

# Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Triangle, NC  
Chapter



## Newsletter Summer 2019

### WILPF at Poor People's Congress in DC

— Margaret Herring, Ruth Zalph

WILPF members Margaret Herring, Brenda Hines, Jean Chapman, Lib Hutchby, Fran Schindler, Ruth Zalph and Vicki Ryder participated in the Poor People's Congress in



Washington, DC June 17-19 at Trinity Washington University. We traveled by bus and train and stayed at Howard University. This was an inspiring event.

Over 1,000 people attended from all over the country; delegations from over 40 states, including Alaska and Hawaii, were present.

Day 1: On the first day there was a forum with numerous Presidential candidates, including Elizabeth Warren, Kamala Harris, Bernie Sanders, Joe Biden, Marianne Williamson, Eric Swalwell, Andrew Yang, Michael Bennett and Wayne Messam. Rev. Barber asked questions pertaining to what they would do to get PPC goals in the forefront of their campaigns: Systemic racism, military, ecological devastation, and a moral agenda. Each candidate also heard from one or two people whose lives were impacted by our government's policies and who asked the question, "What would you do to ameliorate the problem"? Joy Reed of MSNBC was an excellent moderator. The evening session was, "Launching the Poor People's Moral Budget". If you weren't exhausted enough, you could attend the jam session afterwards.

Day 2: We started with breakfast at 7am, followed with a session on Organize, Why and Now with a keynote by Rev. Barber. The afternoon had workshops and tracks on many subjects. Tuesday evening's panel discussion was on intersection of injustices moderated by Claudia de la Cruz/The People's Forum(NYC). Following that we saw the screening of "Amazing Grace" about Aretha Franklin introduced by the Producer, Alan Elliott, and Rev. Barber

Day 3: On the final day, Rev. Barber and five leaders from the Poor People's Congress went to Congress for an official hearing of the House Budget Committee where they were given a set time to testify. Rev. Barber and Rev. Liz Theoharis

were terrific, and our other leaders, Kenia Alcocer, CA, Callie Greer, AL, Savannah Kinsey, PA, and Chris Overfelt, KA, spoke of their life experiences. We watched the hearing livestream which allowed us to watch and evaluate those who are supposed to represent us. The goal of their appearance was to reveal the faces behind the facts of poverty. Rev Barber decried the moral crisis of poverty in our country. Taking action on poverty, said Barber, "is the moral mandate for our nation at this moment. Nothing less than the promise of our democracy is at stake." The Poor People's Campaign says that there are more than 140 million people making less than twice the poverty line in the US. and that the country must move past partisan politics and focus on assisting poor and low-income people. "Poverty and inequality are created by policy, and must be remedied by policy, not pity," Barber and Theoharis emphasized in the report. The poor people's Moral Budget was presented to the committee. However, Congressman David Price was one of about only four committee members present.

In the afternoon of the last day, Rev. Barber gave us a challenge to organize in our home states. He gave an outline for how the movement is to be structured. Next year there will be a Mass Poor People's Assembly and Moral March on Washington June 20, 2020. Part of the action we can take immediately is to demand that the parties hold a presidential debate on poverty and the interlocking injustices by going [here](#). Music and singing before and after every session helped to bring us together. This was a well-planned and executed conference that we were glad to have attended.

### Norwegian WILPFer Visits Triangle WILPF – (several members shared their impressions)



In July, Triangle WILPF had the honor and pleasure of meeting Audgunn Oltedal, a member of the board of WILPF

Norway and a well-known journalist and broadcaster in her home country. Audgunn had contacted us through the WILPF US website and asked if it would be possible to meet with Triangle WILPF when she came to Wilmington this summer to visit her daughter-in-law's family.

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WILPF members hosted a luncheon for Audgunn which in turn led to a series of shared meals and meetings over the next few days. At the potluck, she talked to us about what WILPF is doing in Norway. They have the same threat from the right wing that we are experiencing and are concerned about the rise of fascism. Their government has moved to the right. Norway WILPF's main focus is on NATO and the fact that the conservative government of Norway has invited the US to have a military presence in Norway. Last year, Oslo asked the US to send 800 marines and build infrastructure close to the border with Russia. Troops will be there for a 5-year rotation. In addition, the US is sending 52 fighter planes (F-32).

Audgunn was very interested in all the areas we are working in, particularly our fight against racism. She was shocked at the prejudice and hatred against African Americans in this country. She spent time interviewing several members about their lives. Audgunn was amused that we accept men into our chapter of WILPF and said that when she got back to Norway, she would raise the issue. - Margaret Herring

Later that day, after a pleasant supper outside at Weaver Street market with a small group of WILPF sisters, Emily O'Hare and I invited Audgunn to walk across the street with us to see our community radio station hello, WCOM FM. She had been a journalist and radio TV presenter in Norway and was very interested and impressed that our branch was doing something unusual for branches in Norway and here. We took photos outside the station and fortunately the DJ who was on the air invited us into the studio so Audgunn saw our small but mighty space and we could take more pictures. Her interest and enthusiasm was so encouraging to us! – Lori Hoyt

I first met Audgunn at a welcome lunch hosted by Margaret Herring. I was very impressed by how intently she listened and took notes (copious notes!) as WILPF members told of their activities. I'm sure she shared every bit of information with her WILPF members in Norway!

In addition to her commitment to the peace movement, Audgunn is devoted to her family. She is a wife, mother, and grandmother. She wholeheartedly takes in and appreciates all the joys life has to offer. We both love art. She knits, I crochet. One night she modeled all the hats I crocheted and selected one to take home. Audgunn loves working with her hands. The opportunity arose to make peace cranes (for Hiroshima/Nagasaki Day) at Lib Hutchby's house after dinner. A perfect use of hands! However, it turned out that Lib and I folded peace cranes as Lucy Lewis and Audgunn took turns singing protest songs. A delightful evening with our guest from Norway! – Emily O'Hare

### **Al My Brother Showing** – Emily Keel

On June 10, WILPF partnered with the Poor People's Campaign in showing the Cash Michael's film called Al: My Brother. The movie features the life of Al McSurely who has



been a local revolutionary fighter for racial justice all his life.

Margaret Herring, WILPF member and Al's wife at the time, was also an integral part of the story that

took place in Kentucky when they were working to organize poor and working class people into a politically powerful force for economic and political justice for the poor.

The reaction of the entrenched power structure was to arrest and charge them with sedition. All their books and papers were taken in a raid. Later on, their home was dynamited in an assassination attempt.

Cash Michaels is an award-winning journalist and community activist. After the showing, Margaret, Al and Michaels answered audience questions; Mark Dorosin from the Julius L. Chambers Center for Civil Rights served as moderator. The movie, shown at the Chelsea Theater, was sold out. Supporters and friends of WILPF and the Poor People's Campaign came out to learn more about this inspiring story, offer support and to raise money for both organizations

### **Hiroshima/Nagasaki Commemoration**

– Lucy Lewis



.George Friday was the keynote speaker at the Orange County Peace Coalition's annual commemoration of the US atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Triangle WILPF is a member of the OCPC). These anniversaries serve as an awful reminder of the power of nuclear bombs and weapons, and the continuing threat they pose

to all humanity.

Friday is a former fundraiser for SANE and has held previous leading roles in Piedmont Peace Project, National Juvenile Justice project, United for Peace and Justice, and Bill of Rights

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Defense Committee; founding member of Move to Amend. Friday holds degrees in Political Science, Economics, and African American Studies from UNC-Chapel Hill. Her powerful remarks included thoughts about her own history, why she has been involved in the peace movement for so many years, her trip to Japan during one of the August commemorations there, and the roles of white privilege.

The program included Mary Jenne's reading of two eloquent poems and the Raging Grannies' wonderful songs of peace.

### **Labor Rights Are Human Rights**

—Miriam Thompson

WILPFers and friends have been active on several important labor solidarity fronts. We have been working with the Triangle Labor Council of the State AFL – CIO, the Durham Peoples Assembly and RaiseUp\$15 to demand the NC General Assembly institute a living wage. We have been working with partners across the state to support Medicaid expansion for the over 650,000 workers and their families who do not have healthcare. The governor as of this writing is holding firm that he will not support a state budget that denies workers a living wage and access to healthcare. CALL your state legislators now to make sure they vote to uphold the governor's veto until the Republican led General Assembly sits down and negotiates a budget that serves all the people of North Carolina.

Triangle WILPF is also joining its labor partners in supporting the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) fight against the Trump Administration's imposition of contracts that exclude unions, and that would deny collective-bargaining rights to federal workers in agencies like the Social Security Administration the Department of Education, Housing and Urban Development, Veterans CALL Your Congress members now and demand they roll back Trump Administration orders designed to obliterate the rights of federal workers to fair representation and working conditions.

WILPFers and the Raging Grannies continue to picket Circle K, urging their corporate officers to remove Reynolds e-cigarette, VUSE, from their shelves until Reynolds agrees to finally sit down with the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) to negotiate a living wage, medical care and decent housing for the farmworkers that produce its profits.

\* Tell your friends to CALL Circle K's parent company Couche-Tard CEO, Brian Hannasch at 800-361-2612. Tell him you will shop and get your gas elsewhere if he does not support the human rights of farmworkers.

\* Stay tuned for upcoming local pickets. For more information on these and other labor solidarity struggles, text Miriam Thompson at 917-825-0884.

### **CWA Workers Win Their Just Strike**

- Sonia Desai

Since late June 22,000 people working at AT&T in Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Tennessee, Kentucky, South Carolina, North Carolina and Puerto Rico, represented by national union Communications Workers of America (CWA), CWA District 3, were focusing on much needed labor contract improvements. In late June, when contract negotiations started, CWA's press release explained the injustice of recent layoffs, "The company received a \$21 billion windfall from the tax bill and is projecting \$3 billion in annual tax savings going forward, but an analysis by CWA based on AT&T's own quarterly reports shows that AT&T has cut over 23,000 jobs since the tax cut passed. Just before Fathers' Day weekend, AT&T announced job cuts for nearly 2,000 workers, including 911 in the Southeast."

During contract negotiations with AT&T, CWA said August 23 "AT&T continues to refuse to accommodate CWA's request that they send someone to the bargaining table who has the authority to make a decision". On August 24th the people of CWA District 3 voted and carried out the strike to convince company negotiators to reform unfair labor practices.

Members of CWA Local 3611 stood outside the two Carrboro company offices (Hwy 54 intersection with Fenway Ct, and at 625 Old Fayetteville Rd) wearing red shirts and holding signs asking the community for support. They picketed from August 24-28, not getting paid and with possible risks of repercussions. I had heard of it through a friend and, thinking of people striking and their families who are an integral part of the community and learning what they're striking for, I was convinced to show up and join them. In my mind the effects of a person not being treated justly at work spreads throughout the community. I thought about how lack of representation increases social and economic inequality locally and can cause mental and physical hardship on multiple generations as well as increases tension in the community. This strike was like a self-correcting spark. A large spark!

People would show up every day, organize, and discuss the maltreatment they were experiencing, strategizing as they held signs up to drivers in cars and asked for solidarity. CWA's Aug 29th press release says, "The action by CWA members was the largest private sector strike in the south in a decade and was featured in hundreds of local and national news stories. Senator Bernie Sanders addressed strikers in Louisville, KY, Senator Elizabeth Warren and former Vice President Joe Biden posted tweets...and local elected officials joined picket lines across the region."

The strike ended 1pm August 28<sup>th</sup>. The August 30th press release from CWA read, "Negotiators for the CWA have finalized a tentative agreement with AT&T Southeast. The

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agreement follows a historic four-day unfair labor practice strike that ended on Tuesday after a “handshake deal” with the company. The new five-year agreement includes wage increases of 13.25%, pension and 401(k) plan enhancements, improved job security and additional customer service positions. There will be no increase in the health care cost sharing percentage for the life of the contract and employees will now have the ability to contribute to a Health Savings Account via payroll deduction.”

There’s still much work to be done! Join your local union!

### **Pipelines Resistance Grows** – Lib Hutchby

Two environmental groups in N.C. have asked the state to revoke the water quality permit for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline in eastern NC. They reason is that the pipeline will have major impacts not disclosed in their application approved in 2018. Construction has been halted for now due to lawsuits.

\*We should continue to call Governor Cooper to insist that he end this project at 919-814-2000. The costs have far exceeded initial estimates at this point and Duke and Dominion customers will see extraordinary fee increases if this continues.

The Mountain Valley Pipeline extension reaching into Alamance and Rockingham counties has been our recent focus with hearings being held by FERC in several communities. The pipeline in its Virginia portion has already committed 300 water quality violations. “Along its route, it would cross 224 waterbodies, including three major ones, as well as 27 acres of wetlands. According to the 700-page document, the project would cause long-term, permanent impacts to 615 acres of forest, 12 acres of protected riparian forested lands in the Jordan Lake watershed, and 1,439 acres of wildlife habitat” reported by Lisa Sorg of NC Policy Watch. The MVP is proposed to run parallel to and within 15 feet of water inside the Jordan Lake watershed, water supply for hundreds of thousands of people. Lib Hutchby gave comments to FERC at the public hearing in Wentworth and Ruth Zalph, Margaret Herring and Emily Keel gave comments at the Haw River hearing.

\*GLOBAL CLIMATE STRIKE SEPTEMBER 20-29! Join WILPF at our table Friday, Sept. 20, 12:30-2:30 pm at Halifax Mall.

### **Palestine Hits Home** – Miriam Thompson

WILPF has had a long history in opposing the Israeli occupation and colonization of Palestine and denying Palestinians their human rights to land and freedom. In August, Israel’s right-wing Prime Minister Netanyahu, first denied two US Muslim elected representatives the right to visit Palestine at US President Trump’s urging. Then, only Congress member Tlaib was given the right to enter to visit her grandmother aged 90 on humanitarian grounds. Tlaib refused because the conditions laid out for her visit would

have denied her right of free speech to criticize the occupation. Appallingly, one of the leaders of the white supremacist movement, Proud Boys, was given a visa by the Israeli government, denied to Rashida Tlaib. Bernie Sanders issued a stern warning: if you refuse entry to select US elected Congress members, then maybe Congress should withhold the US tax payer billions in military aid that supports the occupation.

There are actions Triangle WILPFers can take to end yet another chapter in US history of supporting dictators and occupations. Support Tlaib, Omar, and the other two members of the “Squad” including Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Congress member Presley.

US WILPF is also urging its members to support HB 2407, the Betty McCollum bill, that would deny military aid to any country practicing human rights violations including Israel and its detention of thousands of Palestinian children. Neither David Price, GK Butterfield nor Alma Adams have endorsed the bill. Yet they joined the overwhelmingly approved House of Representatives anti-Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions resolution that is designed to suppress free speech and dissent over the occupation.

\* CALLS work. (For more information on actions you can take, text Miriam Thompson at 917-825-0884

### **Volunteering with Annunciation House in El Paso Texas** – Fran Schindler

Having found myself more and more concerned about the situation of migrants at the Southern Border, I made the decision to travel to San Antonio and volunteer with the Nonprofit Shelter, Annunciation House. I learned of their work from several of the activists I have been involved with over the past three years while protesting in Washington DC to: Save Obama Care, Keep Kavanaugh off the Supreme Court and Stop the Tax Bill.



I had no clear idea of what my job would be. I just knew that if you could pay your own way there and agreed to stay for at least 2 weeks you would receive a place to

sleep and food. So, I found myself on SWA to El Paso on April 2, 2019. Prior to leaving I had mailed several large boxes of small pillows, t-shirts, art supplies and toys for the children. Things seemed chaotic for a couple of days. However, I like it when I say, what would you like me to do? and someone says, refill the lemonade. Easy, it really is the small things that

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count. You get the hang of it. There were at least 3 permanent staff for day and evening shifts. Lots of volunteers, some local, some from other cities like me. Once you learn the process you just do what needs to be done.

Every day the lead staff person gets a call regarding how many people we will receive from the detention centers. Some days 1,000-1,500 people might be released. Since Annunciation House has several shelters in the area each shelter receives a certain number. We usually received 70-80 people a day. One day we received 100.

They come by bus. When they get off the bus they line up and the lead person explains the rules and the process that will take place. Food is brought in daily by church groups and other local volunteers, who also dish up the food. Then we set up and serve the meal. There is always lemonade and water as people are incredibly thirsty. After eating one of us always goes around and cuts off the wrist bands everyone is wearing. They were always so anxious and grateful to get them off. Some also came wearing ankle monitors which they had to keep on until their court dates were finished. After meals they lined up to give us information on their sponsors, then their sponsors were called and told to buy a bus or plane ticket for the next day.

The next step they received their room number and then lined up for a visit to the "Ropa" room- aka clothing room where everyone got a clean change of clothes and toiletries and perhaps shoes if they needed them and we had a supply. Everyone needed shoelaces and hair ties as these are always taken in detention.

Along the way they stopped at the "Clinica" if they needed medication for themselves or their children. Since I have a nursing background, I spent a lot of time in there. It took a while for me to realize that diarrhea is pretty much the same in Spanish and English. My only regret was not being fluent in Spanish, but thanks to the Google translator I did OK. There were some sick babies and we had to send two to the hospital. In our spare time we filled bags with fruit, sandwiches, snacks, toys for kids, for everyone leaving the next day, many of whom were going to have long bus trips. Just about everyone left the shelter within 24 hours of arrival unless there was a problem getting their tickets for travel.

These were all families with children. Some were Moms with sons alone, and Dads with daughters alone; sometimes intact families. But almost to a person they

were so grateful. And the gift to me was the opportunity to do the work of my heart.

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WILPF's weekly radio show, **WILPF's WAKE-UP CALL** at Carrboro's community-operated radio station, **WCOM 103.5**



**FM**, features social justice newsmakers, elected officials, and community leaders; pictured here are Lori Hoyt and Audgunn Oltedal. The show airs **every Wednesday at 5-6PM**; you can also livestream [www.wcom.org](http://www.wcom.org). Hope you will listen/watch – and let your friends know too!

The program is also broadcast on **The Peoples Channel Tuesdays at noon,**

**Thursdays at 10pm and Fridays at 6am**– TWC Channel 8 in Chapel Hill, TWC Channel 4 in Carrboro and TWC 18 in Durham. And good news for those who miss the radio show or television broadcasts - you can now view it on YouTube at [WILPF Wake Up Call!](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

Call Lori Hoyt, Program Coordinator – 984-999-0956 with suggestions for guests and issues.

- Crew - Lori Hoyt, host and program coordinator
- Emily O'Hare, videographer
- Iris Schwitzer, soundboard

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Triangle WILPF tabling at Carrboro July 4 – thanks to Fran Schindler, Margaret Herring, Larry Chadbourne (pictured) & Lori Hoyt, Lucy Lewis, Nancy Glover, Liz Evans, Dick Paddock, Miriam Thompson



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## CALENDAR

*\*check Triangle WILPF FB page for other events as they develop or subscribe to our bi-weekly email calendar*

**SEPTEMBER 20 -Global Climate Strike**, Halifax Mall, Raleigh, 12-2:30pm. Volunteer with the WILPF table; all business as usual needs to stop on that day!

**SEPTEMBER 21 - Chapel Hill Carrboro NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet**, Sheraton CH, 6-9pm. Bree Newsome, who took down the confederate flag in SC, is keynote speaker. Tickets: [www.chapelhillcarrboronaacp.com](http://www.chapelhillcarrboronaacp.com)

**NOVEMBER 1-3- 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Greensboro Massacre**. Info: [www.greensborolessonsfortoday.org](http://www.greensborolessonsfortoday.org)

**NOVEMBER 11 - 1619 Collective Memory(ies) Symposium**, Stone Center, UNC. This half-day symposium will bring together “conversants” from communities thrown together as a result of the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

**NOVEMBER 16 –Soil Collection, Libations & Remembrance Ceremony**, Rogers Road Community, CH, 2-6pm



WILPF c/o Lucy Lewis  
119 Oak Street  
Carrboro, NC 27510

**MEMBERSHIP TIME! Join any time. *Renewal dues are due each January.***

**In these times, it is especially critical that we strengthen our collective voices and actions. Join us!**

Triangle WILPF meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month (except February and July), 10am-12noon, Chapel Hill Friends Meeting, 531 Raleigh Road, Chapel Hill. Check out our WILPF Triangle FB page and website [www.wilpftriangle.org](http://www.wilpftriangle.org)

Your local dues fund this newsletter, make our membership in WCOM & The People’s Channel possible and support our organizing. National dues help make WILPF a strong national and international voice for peace & freedom. Thank you!

### **WILPF TRIANGLE DUES**

Sliding Scale: \$12-35

Youth/Student: \$5

Make checks payable to: WILPF-Triangle

Mail to: WILPF Triangle Branch

c/o Margaret Herring

201 NC 54, Apt 610

Carrboro, NC 27510

### **WILPF US DUES**

\$35

Annual dues can be paid online by going to:

[www.wilpfus.org](http://www.wilpfus.org) and clicking Join/Renew Membership  
US dues will bring you the Peace & Freedom publication, voting rights for WILPF Board elections and support the work of Branches and Issue Committees nationwide as well the International WILPF Sections – ***please join to strengthen our national and international organization!***

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