

**MINUTES FOR AUGUST 25, 2016**  
**CHAPTER MEETING OF TOM STURTEVANT CHAPTER**  
**USM/PORTLAND**

PRESENT: Peter Woodruff, Regis Tremblay, Dud Hendrick, John Morris, Peter Morgan, Jr., Rita Clement, Peggy Akers, Dan Ellis, Richard Clement, Bud Buzzell, Clarence Smith, Doug Rawlings, and Simon Radecki (guest)

> Doug provided the inspirational opening by reading a letter from the new book LETTERS TO THE WALL (the letter was written by a granddaughter to her grandfather, whose name is on The Wall).

> Secretary's report was accepted as written. Please note: as the acting secretary, I'd like to see if someone else would step forward to take on this task.

> Richard took a moment to send our good wishes off to Gerry Kamke, who is still recuperating from his recent surgery.

> Dan presented the treasurer's report -- we currently have a balance of \$5,434.40. Richard reported that he will be taking a bit from this to buy button supplies for the Common Ground Fair. The treasurer's report was accepted as presented.

> Dan reported that we now have 133 members, but only 74 are currently paid up in their dues. This is a drop from last month. As always, Dan will send out reminders to people to pay their dues.

> **Standing Committee Reports:**

1). **Outreach and Media:** Regis reported on the latest developments of his documentary film project -- "Thirty Seconds to Midnight." He has received a visa to travel to Russia on October 1st (where he still holds hope out for interviewing Putin). He hopes to have the film out by early 2017, with perhaps a world premiere showing at the Railroad Square Theater in Waterville. He once again thanked us for our financial and moral support. Regis also told us that he just completed a film interview with Sherry Mitchell, a Native American attorney very active in the work to gain indigenous people their rights.

Richard reported that MaineShare staffer Sarah was in Augusta recently looking for pledges to MaineShare. No new developments on the Hike and Bike events. The Tim Blanchette memorial activity has been postponed.

Richard gave us the latest update on the Common Ground Fair tabling that we have signed up for. Once again, we are in great need for people to staff the tables (September 23, 24, and 25). The chapter will pay for your entry fee and a meal if you agree to staff the table for at least three hours. **PLEASE CONTACT RICHARD ASAP TO LET HIM KNOW YOU'LL HELP OUT.** We will be featuring our button machine again, Rob Shetterly cards, and material related to the Peace Walk as well as the LETTERS TO THE WALL book recently published and Full

Disclosure material as well. Let's not let Richard down here -- he is busting his butt to get this project up and running; he needs our support.

Dan reported that he has purchased a Dell Computer for \$1,000 to use as he maintains our web page, keeps our list-serve alive and well, and manages our treasury and membership data. Seems like he does a lot for this chapter, don't ya think? He has upgraded from Windows7 to Windows10, including all Microsoft properties.

Doug reported that he, Ginny Schneider, and Lisa Savage have held a conference call to begin working on full disclosure activities in our schools. We are working on appropriate PSA's and on resurrecting the Rob Shetterly calendar project. Ginny is looking to the RESIST Foundation for funding, and Doug will explore the VFP Zinn fund for support (with approval from the chapter).

Dud provided us with a glimpse at the slide presentation he, Rob Shetterly, and Lily Yeh have presented recently on their work in the West Bank. In 2014 and 2015, these three have gone to the town of Nablus to paint murals and young faces and to encourage Palestinian artists to use their medium as a form of protest and bearing witness. Lily Yeh is a Philadelphia-born artist who has been using art to uplift impoverished neighborhoods throughout her career (she is still going strong in her mid-70's). Her work can be found under "Barefoot Artists." This team of five (two other Philadelphia activists joined them) spent two weeks in the West Bank working on the "Resist to Exist" project: not only painting murals but also doors. Dud then told us of being there during the National Prisoners Day that celebrates the lives of the over 150,000 Palestinians imprisoned since 1967 as they resist the Israeli Occupation. Close to forty percent of Palestinian men have been imprisoned. We as citizens of the U.S. Empire, who provide massive amounts of military support to Israel, are responsible for this travesty against human rights. To reinforce that point, Dud showed us slides from the Al Farra Prison that used to house and torture fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen-year-old boys who dared to confront the IDF. It is now a museum. Dud also told us his opinion of the power of nonviolence: he said that you would think these people would all be terrorists and suicide bombers, but they are not. They choose to use nonviolence as a means to protest their subjugation. We asked Dud to bring Lily back to Maine, where we could hold more presentations of their great work.

Richard told us of his and Rita's recent trip to Washington, DC, where they visited the Arlington Cemetery to join others in paying their respects to Captain Kahn and to support the Gold Star families who have lost loved ones to the recent wars. As the parents of an Iraq War veteran themselves, they felt especially moved by witnessing all the recent graves added to our national cemetery. "No more wars," said Richard. We agree.

### **> ONGOING AND UPDATED BUSINESS**

1). John reported that everything is going along nicely for the Peace Walk. Sherry Mitchell of the Penobscot Nation will speak at the start of the walk. Acupuncturists will be available at various stops along the way. Peter Morgan pointed out that the dates on the agenda for tonight are wrong -- the correct dates are on the web site and in PEACE IN OUR TIMES.

2). Dan updated us on the proposed recognition of Hersch Steinleib. He has put together a certificate which he shared with us. Doug passed around a donated copy of the LETTERS TO THE WALL book for members to sign -- we will give Hersch this book as a gift. A card was also passed around for all to sign. Those members who want to be involved in the entourage to present Hersch with this recognition before our next meeting in Brunswick (September 29th) are to meet at the UU church in Brunswick at 6:15pm.

3). John kept us updated on the Zumwalt Twelve -- they were arraigned on August 2nd; they pled "not guilty." There will be a dispositional hearing on September 7th, where they will be offered a plea bargain. John anticipates that they will not accept this bargain, and then forge ahead for a trial by jury.

4). Doug reported that 150 copies of the book LETTERS TO THE WALL have already been sold (note: 187 have been sold to this date). He spoke of our plans to have the book distributed to school libraries and to others who want to use the book as a resource when discussing the American War in Vietnam. It is currently being offered at cost (\$8.67) and can be purchased by going to our [vietnamfulldisclosure.org](http://vietnamfulldisclosure.org) website and scrolling down to the link for the book. Many letters in the book are written by Mainers. After some discussion, the chapter agreed to buy 24 copies of the book to be distributed/sold at various venues like the Common Ground Fair. Members are encouraged to buy a book or two.

#### > **NEW BUSINESS**

1). Richard announced the death of longtime member Miles Freeman. Presente.

2). Doug mentioned that VFP member Mike Hastie and his colleagues Brian Willson and Becky Luening, after a recent trip to Vietnam, are seeking funds to help repair the mural at My Lai. They estimate that it will cost \$4,200 to fix it. VFP members are donating individually, but we also decided to send \$200 in funding (Peggy motion and Smitty seconded). A link to the funding application can be found on [vietnamfulldisclosure.org](http://vietnamfulldisclosure.org) or on the national website.

3). Doug informed the chapter that, upon agreement with the officers and board members, we agree to offer travel support for those veterans attending the Tri-County Mental Health Veterans Fair in Farmington this coming month. On their brochure they will state that veterans seeking travel assistance are to contact Doug. Last year we provided \$100 to support two veterans and their families.

4). Doug informed us that he was contacted by Frank Donnelly to see if any members want to join him in a trip to Nogales, Arizona as VFP joins other peace groups in protesting the School of Americas and the current plans to deport thousands of "illegal aliens." No one indicated that they would be joining Frank. Some chapter funding would be available to help defray costs.

5). Doug reported on the latest developments in the "Veterans Challenge Islamophobia" movement. There was much attention paid to this topic at the national convention. Jim Driscoll has mounted a national campaign (chaired by Jonathan Hutto) that will work with local and regional chapters interested in combatting this virus in their communities. Specifically, Driscoll is offering a three-day workshop on September 9-11 in the New York City area as a training

session. No one around the table could attend. However, Doug suggested that since we really haven't had much response to our initiatives in Lewiston with the Somali mosque, perhaps we should approach the strong USM student chapter of Muslim youth to see what we can do. Doug will also broach this topic with the Elders group (he will be meeting with Fred Brancato in early September).

6). Dan reported that the Brunswick Peace Fair went well. Regis and Bruce and Martha Speiss were all recognized for their great work for world peace by receiving a PeaceWorks plaque from Rosalie Tyler. Regis took a ton of pictures that Dan has posted. The button machine was a huge success. John and Doug helped Dan to staff the table.

7). Doug prattled on about how great the VFP national convention was this year in San Francisco. His report on the convention can be found on our list-serve. There were many highlights that he shared in this report. What he did not share, however, was the formal expulsion of a member for extortion of funds and for lying about his military service. Very sad. But necessary -- our organization is built on trust and when that trust is broken, we have a formal means to deal with it. That said, Doug encourages you all to go to TomDispatch to read Ann Jones's full essay on the attack on our VA system by the Koch brothers, which informed a good part of her Saturday night banquet address at the convention. There were many, many plenaries and workshops that were very educational. The national website will be posting videos from the convention in the next few weeks. Check it out. By the way, Veterans For Peace was offered the national peace prize by the Washington DC based US PEACE MEMORIAL FOUNDATION. A big deal for an organization that first housed its national convention in the basement of a church in Portland, Maine.

8). Peggy told us of her two weeks working at the SEEDS OF PEACE camp. During the first week she worked with 14 and 15-year-old kids from Egypt, Jordan, Israel, and Palestine. She felt the urgency of their presence as they told of their lives and, despite the pain they have witnessed, their hope for a better world. She told us how intense the dialogues were, yet how playful the young people can be. In the second week she worked with kids from Maine, from inner city Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles, to help form the same bond of compassion and empathy. As always, Peggy left this experience with a renewed sense of hope and determination.

**Guest Simon Radecki closed the meeting by telling us of his work with MAINERS FOR RESPONSIBLE GUN OWNERSHIP.** He is replacing Deb Atwood. He was thankful for the opportunity to attend our meeting. Their work is to close the gap in the existing background check laws. Peter Morgan mentioned the Moms Demand Action group and our willingness to work with them and others on this issue (Peter tabled with Deb at the recent Brunswick Peace Fair). Richard gave Simon a copy of the recent Elders Statement on Violence that we have endorsed. One interesting fact that Simon presented -- in 2016, for the first time in our nation's history, gun violence will replace car accidents as the number one cause of death for those nineteen or younger. We exchanged cards with Simon and hope that he will continue to attend our meetings.

THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 9:18pm.

NEXT MEETING IN BRUNSWICK ON SEPTEMBER 29<sup>th</sup> at the Unitarian Universalist Church, One Middle Street.

Doug Rawlings  
Veterans For Peace

Art is not a mirror held up to reality but a hammer with which to shape it. -- Bertolt Brecht

I refuse to live in a country like this, and I'm not leaving. -- Michael Moore

American politics is the entertainment wing of the military industrial complex -- Frank Zappa

Common sense: the insight of mediocrity. -- Theodore Roethke