

**PEACEQUEST MEETING NOTES
MONDAY NOVEMBER 2 2015**

MANY THANKS

- Thanks for coming out to the meeting.
- As usual, a very special thanks to Bob for booking rooms for us for our meetings and events and to Knox Met for accommodating us.
- Thanks also to First Nations for honouring the treaties. The only treaty promise kept by settler society was to take the land. We are privileged to be gathering for this meeting on Treaty 4 territory.

REMEMBERING BILL CURRY

The sudden death of Bill Curry on October 12 sent shock waves through the peace movement across Canada. Just a few weeks earlier, on September 5, Bill and his wife Dale Dewar spent the day with us at the Hibakusha Worldwide poster exhibition and the screening of *Village of Widows*.

Dale mentioned several times over the day of the exhibition how much it meant to Bill that the posters were on display for the public to see. It was a very special time, with both Bill and Dale present to share with us their extensive knowledge of the damage done by the uranium industry from start to finish.

Bill was an extraordinary person, completely devoted to peace and the anti-nuclear struggle.

On behalf of PeaceQuest Regina and Making Peace Vigil, Catherine has sent a card to Dale with a beautiful message: “We feel blessed to have had Bill touch our lives with his gentle but passionate work for peace and justice. We grieve his death and celebrate his life knowing his energy will live on in the struggle.

A MINUTE FOR PEACE

1. Ed brought us a call for action from Canadian Voice of Women for Peace. It asks us each to send a letter to our new Prime Minister, listing our peace priorities, and it comes in the form of a petition: <http://vowpeace.org/new-government-new-hope-for-peace/>

The letter, with its list of peace priorities, is very helpful when it comes to thinking about what needs to be done for there to be peace:

New Government: New Hope for Peace

Send your letter to our new Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau today.

Dear New Prime Minister Justin Trudeau,

Congratulations! Your success in the election this week gives us hope for Peace.

The Canadian Voice of Women for Peace is the country’s oldest, national peace organization. We are concerned about the rise of militarism in our communities, increased

arms sales overseas, and Canadian Forces' airstrikes in the Middle East. We want Canada to Make Space for Peace and to be a leader in diplomacy, international law, nonviolence and disarmament. This election, please pledge your support for our peace priorities and after the election work with us and other civil society organizations on implementing them.

Our twelve peace priorities:

1. Stop Canada's bombing of Syria and Iraq and withdraw our troops from the Ukraine
2. Open our borders to more refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, Libya and Iraq
3. Sign and ratify the Arms Trade Treaty
4. Cancel the \$15 billion General Dynamics Canada contract to send weapons to Saudi Arabia and instead invest in a strategy for green jobs and renewable energy
5. Stop the secretive \$26 billion Canadian Surface Combatant program and instead build affordable housing and public transportation across the country
6. Reduce military spending and redirect funds to social and environmental needs
7. Implement the recommendations of the External Review into Sexual Misconduct and Harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces
8. Launch a public inquiry into Canada's missing and murdered indigenous women and girls and create a national strategy to end gender-based violence
9. Hold a public inquiry into Canada's complicity in the torture of Afghan detainees
10. Convene public consultations for a green paper on national defence and security and on the establishment of a Department of Peace
11. Advance the United Nations' Security Council agenda on Women, Peace & Security
12. Show leadership in nuclear disarmament and host an international meeting on the proposed UN Nuclear Weapons Convention to abolish these weapons of mass destruction

Peace is the foundation for a just and sustainable society. We look forward to your support and working together for peace.

2. Florence brought Peace and Love fridge magnets, available at the \$ Store, stationary aisle.

She also brought copies of the prayer for peace Peter Gilmer said at the peace flag raising ceremony:

Paraphrase of a Franciscan Blessing

May the Creator bless us with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths and superficial relationships, so that we may live deep within our hearts.

May the Creator bless us with anger at violence, oppression and exploitation of people, so that we may work for justice, freedom and peace.

May the Creator bless us with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, hunger and war, so that we may reach out our hands to comfort them.

And may the Creator bless us with enough foolishness to believe that we can make a difference in this world, so that we can do what others claim cannot be done to bring justice, peace and kindness to all.

In the words of the prophet Micah:

God has told you, O Mortals, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.

Amen

3. Evelyn brought us a Christmas card to send to Knox-Met to thank the church for supporting us in our work for peace. We all signed it.

Evelyn also brought us a number of items from the pressenza website:

- a) NATO wars to blame for refugee crisis in Europe:
<http://www.pressenza.com/2015/09/nato-wars-to-blame-for-refugee-crisis-in-europe-its-time-to-dissolve-this-anachronism/>
- b) The new cold war: Ukraine and beyond: <http://newcoldwar.org/pushing-the-edge-on-nuclear-war/>
- c) ProMosaik interviews the peace activist Pia Figueroa Edwards:
<http://www.pressenza.com/2015/09/promosaik-interviews-the-peace-activist-pia-figueroa-edwards/>

Compilation

At our August meeting, we decided we would compile all the Minute for Peace items for posting on the PeaceQuest Regina facebook page. Check it out next week to see all the Minute For Peace items we have collectively contributed: <https://www.facebook.com/PeaceQuestRegina>

Thanks to Bill for getting us going on the Minute For Peace tradition at our January 12 2015 meeting to which he brought copies of Wilfred Owen's poem "Dulce et Decorum Est. Minute For Peace has become a very rich resource.

THE FEDERAL ELECTION

It's been a long time since our last meeting, which was on August 24. Much has happened since, including the federal election.

1. How do we feel about the election outcome? Yahoo!! Harper is gone.
2. Will the new Liberal government work for peace? The Liberal legacy is not all that encouraging. We must put pressure on them.
3. What can we do to encourage them to work for peace?
 - a) Here's one idea: A women phoned into the CBC, re the renovations to 24 Sussex, saying the government should cut military spending and use the money for the renovations.
 - b) Hold meetings with Erin Weir and Ralph Goodale—discussed later in the meeting.
 - c) Katimavik program—discussed later in the meeting.

REPORTS

1. Hibakusha Worldwide poster exhibition + screening of film *Village of Widows*: all who participated

- It was a very successful event.
- Hilary, Bob, Catherine, and Florence, along with Bill and Dale, were on hand for set-up. Emilie came along and solved all our technical problems.
- Aside from the posters, there were three information tables: one on the nuclear industry, which was set up by Bill and Dale; one on the uranium industry and the environment, set up by Clean Green Regina; and a peace table with material from the three Regina peace groups, PeaceQuest Regina, Making Peace Vigil, and Regina Peace Council.
- Folks drifted in and out all day.
- There were about 25 people present for the screening of the film in the evening.
- It was especially good to have members of the Regina Japanese Canadian Club with us. They wish to be informed about anything we do that is related to the bombing of Hiroshima or Nagasaki.
- Thanks to Cathie Gibson of Clean Green Regina, we had a raffle at the end, with a book and a couple of peace packages as prizes.
- Thanks to Tennille, Terri, and Larry, we were also able to serve peace cookies (see photo).
- The poster exhibition was left up until Sunday afternoon so the Knox-Met congregation was able to view it after church.
- A woman who attended the film screening contacted a couple of us a few days later to say the film had had an enormous impact on her, as she had worked as a secretary for El Dorado before she had married.

2. International Day of Peace: September 21

a) Peace Proclamation

At the request of Peter, Mayor Michael Fougere proclaimed September 21 International Day of Peace. Peter made the application about a month before the day.

b) Letter to the Public and Catholic School Boards

Jean sent letters to both school boards, asking that students throughout the city be given the opportunity to participate in Peace Day through school assemblies, classes, or clubs. Both boards responded, committing to pass on the request.

Here is in part the response of the Catholic School Board: “For each Monday, our Catholic Education Services Coordinator prepares and distributes prayers for each school to use, based on religious feast days, themes, or issues that present themselves to us. I will ask that the prayer for Monday September 21 also include a focus on the theme you have listed: “Partnerships for Peace—Dignity for All.” Thus, each school can read the prayer and focus on the awareness and resulting conversations of working for peace for all.”

c) Peace Flag Raised at City Hall

- It was an historic occasion, the first time, as far as we know, a peace flag has flown in front of city hall.
- It was also a joyous occasion. The program opened with City Hall Commissionaire Jim Kirko raising the peace flag. Peter Gilmer then gave the prayer for peace. Next Ed and Florence said a few words about peace. They were followed by two City Councillors, Shawn Fraser and Barbara Young, who each spoke. To end the program, Hilary led us all in singing “One More Step.”
- We also handed out peace pamphlets.
- There were about 30 people in attendance. The media also turned out.

d) Ringing of Church Bells

At Bob’s request, Knox-Met rang its bells 70 times at noon on September 21. While the bells rang, Bob and Florence stood on the corner of Lorne and Victoria holding a peace banner and handing out peace flyers.

Several other churches were asked to ring their bells, but none responded.

3. Knox-Met Peace Garden—September 20 Dedication

Bob reported the following:

Joyce Wells, a member of the Knox-Met congregation, did much of the organizing. She also wrote material for the church bulletin.

There were three parts to the dedication:

- a) A wonderful church service, which included a sermon by Rev Bob Kitchen that focused on peace and Rev Cam Fraser playing on the words *peace* and *peas* when he was talking to the children. How do we grow peace? was the question Cam asked the children.
- b) A program in the garden, chaired by Carol Bryant, Chair of the Knox-Met Board. It was a beautiful day and most of the congregation come out into the garden. The program included a Prayer of Blessing by Rev Bob Kitchen; Words of Peace by Bill Stahl, a PeaceQuest Regina member; and a sing-along of the song “One More Step Around the World I Go,”

led by Cheryl and Cam Fraser. The program concluded with the children, along with their Sunday school teacher Marlene Hall, planting bulbs in the lily garden.

- c) A reception in the church hall at which peace cookies, made by members of the congregation, were served. There was also a photo display of the garden as it grew and changed from early spring through to the fall.

It was suggested at the meeting that there might be a peace garden event every fall.

PeaceQuest Regina Facebook Page

Our facebook page, created and managed by Emilie, is another very rich resource. Have a look at it, if you haven't done so recently: <https://www.facebook.com/PeaceQuestRegina>

Send Emilie links to peace items: 2394909@gmail.com

4. Mayors for Peace—Letter to Mayor Fougere

Mayors for Peace is a 1982 United Nations initiative of the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to promote the solidarity of cities toward the total annihilation of nuclear weapons.

a) Membership

6,779 cities worldwide have signed up, 102 of them in Canada.

Saskatoon is a member of Mayors For Peace, but Regina isn't.

Regina Canada-Japanese Club sent information to Mayor Fougere last year for his review, but Regina hasn't joined.

b) Action

Peter will draft a letter to Mayor Fougere.

All three Regina peace groups will sign it.

We will also ask the Regina Canadian Japanese Club if they would like to sign.

Do you know of any other groups or organizations we could ask to sign?

5. Mayors for Peace—Petition calling for the elimination of nuclear weapons

We collected 144 signatures on the petition.

Evelyn was by far our best collector, collecting more than half of the signatures.

Florence will mail the petition sheets off to the Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation.

6. PeaceQuest Kingston Retreat: Ed's Report

Ed represented PeaceQuest Regina at the PeaceQuest Kingston 2015 retreat, which took place in October. He was hosted by Judi Wyatt, who spoke at one of our PeaceQuest meetings last fall. The retreat itself took place on Belle Island, a retreat owned by the Sisters of Providence.

Ed told the Kingston folks what we are up to in Regina. Kingston wants to support our work. We are the most active PeaceQuest affiliate.

Considerable time at the retreat was spent discussing the peace conference PeaceQuest will be holding in November 2018 to mark the end of World War I 100 year commemoration events.

One big question was the future of PeaceQuest, which was founded in the lead up to World War I 100th anniversary celebrations. The PeaceQuest challenge was how to counteract the glorification of war with a message of peace. The consensus both in Kingston and Regina is that PeaceQuest should continue. There is (unfortunately) much more peace work to be done for peace!

The Kingston group has had great success working with schools and churches, many of which have become Peace Schools or Peace Congregations.

PeaceQuest Kingston would like to know if Regina could help out with two national PeaceQuest projects:

A. COMMUNITY PEACE GARDENS / POLES / LABYRINTHS

GOAL: Creation and / or rededication of Peace Gardens, Peace Poles and Peace Labyrinths in (150??) communities during the celebration of Canada's 150th birthday in 2017.

Bob was invited to lead this project.

B. 150 Reasons to Celebrate Canadian Identity

Rationale

- To make a thoughtful contribution to a national conversation regarding the defining values of Canada as a nation leading up to July 1, 2017
- To provide a template that can be used by PeaceQuest affiliates across the country

Katimavik: Meeting Place in Inuktitut

PeaceQuest Kingston also suggested that PeaceQuest might work to get funding restored to Katimavik, a program in which those 17 to 21 years of age spend 9 months helping in community projects in three different areas. This program was defunded by the Harper government. Since the program was started in 1977 under the Pierre Trudeau government, and since Justin Trudeau was at one time a spokesperson for Katimavik, such a campaign would be timely.

Katimavik might have particular relevance to PeaceQuest Regina as an alternative to or replacement for the military training program currently in our high schools.

Ed volunteered to lead this effort.

The meeting made the following suggestions:

That we write a letter to PM Trudeau asking him to reinstate Katimavik;

That we request meetings with Ralph Goodale and Erin Weir about Katimavik;

That we contact the peace groups in Saskatoon and Yorkton about getting involved in the campaign.

Since the meeting:

- Ed has drafted a letter to PM Trudeau; sent it around for comment; and then, along with Kelly, a graduate of the Katimavik program, signed it and sent it off the PM. Thanks Ed.
- In the meantime, an online petition on Katimavik has appeared. Please sign and forward to all your contacts: https://www.change.org/p/justin-trudeau-m%C3%A9lanie-joly-canadian-government-reinstate-katimavik-in-canada-by-sept-2016?utm_source=action_alert&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=435290&alert_id=HrtGwnhfJR_%2FfWetXYGU4z7%2B3RfqM9hP8NsvJVq%2B3ihIGOG%2FnBIDds%3D
- Ed also urges each of us to send our own letters or notes to the PM urging him to restore Katimavik: The Right Honourable Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Office of the Prime Minister, 80 Wellington Street, Ottawa, On, K1A 0A2

To learn more about Katimavik, go to: <http://www.katimavik.org/our-history>

NEW INITIATIVES

1. Remembrance Day, Wednesday November 11

Making Peace Vigil handed out white poppies on the corner of Scarth Street and 11th Avenue, from noon to 12:30 pm, on Thursday November 5. Mennonite Central Committee buttons, with the message “To Remember Is To Work For Peace” were also available. Florence brought some of both to the meeting for anyone who wanted them.

We recalled Malcolm French’s powerful radio piece last year on why he wears a red and a white poppy: <http://www.cbc.ca/radio/the180/white-poppy-campaign-the-semi-circle-parliament-defining-terrorism-1.2868784/do-red-poppies-and-white-poppies-contradict-each-other-1.2868777>

Florence will see if Malcolm is interested in writing a letter in a similar vein to the editor of the *Leader-Post* in time for this year's Remembrance Day.

2. Peace Photos

Catherine suggested we sponsor a Peace Sign contest in order to encourage people to create peace signs in their yards or public spaces or even on cookies.

We already have quite a collection of peace signs scattered around the city:

- a) 2 at the Knox-Met Peace Garden
- b) 1 created in the snow New Year’s Day 2015—we can make a better one this year based on last year’s experience.
- c) A fine rock peace sign in the front yard of 2905 Atkinson Street, which Catherine spotted
- d) 2 sets of Peace Cookies

If you see any other peace signs around the city, please take a photo so we can add it to the collection.

If you know any artists, please tell them about the project and see if they are interested in entering the competition.

Florence will try to get all the photos to hand into one file and then send them around. She will also draft a blurb for the peace sign contest and send it around for comment.

3. Greeting Cards

We will print up 50 peace greeting cards and sell them to ourselves.

Should it ever snow (not that we wouldn't prefer it didn't), Florence will take a photo in front of City Hall that includes the peace fountain, the I LOVE REGINA sign, and the flag pole.

Emilie will "fix" this photo, by attaching the peace flag to the flag pole and substituting PEACE for REGINA.

If it doesn't snow this year, we will use the photo taken in September of the peace flag flying in front of City Hall.

4. Plans for marking the 100th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme—July 1 – November 18 1916: Bill

The Battle of the Somme was one of the worst British defeats in history. It lasted five months, killed or wounded 1.2 million men on all sides, and resulted in only a few kilometers of mud changing hands.

In the winter of 1916 the Germans attacked the French at Verdun. The British high command decided to attack along the river Somme to relieve pressure on the French.

The British shelled the German lines for a week prior to the attack, in a bombardment so large it could be heard in England. Due to the poor training of their gunners and the low quality of their shells, the bombardment was ineffective, however, leaving the German dugouts undamaged and the barbed wire uncut.

British forces went over the top on 1 July. The German machine guns were waiting for them. The British took 56,000 casualties that day, mostly in the first 45 minutes. The Newfoundland Regiment took part in the first day attack at Beaumont-Hamel. They began their attack at 9:15 in the morning and immediately came under heavy machine gun fire. Within 30 minutes the regiment was wiped out. Of 800 men, only 68 were left.

The Canadian Corps did not enter the battle until 23 August. From then until rain and snow put an end to the battle in November, they made a number of attacks, captured a few German positions, but took 24,000 casualties.

As a consequence of the Battle of the Somme, morale collapsed on the home front, enlistments dried up, and the Borden government brought in conscription. This led to the conscription crisis of 1917.

To commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme, Bill will organize and chair a panel discussion. Suggested panelists: Malcolm French, Jim Pitsula, and Bill Weiser.

We will also ask the RPL Film Theatre show a suitable film. Please suggest titles.

5. Letter Writing Social: We Want Peace

- We will organize a letter-writing social, using the Amnesty model.
- We will try to get the back room at the Artful Dodger, which is free, as long as a few of us patronize the bar.
- How does Monday November 30, 7 – 9 pm sound to folks?
- The letters will be addressed to PM Justin Trudeau.
- Possible subjects: a) Katimavik; b) Prime Minister for Peace/negotiated settlements to conflicts; c) Department of Peace. Please suggest others.
- We will prepare points for letter-writers to draw on in writing their letters. We will also provide addressed envelopes.

NEXT PEACEQUEST REGINA MEETING: MONDAY DECEMBER 14, 7 pm, KNOX-MET

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 7, 10 am – 5 pm: MCC SASKATCHEWAN ENCOUNTER AND AGM—HOPE FOR REFUGEES, PARLIAMENT COMMUNITY CHURCH, 4011 PASQUA STREET

Featuring Rami Shamma, Program Manager at Development for People and Nature Association (DPNA), a Lebanese NGO which aims to support a non-violent democratic society where individuals enjoy all their rights and freedoms without discrimination. Join us to learn about Rami's work engaging with refugees in Lebanon, as well as the perspective of refugees in Canada, specifically Saskatchewan. Brian Dyck, MCC Canada's National Migration and Resettlement Program Coordinator, will also be present and help us to understand some of the complexities of sponsorship in Canada.

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 21 & SUNDAY NOVEMBER 22: TEN THOUSAND VILLAGES POP-UP SALE, HOLY ROSARY CATHEDRAL, 2104 GARNET STREET

Saturday: 1 pm to 5 pm

Sunday: 10 am to 9 pm

A chance to do some seasonal shopping and support people from around the global village.