

**2014 Report on Conscience Canada Annual General Meeting, held March 29 at 2 pm at Friends House, 60 Lowther Avenue, Toronto, Ontario**

Nine members and three guests attended this year's Conscience Canada (CC) AGM with 12 additional proxies. Mary Groh, President of the board, presided over the meeting. Persons willing to remain as board members and who were accepted by the meeting were: Dave Bechtel of Kitchener ON, Mary Groh of Toronto ON, Anna Kirkpatrick of Nelson BC, Murray Lumley of Toronto ON, Jan Slakov of Salt Spring Island BC, Dwyer Sullivan of Kitchener ON, Eric Unger of Winnipeg MB and Don Woodside of Dundas ON. Treasurer Dave Bechtel distributed the 2013 Financial statements and the auditors were appointed for 2014. Don Woodside gave a report on the 'Final Transition to New Federal Rules for Non-Profit Organizations which govern Conscience Canada. He reviewed the new Bylaws most of which are the same as in the past and the Articles of Continuance. Both of these documents were accepted as governing Conscience Canada by a larger than 2/3 majority of the members present, including proxy votes. The new Bylaws and Articles will be posted elsewhere on this website.

**'Training The Next Generation Of Peace Activists'** at 3 pm with additional guests present:

Board member Dwyer Sullivan with the assistance of Father Bob Holmes, and Ann Murphy, retired history teacher, with Ann's husband Jack Murphy, made presentations about how to work with youth "to co-create communities of leaders, especially among youth, through action, reflection and friendship. With others we seek to overcome the forces militating against life, through the development of authentic relationships, critical awareness and a community of justice and love."

Bob showed two short videos about young people who are dedicated to peace-making, 1. about an Afghani Youth group active for Peace in Kabul. Some of their signs said, "We can be friends" ; "Afghan 'talk- of - peace' must walk"; "Oh how we wish to live without wars!"; "Waking up for the Global Day of Listening to Afghans." 2. Israeli conscientious objector young people who say that Israel is occupying Palestine. They all spent time in prison for their stand and speaking out.

Bob asked: how can we motivate our own young people to be committed to peace and opposition to war? Ann - presented segments of the film 'Oh What A Lovely War', about WWI directed by Richard Attenborough. It is a biting satire on the futility of war as observed by the very soldiers who were sent to die and who really created this anti-war music. We sang some of the songs from the film. Ann used the music and words from this musical to teach her classes about war - the futility of it.

Dwyer - spoke about ideas for teachers and had a number of teaching aid resources in his handout. He spoke of learning by action, not just by thinking, going and seeing and experiencing poverty and oppression. He has taken many students and now adults to the School of Americas protest, at Fort Benning Georgia and to Mexico and Central America. He referred to the Anti-recruitment resources produced by Matthew Bailey Dick when Matthew worked for Mennonite Central Committee. Dwyer said that more women are killed by men (they know) than died in Afghanistan, yet there is no 'Highway of Heroines'. Dwyer belongs to Youth Corps which developed the training initiatives and resources listed in his handout - 'Training The Next Generation of Peace 111Activists'. He recommended to first make friends with your family and then with other kids wherever they are.

Mothers Day began as a protest against war by Julia Ward Howe, after the American Civil War. Peace Quest is a new initiative for exposing the upcoming government sponsorship of celebrating WWI as some kind of glorious thing when it was a needless human tragedy. Jesus message was about non-violence and Dwyer told of Father Charles McCarthy, of Notre Dame University in South Bend Indiana, who left the school when an ROTC was allowed on the campus of Notre Dame. Dwyer spoke of Father Bob's pilgrimages to Palestine where he has taken many people to see the whole story of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Dwyer mentioned his yearly Walks to expose male violence against women as well as Children's International Summer Villages and Camp Micah, a social justice camp to train youth leaders. Dwyer works with many small student groups.

Thanks to Dwyer, Father Bob and Ann for their wonderful presentations.

## Conscience Canada Report for 2013

This year we marked the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the incorporation of Conscience Canada in Victoria B.C. and the 10<sup>th</sup> of its reorganized headquarters in Toronto. These two milestones were recognized at a low-key celebration with a decorated cake at the April 6 AGM held at Danforth Mennonite Church in Toronto's east end.

Although the organization has functioned well for 30 years we, along with all Canadian non-profit organizations, have been required to re-work our Articles and By-Laws to be sure they are in compliance with the Federal Government's new Not-for-profit Corporations Act, and this to be done by October 2014. This meant scrutinizing the instructions kit put out by Industry Canada and our own Articles and By-Laws, a time-consuming and tedious piece of work which Don Woodside undertook and worked hard at. The revised version of the Articles of Continuance were presented to the April 6 AGM and were accepted. We continued the work on the By-Laws before too much momentum would be lost, and the Board considered and agreed to the revisions Don proposed, so that the work was basically done a year ahead of the deadline. A huge vote of thanks is due to the board members for the time and mental demands this required, and especially to Don Woodside for taking the initiative.

In order to fulfil one of the requirements we made a special effort to get a definitive membership list from our data base. A letter went out in November to 1100 persons and about two dozen organizations on our mailing list, and the responses to this mailing by the end of 2013 indicated that 190 people wished to be considered members. Following a reminder in January that number has more than doubled.

Our data base and the website were given into the competent hands of Todd Lumley, who has been very helpful in organizing these technically demanding basic tools and in producing information in rapid response to our requests. We feel very fortunate to have his expertise. We also had our DVD revised early in the year, so that those who view it on the website get more recent statistics.

Prior to the biennial meeting of Conscience and Peace Tax International (CPTI) in Bogota in February, Dwyer Sullivan helped us find a young Colombian teacher to represent CC. The Colombian organization had arranged a wonderful program. Unfortunately, at that meeting the CPTI organization became unravelled. The headquarters in Belgium has since been closed and a new organization has taken over with headquarters in UK. Because several of the American members felt the change was not handled in Bogota strictly according to the by-laws, another general meeting was called for September. This teleconference had only four participants, including Conscience Canada represented by your president. Since the corporation in Belgium had already been dissolved, the objections and grievances voiced seemed largely irrelevant, but at least they got into the official records of CPTI. Conscience Canada has yet to hear from the new entity about the status of our membership.

Our organization got some unexpected promotion in the Yukon when Dwyer Sullivan was there visiting family in March. He addressed a couple of ecumenical groups, including a men's breakfast club, and a senior class in a RC high school, using our DVD, handing out literature, and explaining our purpose and how to re-direct military tax with our Peace Tax Return.

In October a Peace and Justice Conference in Waterloo, Ontario included a seminar on withholding military tax. Don Woodside agreed to make a presentation and take part in a panel at that conference. Jack Payden-Travers of the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund, Washington, DC met with several CC board members after the conference to discuss common issues. In both Canada and USA there is a definite decline in support for peace tax redirection and some new way of promotion is needed. Social media was named as having a potential which should be cultivated. Anna Kirkpatrick has been working in this area and knows some of the problems which can arise with Facebook, for example. The hope is that she can involve the members who have expressed an interest in using social media to promote CC.

The traditional type of promotion has continued—a table for display of literature at the Nagasaki Day commemoration in Toronto and at the Gandhi Festival in Hamilton, ads sold to print and on-line magazines, and

articles written for periodicals and the website (thanks, Eric Unger). The gathering of material and publication of two interesting newsletters yearly is the on-going but far from the only important task accomplished by our seasoned editor, Jan Slakov. Murray Lumley has been working with Ceasefire.ca to send out an ad to their e-mail data base during the 2014 tax season. This is expensive advertising, but provides us with an extensive and sympathetic target body of Canadians; and with an automatic response for all who click on the ad it could find for us a number of new supporters and even peace trusters. Our treasurer reports that in 2013 there were just 17 persons who made deposits in our Peace Tax Trust Fund.

The board accomplishes much of its work by e-mail correspondence, and held conference calls in June and November, in addition to meeting in person on April 6 prior to the AGM. It is a joy to get together but not feasible for those in the West to get to Ontario very often.

We appreciate what our members have done or could do in writing letters to the editor, in visiting their MP's, in handing out CC literature. In this anniversary year of the beginning of the disastrous World War I let us watch for opportunities to remind people of the evils and waste of war. Let us point out to them the small but positive step away from war which they can take while filing their income tax.

Mary Groh, president, for  
David Bechtel  
Anna Kirkpatrick  
Murray Lumley  
Jan Slakov  
Dwyer Sullivan  
Eric Unger  
Don Woodside

Say not the struggle nought availeth,  
The labour and the wounds are vain,  
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,  
And as things have been they remain.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,  
Seem here no painful inch to gain,  
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,  
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by eastern windows only,  
When daylight comes, comes in the light.  
In front, the sun climbs slow, how slowly,  
But westward look, the land is bright!

*Arthur Hugh Clough (1819-61)*