

Women's International League for Peace & Freedom newsletter



Call for nominations

We are calling for nominations for Section office holders:

- President
- Co-ordinator/s
- Treasurer

Send to:
wilpf@xtra.co.nz or
PO Box 2054
Wellington

by 3 March 2013

Keep Hope Alive

Christchurch WILPF members Lois and Martin Griffiths describe their experience in Palestine in October, 2012, picking olives as part of the Olive Tree Campaign

Every year overseas volunteers visit Palestine in February or October to show solidarity with Palestinian farmers in a useful way. February is the month for planting new olive trees; October is the time for harvesting the olives. Last October we decided to take part.

The Olive Tree campaign is a practical way to help Palestinians and it has

great world-wide appeal. We were joined by Europeans and Americans, as well as someone from Japan and from Australia. There were 82 of us, so we were split into 2 groups, one that stayed in a hotel and the other with Palestinian families. Our group, the hotel one, was led by a Palestinian, Baha. The other group was led by a Dutch woman, Kristel, engaged to a Palestinian. She was looking forward to the day when she and her husband would be harvesting their own trees.



Lois Griffiths, picking olives

The campaign is run from Beit Sahour, one of 3 predominately Christian towns near each other. Beit Sahour, also known as Shepherds' Field, is to the east of Bethlehem, Beit Jala to the west.

Cont on p.2

Inside this issue:

Keep Hope Alive, cont	2
Whale Dreams	3
Silent vigil against rape culture	3
WILPF International news	4
Vigil on International Women's Day, 8 March	5
One Billion Rising campaign	5
Otautahi branch report	6

Aotearoa Section 2013 AGM

The 2013 AGM will be held in Auckland at the Friends Meeting House, Mt Eden Road from Friday evening 8 March to Saturday 9 March.

We will start with a shared meal on Friday

evening at 6 p.m.

The meeting proper will start at 9 a.m. on Saturday 9th and will follow the usual format of a business meeting.

After lunch on Saturday

we will have a speaker from PARS to tell us about the support given by that organization to women in prison.

We are calling for nominations for office holders (see above).

Keep Hope Alive cont

The olive tree not only provides a living for Palestinian farmers but it plays a role in their culture and in their lives. Palestinians will tell you it is difficult to explain. The trees can live and bear fruit for thousands of years. Traditionally Palestinians live in the same village, even the same plot of land, so that the same tree is cared for and harvested for generations. People respect individual trees almost as part of the family.



The group at work

Olive picking mornings started by going by bus to a farmer's land, then walking uphill or downhill to the trees. The men carried ladders and bottled water; we women carried mats and buckets. The mats are spread around the base of trees and as olives are picked they are dropped onto the mat, then scooped up into buckets which, when full, are loaded into large sacks. Some people stayed at ground level, some used ladders or climbed the trees. After a morning of harvesting, we were served lunch by the farmer and his family. In the afternoon and evenings, we were given opportunities to learn more, first hand, about the reality of life under occupation. Palestinians are struggling to survive as the IDF (Israeli army) and settlers often destroy trees, in large numbers, hoping to destroy the farmers' self-respect and their ability to support themselves and their families.

Instead of being cut down or burned, sometimes ancient olive trees are uprooted intact, and sold to wealthy developers. Palestinian poet, Mahmoud Darwish, has written, "If the olive tree knew who planted it, its oil would become tears."

We recommend this project. It's a unique opportunity to meet Palestinians and to meet people from around the world who care enough to join a practical project. There is another way to "Keep Hope Alive" without travelling so far. For NZ \$25, you can sponsor an olive tree. Sponsorship covers the cost of the young plant, distribution, planting and information for the farmers on

the best techniques for olive tree care and production improvement. The cost also covers an official certificate, a sponsor label to be inscribed with the sponsor's name and put up in the field where the tree is planted. Three-year old, solid, young plants are chosen.

Martin and I will sponsor a couple of trees. Our Christchurch WILPF Branch has agreed to sponsor a tree. If you, or if your WILPF Branch, would like to do the same, please send us your name. To keep bank charges at a minimum, we believe it would be best to send just one order.

The Olive Picking story I've told has a sad sequel. The Dutch woman, Kristel who led a group, wrote in her blog that the land she had picked olives on for the first

time with her future in-laws, and that partly belonged to her fiancé, will be taken from them. Israeli officials have notified the family that their land would be confis-

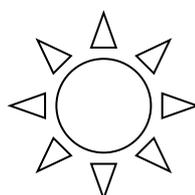
cated to build a by-pass road. There is nothing the family can do about this. Life is hard for Palestinians under occupation.

Lois Griffiths:

mandlgriffiths@clear.net.nz

Project Hope:

www.jai-pal.org



Whale Dreams

Some of you may have been fortunate enough to catch a beautiful documentary film on a Saturday night in January on Maori TV called *Whale Dreams: The Gathering*. Before long, a familiar presence emerged—that being our own Pauline Tangiora, who lives at Mahia on the East Coast. Her input and message was considerable throughout the film.

Made in Australia, it featured a coastal area of the Great Australian Bight. These are the traditional lands of the Mirning, a group of indigenous peoples de-

clared extinct in the 1950s and known as founding members of 'The People of the Whale'.

They have, as do Maori and some other indigenous cultures, the ability to communicate with whales in their dreams and through songs, going back through incredibly ancient times.

Some of the grandmothers we have heard Pauline speak of also featured significantly in the film.

Whale Dreams was released in the United States and United Kingdom

in 2008 and was shown at Monaco and Cannes where it received two awards, one being Best Film. It was produced by Julian Lennon and was made in two stages over 15 years as funding permitted. The film has been described as moving, timely and a gutsy reminder that we must gently and actively care for our earth and its people.

Very nice Pauline. We are proud of you.

Rae Martell

Women Against Rape

On 12 January, a very hot Saturday, Ruth Coombes and Rae Martell and a number of other WILPF members joined a gathering of around 130 men and women in Auckland's Aotea Square.

The occasion was a silent protest in solidarity with the anti-rape movement in India, and followed the brutal rape and beating of a young woman in Delhi. She had just died of her injuries. 'Rise Up Against Rape Culture' was organized by a group of young Asian women who arranged a vigil to mourn and extend aroha and support to those still in grief and disbelief over this injustice.

Why a silent protest? Because words could not express the pain and rage they had been carrying in their hearts since the loss of

this sister, and many other victims of brutality and abuse at the hands of men.

Immigrant women of colour and young people in Aotearoa New Zealand sought the tautoko of all members of New Zealand society from all walks of life to join them in honour of the women victims and their families. We were asked to join them in their protest against rape culture so we can collectively build hope and strength.

In respect for Indian custom, people wore something white as a colour for mourning. Black scarves



Anna Lee (left) and Rae Martell at the silent vigil in Aotea Square. Photo: Ruth Coombes

were distributed at the event for people to wear as masks symbolizing our silence.

The planned 30-minute vigil was reduced due to the heat of the afternoon, and was followed by a variety of speakers.

The event was supported by SHAKTI. **Rae Martell**

WILPF International

Message from WILPF Secretary-General, Madeleine Rees

Happy New Year! We are still here and only two years away from being one hundred! Indomitable!

We have much to do in this new year. It feels as though things are changing, that we are at the beginning of something different. The response to the recent violent rape in India has been massive, it could be that something is moving and if so, we must already be wary of the backlash.

The debate on violence against women is now very, very public and we have to keep driving it on. Could this be one of those rare moments when an isolated incident triggers a significant change all around the world? We certainly hope so and we have lots of things coming up for you to engage in.

WILPF and our PeaceWomen programme will be at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) 4-15 March, as usual, where we hope to make a stronger impact than ever. There will be over 60 WILPF members there. 60! We must make every woman count. During the CSW in New York, we will also be launching our 100 anniversary campaign. For those of you who won't be able to join us in New York, there will be lots of opportunities to contribute on a national and local level.

While the CSW is going on, Reaching Critical Will (RCW) and some

WILPF members are going to Oslo for a major conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. The conference is aimed at getting countries to give greater recognition that the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapon use would be unacceptable, and we hope it will inspire states to begin the work of outlawing these weapons.

Later in March, we will move straight into the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) negotiations. RCW is preparing a toolkit for WILPF Sections and will hold a workshop on this topic during the IB meeting in Madrid. I urge all of you to get involved in this. It's a critical moment for WILPF to ensure that international arms trade never facilitates gender-based violence. We have allies and we have strong arguments, but we need all our members to carry out advocacy efforts to your governments to make them prioritise this issue and to win over the few sceptics. We need a strong ATT that includes a provision on preventing gender-based violence and we have a great opportunity to achieve this goal in March.

A few days ago, WILPF international president Adilia Caravaca wrote a statement drawing our attention to what is going on in Syria as we were celebrating our new year. At WILPF International we are speaking with women from Syria both inside and outside

its borders, and we are working with them to develop a serious long-term process towards their participation in peace-building efforts and attempts to end the war.

The urgent issues are obviously the humanitarian crisis and the issue of legal status on 3rd countries. For the latter, we will examine where there is a failure to comply with international law and provide points for advocacy and lobbying. On the humanitarian aid, we urge you to work with OXFAM, Action Aid, UNICEF and others we trust to deliver aid where it is most needed. Collect stuff, donate and do whatever we can to contribute!

Long-term work needs preparation and time. It is all too easy to get it wrong, and sadly, there is not a single example of a post

conflict country where it has been done right! Maybe this will be part of the something that is moving in the right direction.

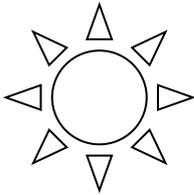
"It feels as though things are changing, that we are at the beginning of something different."

But before all these events, we have our International Board meeting in Madrid in February. At this moment, we have over 50 registered, which is fabulous. However, what we still need is funds. We are trying all our usual supporters and have managed to raise some but we need more. I want to thank the Sections who have contributed to travel funds so far, we have Sections in far flung countries and visas and tick-

ets are now extremely expensive so all additional help will be gratefully received.

So we are and will be busy. Let's make 2013 the year when we turn all of our efforts into concrete successes that will push the world in the right direction.

- Madeleine



International Women's Day 8 March Vigil in Auckland

To mark International Women's Day 2013—which falls on the day we begin our Section AGM—we are holding a vigil outside the Army headquarters, 204-234 Great North Road, Auckland between 5:30-6 p.m.

We will be holding banners: 'Women Say No To War'

Please join us in letting the military know that we women support negotiated, non-violent solutions to disputes, and total disarmament.

Email Joan Macdonald for more information:

joanmac@pl.net

WILPF nominated for Nobel Peace Prize

WILPF International has been nominated by the International Peace Bureau for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2013.

Colin Archer, Secretary General of IPB, traced our history of peace-making and social justice and our activities in times of peace and war.

He stressed the importance of our current approach in continuing to challenge obstacles to peace, through the integration of our Reaching Critical Will and Peace-Women programmes with Human Rights. He also pointed out the need to work closely with the Sections to ensure that what we do is relevant and reflects the real ex-

periences of women in different contexts, from austerity-ravaged Europe to the Democratic Republic of Congo enduring the horrors of armed conflict.

Two WILPF women have won the prize in the past—Jane Addams in 1931 and Emily Greene Balch in 1946.

One Billion Rising campaign

Did you know, one in three women on the planet will be raped or beaten in her lifetime?

This year, WILPF is taking a stand and joining with the One Billion Rising campaign to unite in the struggle to end violence against women. But we need your help to

raise awareness of the terrible statistics of gender violence today.

Information on the campaign is here: www.onebillionrising.org

And : www.wilpfinternational.org/one-billion-rising/



The event in Auckland is at noon - 1pm at Takaparawhau/Bastion Point via Michael Savage Memorial

WILPF Aotearoa

P.O. Box 2054
Wellington
Aotearoa/New Zealand

www.wilpf.org.nz
wilpf@xtra.co.nz
And see us on Facebook

President: Pat Jackman

Vice presidents: Céline Kearney; Pauline Tangiora

Treasurer: Megan Hutching

Section Co-ordinators: Edwina Hughes;
Joan Macdonald

WILPF International, Geneva
www.wilpfinternational.org

If you are thinking of updating your will, and would like to leave a bequest to WILPF, the following clause can be used:

I give the sum of \$ _____ to Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) Aotearoa/New Zealand Section Inc to be applied for its general purposes. A receipt taken by my executors as being given on behalf of the organization will be a complete discharge to my executors for the legacy.



(R-L) Mia Tay, Prue Stringer and Celine Kearney were among the WILPF members at the celebration in Christchurch of New Zealand's nuclear free legislation.

Otautahi Branch report

2012 was another weary year for Otautahi WILPF members, dealing day by day with the consequences of the earthquakes.

We hosted the section AGM in March, an opportunity not only to review the year for WILPF but also to provide a forum for broader discussion about women's issues in New Zealand. We appreciated WILPF women from other parts of the country joining us, being able to see some of the city for themselves.

In June we had a WILPF presence at the 25th celebrations at the

Peace Bell, in the Botanical Gardens, of our Nuclear Weapon Free New Zealand legislation. In August we gathered at the Peace Bell again for the yearly Hiroshima and Nagasaki memorial, organized in conjunction with the Society of Friends. The Japanese women's choir sang and Natasha Barnes and Keith Locke spoke.

At our final meeting for the year in November, Lois and Martin Griffiths spoke about olive picking in Palestine. WILPF Otautahi decided to sponsor an Olive Tree, through Keep Hope Alive.

We continue to be financially supported by the Society of Friends, and to work with NCW and a wide network of other groups, organizations and individuals on issues of social justice and environmental sustainability.

Celine Kearney

