

Three Questions for Three WILPF Board Candidates

The Nominating Committee held a Meet-the-Candidates conference call on November 4, but because there were few members in attendance, the committee decided to ask the candidates to respond to our questions in written form so all members can access their answers. Here are the questions and the candidates' responses.

Eileen Kurkoski, Candidate for Secretary of the Board

1. How do you plan to fulfill your position's role?

The best way I know to fulfill my secretarial role is to make it a high priority in my life. This means I will make an extra effort to learn quickly what I need to know and do, with the president prepare the agenda for meeting ahead of time, take accurate notes at regular and special meetings, ask clarifying questions and get notes out in a timely manner. I will also contact national chairs to collect their committee notes for archives, and carefully study issues prior to voting.

2. What will you do, as a board member, to maintain the financial stability of WILPF?

There are a few things I would do to maintain the financial stability of WILPF. Personally, I will contribute more to WILPF yearly than I have in the past. Locally I will continue to help a fellow branch member to reach out & fund raise from existing and potential members. For example, we will soon be sending out invitational newsletters I created to gather members and their friends for our annual retreat. We remind those we invite to pay national dues. At the retreat I will encourage having an event to bring new people in. I also plan to get more involved with the national membership committee.

When finances come up during board discussions I will be sure to listen carefully and understand the budget and any new expenses that are being proposed so I can vote intelligently. Overall I think our organization needs to grow and be careful how we spend our limited funds.

3. How would you communicate about your national work with WILPF members?

I think communicating about my national work with WILPF members and even non-members requires me to be an ambassador for our organization. This means listening carefully to their interests, concerns and wishes. It means being pleasant and informative; the latter requires me to keep abreast of what is going on nationally and reporting what I learn in my Boston branch meetings, and sending the branch meeting notes out so those who did not attend the

meetings know what is going on. The same would be true communicating with members I meet outside the branch.

I think it's important to focus on the principles of our work rather than personalities so I would avoid gossip and emphasize what is being worked on and accomplished nationally and regionally.

Teresa Castillo, Candidate for Program Chair (2-year position)

1. How do you plan to fulfill your position's role?

Since the Board has 2 Program Chair positions, if elected, I plan to work closely with the other Program Chair to realize a closer collaboration and connection between the Board and our members. I plan to work with Branches, plus At-Large members, to support the program activities our members are focused on. Communication and input is important. I plan to seek advice from the current Program Chair, Maureen Eke whose term is ending, and I'd like to connect with members to gather ideas on how best to move forward. As Program Chair, I'd like to know how our members address the Issue Committees at the local level. What issues they are focused on and why. Gathering that information will be a tool to bring more solidarity across branches and the possibility of more united actions in the future. I also hope to help bring a stronger, united feeling between National and local levels.

2. What will you do, as a board member, to maintain the financial stability of WILPF?

As a Board member, I accept the obligation to bring in a minimum of \$500 each year. To accomplish this, I will work to recruit new members and will seek out other funding sources. I also plan to let my branch know the importance in helping to support WILPF US financially, by giving more than the minimum annual dues when possible. I feel it is important that all members understand the needs of our organization at the National level and how this will translate into more support and stability at the local level as well. Each of us benefits from the longevity of WILPF US as an organization, so it is up to each of us to help support the organization financially. As with all things, open communication and transparency helps our members understand the financial state of our National organization.

3. How would you communicate about your national work with WILPF members?

WILPF members are spread throughout the country and not all use (or like) the same form of communication, so this is a challenge. I think that it helps if we can keep our website updated with program information and Issue Committee updates. Through communication with Branches and members, I hope to build a broader desire to connect at all levels.

Barbara Nielsen, Candidate for Program Chair (3-year position)

1. How do you plan to fulfill your position's role?

Because there are two equal Chair positions for the Program Committee, I am looking forward to working collaboratively in this leadership role with my “partner” Chair, as well as working collaboratively with issues committee chairs, branches leadership and at-large members, and, also, with other members of the national board team (including consultants), in achieving ways to increase the effectiveness of our programs and activism and community, national and international visibility of our organization, mission and vision.

2. What will you do, as a board member, to maintain the financial stability of WILPF?

I anticipate working in conjunction with other board members and the financial committees (development and finance) to seek greater membership financial support as well as more grant funding and donations and explore ways to maximize the value of the services that we are using. Every candidate and sitting member of the board has agreed to be collectively responsible, with the full board, for the fiscal health of the organization and to work toward a goal of raising \$500 per year per board member, with the assistance of trainings, staff, and other board members; and along with many others in WILPF, I have also given many hundreds of hours of volunteer time as well as goods and services toward furtherance of our program goals and mission of peace and social justice.

3. How would you communicate about your national work with WILPF members?

The Program Chairs have traditionally communicated, outside the board structure itself, mostly with the issues committees chairs and other members of the Program Committee about our program work; an anticipated priority is to expand communications about program strategies and activities to embrace the entire membership in branches as well as at-large, taking better advantage of existing communications tools and exploring other alternatives. I have for some time expressed a desire to work with other members to find avenues to engage branches and at-large members in the work of the issues committees in more direct ways and have confirmed that both of us who are candidates for the Program Chair positions are in agreement about this as a priority going forward. I have access to email and am demonstrated that I have been and will continue to be willing to communicate with this and other technologies, including popular social media such as Facebook and Twitter (and our new “Twitter Storm” actions in support of our “End the Whole Nuclear Era” campaign and our current petition to the POTUS and US Senate to support the UN Nuclear Ban Treaty (via

signing the treaty by the POTUS after consent of the Senate – a project I am actively working on with other members and our excellent social media consultant – and which we hope will serve as a template for member activism on other of our issues going forward!).