

MANY WILPFERS MISSED THIS MESSAGE WHEN IT WAS FIRST RELEASED BECAUSE OF A SERVER ERROR; THEREFORE WE ARE RE-SENDING IT NOW. THE MEMBER CALLS ANNOUNCED BELOW ARE HAPPENING THIS WEEK WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY. OUR APOLOGIES FOR DOUBLE POSTINGS.

March 17, 2008

Dear WILPF sisters,

The official start of spring is this week, and those of us who have had a difficult winter welcome its arrival with gratitude and renewed energy. Here are some updates as we move forward into the new season.

- We thank those individuals and branches who have contributed to the \$10,000 matching grant. For those of you still considering a donation, please note the deadline to match the grant is March 31st.
- To start fulfilling everyone's desire to re-staff the national office, we have officially begun our job search for the Director of Operations. Go to our website [www.wilpf.org] for the job description and application process. And please help us spread the word to suitable candidates.
- We will be holding another series of nation-wide calls with members, with the focus being on our spring membership drive. Information about the calls is included in the box below; we ask that those interested in participating r.s.v.p. to Georgia Pinkel (gpinkel@pacifier.com) ahead of time so that she can send you an outline of what is being proposed. As always, we depend on our "plugged in" members to tell those without computers about these calls.

NATIONAL CALL SCHEDULE:

Wednesday, March 26: 7 p.m. PDT; 8 p.m. MDT; 9 p.m. CDT; 10 p.m. EDT

Thursday, March 27: 4 p.m. PST; 5 p.m. MDT; 6 p.m. CDT; 7 p.m. EDT

Dial up: 605-990-0200 ; Access code: 1058181

- The minutes from our January member calls are pasted below.

Sincerely,
Nancy Munger
For the National Board

**Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)
United States Section**

2008

Composite Notes from 3 Membership Calls: January, 22, 23 and 24th

Moderators:

January 22 CJ Minster

January 23 Ellen Murtha

January 24 Georgia Pinkel

Presenters:

January 22 Ellen Murtha

January 23 Pat O'Brien

January 24 Chris Morin

Scribes:

January 22 Paj Wadley-Bailey

January 23 Nancy Munger

January 24 Nancy Munger

Time Keepers:

January 22 Chris Morin

January 23 Jane Doyle

January 24 Audley Green

Board Members Present:

January 22 CJ Minister, Paj Wadley-Bailey, Ellen Murtha, Georgia Pinkel, Chris Morin, Cindy Domingo

January 23 Pat O'Brien, Ellen Murtha, Nancy Munger, Audley Green, Georgia Pinkel

January 24 Chris Morin, Georgia Pinkel, Nancy Munger, Audley Green, Pat O'Brien, Odile Huguenot-Haber

On January 22, there were 24 announced WILPF members from 11 different states:
CA, VT, PA, TX, OR, VA, MN, AZ, NY, WA, CO

On January 23, there were 8 announced members from 7 different states.

On January 24, there were 15 announced members from 7 different states:
CT, CA, MD, MI, TX, PA, VT

The Moderators thanked everyone for coming onto the calls and explained the purpose and guidelines.

The Presenters gave pertinent information, including:

The office is not closed. We continue to receive and open mail that arrives. A handful of volunteers from the Philadelphia area are volunteering part time answering phones, packaging and mailing out resources, and processing donations and membership dues.

The Presenters explained that staff was laid off because WILPF was not receiving the income that was projected and the organization was getting further and further into debt.

The call was then open for questions.

A member asked for further explanation concerning the alleged lock-out and violation of union rules. Unfortunately, Board members are unable to respond to questions about our interactions with the unionized staff because they have filed a grievance with the National Labor Relations Act. The board's position is being represented by an attorney and it is better for the organization if we don't speak outside official channels on these issues at this time.

We have an audit done every year and the most recent audit was completed for FY2006. Income and expenses for 2006 are illustrated the soon-to-be-delivered Winter 2008 issue of Peace & Freedom. Our 2006 990 Tax Form is posted on our website.

While we asked members for help in refining our strategic plan, we did not ask for help in addressing the financial crisis as it was happening. In part, this was because we were ourselves struggling to keep pace with the facts as they were becoming known. In part, it was because we didn't yet know what to ask for or how to ask. But now we do. WILPF's survival is not in question, but there are things each of us can do to help WILPF U.S. Section weather this time. The Board struggles daily to develop consensus around our understanding of the current situation and on steps we can take to hold the organization together and move forward. But consensus within our organization needs to extend beyond the national board. We will survive regardless, but our Section will only thrive if we extend ourselves toward solving the problems at hand.

Our membership of approximately 4,500 does not have the capacity to sustain a National staff of eight, even when everyone contributes to her limits, as many, many Wilpfers already do. As much as we might like or respect individual staff members, this seems to be a simple fact, and one recognized widely among our membership and within WILPF internationally. It is a situation that could be addressed by (1) raising additional funds from donors outside WILPF's membership base, (2) increasing the number of WILPF members, or (3) cutting operating costs, including payroll.

Members are presently being called to renew their dues and calls are also being made to large donors. One member suggested that the Past Presidents Committee should be utilized to make donor calls. This is already being done.

The current policy regarding Bequest monies received calls for setting aside some portion -- between 10-50 %, according to the size of the bequest -- in a savings account. Yes, bequest funds can be earmarked or restricted by the donor or by the board when they are received.

As of November, 2007, our debt was over \$90,000. We will hire staff when it is financially feasible to do so.

We have one intern in the office who interned with WILPF last summer. She is continuing her work in assisting with the Commission on the Status of Women meetings held at the UN in February and March.

JAPA owns the National office building and we are able to keep up with the rent.

One member expressed her concern that the running of the organization is separate from the political issues and stated that she is interested in a coordinated strategy.

One of the ways to address WILPF's financial problem in a consistent and focused way has been through strategic planning; to better diagnose particular problem areas and fully consider a wide range of solutions. The Board has been consumed by the emergencies of the past several months; however, the members and branches continue to do their amazing work. WCUSP and WATER work goes on, as well ISSUES committees, especially DISARM.

Someone commented that WCUSP is focusing on Israel and Palestine and wanted to know why Iraq was not a focus. Another member answered that branches were working against the Iraq in their own communities.

Other program information informed us that the WCUSP campaign now has a postcard campaign concerning GAZA and the Program committee has issued a statement concerning the Congo situation.

Board nominations and descriptions of Board positions will be in the next Peace & Freedom.

There is frustration over keeping the membership branch lists updated. It is very helpful if branches can correct errors and send them to the office.

One member suggested that branches could put an announcement in their newsletters about dues reminders.

Other suggestions from the Calls:

- o Membership lists need to be updated. Include name, where from, life member, how many years in WILPF and so forth.

- o Branches should include dues reminders in their newsletters.

- o Consider having membership cards – something saying we belong to WILPF; something to prove that our dues were processed. In the past we had membership cards indicating our membership and expiration date.

o Develop a list of members' skills with the purpose of members helping each other.

o Membership calls are good: we need the cross-pollination.

o The membership calls, because of the dialogue, is invigorating

o Have bi-monthly calls with a specific focus

Look for an announcement of the next Membership Call.