

Maine War Tax Resistance Actions--2018

This year seemed like more of a struggle than last year in terms of organizing events. Perhaps, since the focus has been on connecting with college populations, getting permission is more time consuming. In any event, we have realized it is important for everyone to step up and decide when and where they will do outreach during WTR season no later than March 1st because that is when deadlines for newsletters and media work starts to happen. So, please start thinking now about what you would like to do next year!

This year we had a calendar listing in the M, the Portland Press Herald's entertainment insert. WBFY of Belfast interviewed Alan Clemence (see link below). Channels 8 and 13 expressed interest and then did not appear. We had great coverage by Channel 5 in Portland (see link below). Morgana Warner-Evans entered all of our events on various media calendars throughout the state. The hope this year is to call some of the major outlets and ask them what we have to do to get a feature.

These are the reports from around the state:

1. Bangor – Earth Day

Alan Clemence requested to have a booth at Earth Day. We were turned down due to our issue being too political.

2. Bar Harbor – College of the Atlantic (COA)

An activist from Ellsworth tabled in the cafeteria. He had conversations with four interested students, and one other student took a pamphlet. Also, the baked stuffed haddock was delicious.

3. Biddeford – University of New England

The university waived their \$150 fee to table at their March career expo. However, they would not allow a WTR in a polar bear suit at the event. We connected and had conversations with over 50 students. We also connected with the dean, who was very supportive until we asked to table a second time at the cafeteria. We have also connected with the person who handles internships at the school. She has said we can table at her fair in the fall.

4. Belfast Coop

Margaret de Rivera, Cathy Minks representing Waldo County Peace and Justice, and Alan Clemence tabled from 10am-3pm on 4/7/18 at the coop. They started out in the snow but luckily the weather improved from there. They had 8-12 substantive conversation and 8 people signed up for more information. WBFY interviewed Alan:

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/wbfy/shows/Forum/Alan+Clemence.mp3>

5. Brunswick – Bowdoin College

Four of us worked hard from different angles to get permission to table on Bowdoin's campus. We hear that the CIA does heavy recruiting there. Finally, The Bowdoin Climate Change group responded to the Maine WTR Resource Center and agreed to sponsor us on campus. After agreeing, they withdrew their sponsorship and told us to contact the Democratic Party on campus instead. We explained that we have a fiscal agent that is a 501c3 and that we are a nonpartisan organization. We did not hear from them

again. We do not know why they did not sponsor us. If anyone has any good connections at Bowdoin, please let us know.

6. Brunswick Post Office

PeaceWorks distributed 100 handouts showing the 2017 Obama discretionary budget (54% for military) and the proposed 2019 budget on the other side (61% for military). They had wonderful conversations with more than half of those people, and felt it was a fine bit of public education.

7. Damariscotta Post Office

Suzanne Hedrick spent two days leafletting and talking with numerous people in her community. She is a well-known figure there, so conversations were many. She asked a military couple if they would rather have healthcare or warfare and they said both. She also spoke with a young man intent on joining the Marines and tried to talk him out of it.

8. Farmington – University of Maine

Arthur Harvey reports that the tabling went well. He handed out about 250 flyers. Two young men stayed and questioned him for several minutes. One was a local fellow from Bethel with some farm experience, and he was intrigued by the possibility of raking blueberries this summer.

9. Lewiston – University of Southern Maine

Professor Chris Holden had 8 substantive conversations with students--some undergraduates, including one intending to be a teacher, preferably in Native American schools, some in the Master's program in occupational therapy.

10. Lewiston – Bates College

We worked really hard to get permission to table at Bates. Jason Rawn arrived at the appointed hour and the school would not allow him to set up until the student sponsor appeared. Unfortunately, she was waiting for Jason at a different location. We will try again next year.

11. Machias – University of Maine

Lynn Bradbury tabled on two days for nearly three hours each. The reception was good, as she admonished the quickly hurrying by students to “think very critically about any mainstream media info you are receiving about Syria,” many nodded in seeming knowing assent. Many passed by without making eye contact including history professors.

She was able to hand out materials to about 80 students, even many who at first said they had no time. She gave them pre-folded packets with WTR information (mostly the pie chart showing where tax dollars go) wrapped around a 911 truth quiz, an article by Paul Craig Roberts on Why Propaganda Trumps Truth, and copies of MLK's Beyond Vietnam speech given April 4, 1967, a year to the day before his assassination. Many students came back to talk, especially foreign students, older ones, and Native Americans. She had 10-12 substantive conversations.

She explained that we are being bamboozled into another CIA war for regime change and resource extraction, as occurred due to September 11, 2001. She believes it is as important to demonstrate to

people the modus operandi for the endless despicable wars as it is to talk about tax resistance. While it is admittedly a moral issue, she thinks that reaching minds, especially those of students who have not yet thought much about paying taxes and who probably don't readily understand the rationale behind limiting one's income in order to lower the taxes assessed as they face paying off humongous educational loans, it is aided by an appeal to the events of any given day (i.e., permanent war propaganda and lies about (bogus) chemical attacks). She also referred to how Russia bashing is instrumental to the frenzy for another cold war is also useful (to the government and the military-industrial complex).

12. Orono – University of Maine

Larry Dansinger reported that “we had a total of 714 pennies (about 72 people give or take) at UMaine Memorial Union, Orono, 4/17/2018.” The penny poll results were as follows:

Environment 120 Pennies 17%
Interest on Debt 26 4%
Food/Agriculture 74 10%
Defense 31 4%
Vets Benefits 65 9%
General Govt. 20 3%
Transportation 48 7%
Health 141 20%
Housing 37 5%
Education 152 21%

Total 714 100%

13. Portland – University of Southern Maine

The table at University of Southern Maine was more successful than we anticipated. The school did not allow us to table at the cafeteria, which is a much better location. We now know for next year that we need to request a specific spot. In any event, the foot traffic was fairly constant until 1pm. We spoke with at least 32 students and provided them with packets on peace jobs, war tax resistance and truth in military recruiting. Four signed up for more information on the Youth & Militarism Project. We connected with at least two activist students who will be on campus next year.

14. Portland – Lobsterman Park across from Senator Susan Collins' Office

We held likely the first outdoor lunchtime concert in Portland this season. Professor Gray Cox volunteered to bring his Downeast music group, Fire in the Commons, to Portland to play original songs that take inspiration from Pete Seeger, Violeta Parra, Sweet Honey in the Rock, Emma's Revolution, Will I Am and Ladysmith Black Mambazo. Their lyrics cover topics such as climate change, war, peace, diversity, immigration, consumerism, hope, community building and ecological stewardship. Channel 5, which has a service area of 70,000 people in the Greater Portland region, recorded the event. Here is the link: <http://ctn5.org/content/maine-war-tax-resisters>

A WTR in a polar bear outfit joined us (see video) to draw the connection between the military and its huge carbon footprint on the planet. We made a connection with the Maine People's Alliance, which

also sponsors a tax day event. In past years, according to a volunteer, WTR day events were co-hosted with them. We will try that next year. This year the co-host was Veterans for Peace (VFP). Speakers included representatives from the Southern Maine Workers' Center, VFP, PeaceAction and the Maine WTR Resource Center. Representatives from Black Lives Matter, the immigrant community and 350.org sent their regrets. We had conversations with at least 30 people. Five signed the clipboard for more information. Hundreds received leaflets. The location was much better for pedestrian traffic than our locations at Congress Square and Monument Square Parks over the last couple of years.

15. Rome – Youth Activism Gathering

Morgana Warner-Evans led a discussion at the Youth Activism Gathering on Sunday, April 15. The discussion focused on the local impacts of US militarism. She showed a video clip of a student talking about military recruiting in her high school and clips from a documentary about police militarization *Do Not Resist*. 10 Participants were asked what they thought of when they heard the word militarism and what their experiences with militarism had been. They talked about how the high cost of healthcare and education in the United States pressure young people to join the military, and the pressure they and their friends experienced from military recruiters in high school. One participant who was Turkish pointed out that the view of the US military as exceptional and beneficial is not shared in other countries. She had a literature table with WTR information and Youth & Militarism (YMP) packets. One student took a packet.

16. South Portland – Southern Maine Community College (SMCC)

Morgana Warner-Evans tabled at SMCC in the student center from 3-4 pm on Monday, April 2, with WTR and YMP Information. The campus Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) sponsored the table and will sponsor future ones. A representative of the SPLC worked at the table with her. They spoke with 6 students about what militarism is, how it impacts our lives, and the work that the YMP is doing. Two students added their names on the YMP mailing list.

17. Unity – Unity College

This was the first year a Unity College and the reception was positive. Bill Whitman, John McIntire and Lew McGregor reached out. They handed out small cards and said "Happy Tax Day" to people, which caught their attention. They spoke with the college president, and Iraq war veteran, janitors, students and teachers. They were located near the college café and bathrooms, which turned out to be a prime spot. People were very engaged and they had 10-12 substantive conversations.