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December 2014

NEWS from PORTLAND BRANCH and NATIONAL WILPF US

Six members gathered at our business meeting on November 8. We began with reports on recent events and branch membership.

- Portland **WILPF** co-sponsored the Portland United Nations Association observance of United Nations Day held this year on Wednesday, October 22nd. The UN was founded 69 years ago on October 24, 1945. **Suvira Chaturvedi**, UN International Development Specialist, spoke about her 30 years of work toward women's empowerment in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Europe. She calls the changes in public perception of women's role in society and the opening of opportunities for women's involvement in decision-making as "a quiet revolution" that has increased women's empowerment and gender equality in many of these regions over these three decades.
- Membership in **WILPF** is obtained by paying annual dues to the national organization; dues payment makes one a member of the local branch, WILPF US, and WILPF International. In Portland, it also entitles you to our branch newsletters and calendars via email. To join or renew membership in WILPF, please go to www.wilpfus.org/about/donate-wilpf. Also, if you would like to make a donation to the Portland branch, please mail it to the Portland office along with the printed form in each newsletter. We make an annual appeal for these donations; it will be in a spring newsletter.

We spent most of our time discussing ongoing actions and plans for 2015.

- Carol Urner told us that WILPF US has joined an organization, World Without War, which has impressed her by its quality. She showed us her copies of two books by David Swanson: When the World Outlawed War (2011) recounting the 1928 campaign and ratification (1929) of the Kellogg-Briand Pact; and War No More: The Case for Abolition (2013).
- On Carol's motion we voted unanimously to nominate Grace DeGraff (1879-1951, and a Portlander) as the outstanding member in WILPF's local history for the international WILPF 100th Anniversary "Honoring Our Foremothers" list. Grace is also memorialized on the PSU "Walk of the Heroines." <http://woh.pdx.edu/heroine/2670>.
- Carol recently visited the new WILPF branch in Corvallis. One of its members, Leah Bolger is organizing the making of drones quilts; each block bears the name of a drone victim. She suggested we plan to help Leah find good places for their public display while Carol is wintering in California, and that we plan to visit the Corvallis branch after she returns in late spring. On that visit we could also see the Ava Helen & Linus Pauling Papers now located at the Oregon State University Library. We agreed enthusiastically.

Portland WILPF has no December meeting.. Our next meeting will be on Saturday, January 10, from 1 to 3 pm in room B310, First Unitarian Church. Join us to discuss plans for actions in 2015, and come early for a brown bag lunch together. Deadlines: For January calendar, December 29 (no January newsletter). For February newsletter, January 22; for February calendar, January 29. Always send items for publication to wilfpdx@gmail.com .

"WOMEN'S POWER TO STOP WAR"

"100 years after WILPF was first founded, 67 years after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted, 20 years after the Beijing Declaration and Programme of Action were established and 15 years after the Millennium Development Goals and Security Council Resolution 1325 were developed, our news headlines tell us the world is still on fire, with violent conflict still taking place on every continent of the world." In preparation for WILPF's hundredth anniversary year, please explore the website for "Women's Power to Stop War," www.womenstopwar.org/. It represents a global movement of WILPF, with major events celebrating the work of women peacemakers all over the world and forging a new peace agenda for the 21st century. Here are some ways we can support women's peacemaking right now:

Afghanistan: An Oxfam report www.oxfam.org/en/research/behind-closed-doors analyzes the victories and defeats for women's rights since 2001. "Thirteen years on, Afghan women fear a rollback of their rights in a political climate that is full of uncertainties." There are only nine women on the Afghan High Peace Council; there are 61 men, including at least 11 former Taliban members. We must insist that the new Afghan government stand by its promises and involve women fully at all levels of decision-making in peace talks. Oxfam recommends a minimum of 30% women in the membership of all government peace bodies. For a summary of the report, see www.nytimes.com/2014/11/25/world/asia/afghan-women.

Corporations: Germany will soon require corporate boards to have women as at least 30% of their members; failing that, positions are to be left open. France, Italy, Spain, and the Netherlands already have mandatory quotas. Challenging corporations to increase the role of women in governance is essential for changing public perception of women's role in society.

Local government: Portland **WILPF** is developing plans to engage City Hall in following the example of San Francisco, the first city to pass ordinances complying with the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). See page 1 of our November newsletter (www.wilpfpx.org) for notes about how to proceed, and support the process as it develops in the coming months.

PREMIERE & LAUNCH OF DOCUMENTARY "WAITING FOR FAHD"

Even as the first Yemeni detainees in four years have left Guantánamo, [Fahd Ghazy](#) – a child of 17 when he was detained, and twice cleared for release – continues to languish there. "Waiting for Fahd: One Family's Hope for Life beyond Guantánamo" premieres on December 8 in New York City. Poet, actor, musician and activist Saul Williams will be part of the premiere, and the event program will include words from Fahd himself. The film will be posted at <http://www.ccrjustice.org/fahd> at 8 pm ET [5 pm PT] on that same evening. With this film, the Center for Constitutional Rights aims to re-ignite the conscience of America about the human rights disgrace that is Guantánamo.

ICAN HOSTS CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM IN VIENNA THIS WEEKEND

WILPF is a partner organization with the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), and its disarmament program Reaching Critical Will (RCW) has been involved from the beginning in the initiative to abolish nuclear weapons. The forum in Vienna on December 6 and 7 is an opportunity for members of civil society to learn how they can join in the campaign to encourage negotiation of a binding treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons. Explore www.reachingcriticalwill.org to learn about this Civil Society Forum and the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, following immediately on December 8/9.

THOUGHTS ON FERGUSON from Nicholas Kristof

Excerpted from New York Times Sunday Review, 30 November 2014¹

"WE Americans are a nation divided. We feud about the fires in Ferguson, Mo., and we can agree only that racial divisions remain raw. So let's borrow a page from South Africa and impanel a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to examine race in America. . . .We as a nation need to grapple with race because the evidence is overwhelming that racial bias remains deeply embedded in American life. . . .This "When Whites Just Don't Get It" series² is a call for soul-searching. It's very easy for whites to miss problems that aren't our own; that's a function not of being white but of being human. Three-quarters of whites have only white friends, according to one study³, so we are often clueless. . . .My sense is that part of the problem is well-meaning Americans who disapprove of racism yet inadvertently help perpetuate it. We aren't racists, yet we buttress a system that acts in racist ways. It's "racism without racists," in the words of Eduardo Bonilla-Silva⁴, a Duke University sociologist. . . ."
Nicholas Kristof

1. http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/30/opinion/sunday/nicholas-kristof-when-whites-just-dont-get-it-part-5.html?ref=todayspaper&_r=1
2. <http://kristof.blogs.nytimes.com//2014/11/25/thoughts-on-ferguson/>
3. <http://publicreligion.org/research/2014/08/analysis-social-network/>
4. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2006), *Racism Without Racists*, Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham MD

JOIN or RENEW YOUR NATIONAL WILPF MEMBERSHIP, and/or SUPPORT PORTLAND BRANCH

Name: _____ New Member: Renewal:

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip+4: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Membership includes International, US Section, and Portland Branch (including emailed branch newsletter)

National membership annual dues, sliding scale, \$15 to \$150: \$ _____

Non-dues contribution to support Portland WILPF activities, including emailed branch newsletter: \$ _____

Extra contribution if you want to receive a **hard copy** newsletter: \$ _____

Other _____: \$ _____

TOTAL Enclosed: \$ _____

Mail form & check, payable to WILPF, to Portland WILPF, 1034 SW 13th Ave, Portland 97205-1702

FYI: When you send your membership renewal – see options above – the entire dues amount goes to WILPF National; they send our branch just \$2 per member. It is only your non-dues contributions directly to our branch that support all our local work.

How to keep your WILPF membership current

Being a WILPF member means joining the national organization. The best way to join, renew or rejoin is to do it online at wilpfus.org. If you don't do financial transactions on the internet, then send your membership dues check directly to WILPF, 11 Arlington Street Boston, MA 02116. Or you can mail us the above form with your dues, and we will forward your membership dues and info to the national organization. If you send any membership dues check to us (Portland WILPF), be sure to indicate above and on the check's memo line how much of it you want us to forward to National, and how much is for Portland branch.