Co-Chair of the Committee for several years. She served on the WILPF US Board as Secretary, and is Chair of the Jane Addams Branch, set up for at-large members such as myself. Since the One WILPF calls ended, Dianne has quietly stepped up to recruit speakers and invite all members to the monthly third-Wednesday Jane Addams Branch calls, which has led to the participation of an increasing number of people. Those calls can be found in the "Branches" playlist of @WILPFUS today on YouTube. It's my understanding that Dianne is applying to be co-President with Jan Corderman. I also have only good things to say about Jan's years of experience on the Board, as Treasurer of WILPF US, and as an active member of her local branch. I believe Dianne and Jan will work well together. I want to praise Darien De Lu's excellent service as President; she's done an outstanding job as diplomat and promoter of good ideas. I imagine it will take two people to replace her!