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# mondial

Published in Canada by the World Federalists, a non-profit organization that advocates more just and effective global governance through the application of the principles of democratic federalism to world affairs.

DECEMBER  
2016

## Branch News (December 2016)

### Montreal



*Bruce Broomhall is introduced by Montreal branch president Claire Adamson*

The Marie-Berthe Dion Issues Action Group of the Montreal Branch meets monthly for brief discussions on a current issue, followed by writing letters, usually to government officials. The September meeting considered two issues: the need for Canada to amend its legislation on cluster munitions and showing support for Canada to vote in favour of a UN General Assembly plan to abolish nuclear weapons. These topics were chosen in recognition of the International Day of Peace. In October, the group discussed what Canada could do in support of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which Canada signed in May 2016. In May, the Montreal Branch, along with the Montreal chapter of the Council of Canadians cohosted a presentation on “Conflict, Human Rights and the Mining Industry” with UQAM law professor Bruce Broomhall leading the discussion.

### Toronto



*The new Toronto Branch Executive at October 30 meeting. Left to right: Nic Baird, Secretary; Norman Dyson, Honorary President; Rose Dyson, Communications Director; Tom Simunovic, Vice President; Walter Dorn, Director (WFMC President); Helmut Burkhardt, President; Melanie Milanich, Director; John Daniele, Membership Director; Bill Freeman, Treasurer; Renate Burkhardt, Guest photo: John Cowan*

The efforts underway to re-establish a branch in Toronto have been successful and, over September and October the new branch has had several meetings. About twenty people attended the first Toronto meeting in September which included a presentation by WFMC President Dr Walter Dorn and a discussion on forming the

branch. Two following meetings have been held to determine the Branch's constitution and executive. Helmut Burkhardt will serve as Branch President.

## **Vancouver**

Vancouver Branch have regular meetings the third Thursday of each month. The Branch's November meeting was on the topic of Political Engagement and Change and the question of whether civic engagement can create real positive change, especially without [money](#). In October, Human Rights lawyer Cristian Fonseca-Quezada led a discussion on restorative justice, conflict resolution and the peace process in Colombia. The August and September meetings, featured reports on discussion held at the WPMC meetings and World Social Forum in Montreal. Branch Vice-President Duncan Graham reported on the panel discussion on how to transform the United Nations. Panelists included Branch President, Vivian Davidson, who also spoke at the WSF panel. The WSF presentation on a UN Emergency Peace Service was also reviewed at a Vancouver Branch meeting.

In July, the Branch had a presentation and discussion on Brexit and prospects for the European Union. At the June meeting, Branch President Vivian Davidson reported on her meetings with European World Federalists in Brussels and Democratic World Federalists in San Francisco.

In May, Branch member Larry Kazdan, CPA, gave a presentation on Modern Monetary Theory (MMT) and some of the myths surrounding the limits applicable to sovereign states in the areas of economic policy and finance, and how MMT challenges the status quo of environmental decay, aging infrastructure and high unemployment.

## **Victoria**

In October Bill Pearce spoke to the group about the upcoming vote in the General Assembly on multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations and why it is important for Canada to reverse its present policy and support the resolution. He assessed the risks of accidental use of nuclear weapons associated with NATO and nuclear weapons states policies as insight as to why the doomsday clock has moved to three minutes to midnight and trending closer.

In September, the Victoria Branch had a discussion on the dangers of the nuclear arsenal modernization programs and the UN General Assembly humanitarian pledge for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons.

Helen Jaccard, of the U.S. Veterans for Peace, and moving force behind the restoration of the peace boat Golden Rule, spoke to the branch about the dangers posed by ongoing nuclear build-ups. The Golden Rule first sailed in 1958 with a Quaker crew, attempting to stop the testing of nuclear weapons in the Pacific. This summer it made a publicity tour up the U.S. west coast and as far as Victoria and Vancouver.