



April 2023 Newsletter



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Want to donate to Ploughshares Calgary? If you haven't yet made your 2023 donation, please consider doing so soon! Email office@ploughshares.ca for more information on how to donate.

ARE YOU READY FOR BBQ SEASON?





Ploughshares Calgary Society is holding a Spring fundraiser with Spolumbo's!

Help us continue working for "a just world at peace"

Please have your orders completed before April 28th



Contact Us:



SPOLUMBO'S FUNDRAISER 2023

Spolumbo's meat products are gluten free (with one exception: the meatballs are NOT GF), and made with natural ingredients, free of binders, fillers, and preservatives.

As you know, non-profit societies such as ours depend greatly on donations from generous supporters like you. If you are able, we ask that you please help Ploughshares Calgary Society survive and help us continue with our important and ongoing work.

If you are interested in supporting our current fundraiser, please click on the order forms below:

[Order Form A](#)

[Order Form B](#)

Orders and payments can be accepted through email (e-transfer using office@ploughsharescalgary.ca) or physical drop off at our office (cash, cheque, or credit card) located at Parkdale United Church (2919 8th Avenue, NW).

We please ask that orders be finalized before April 28th, as orders will be due to arrive on May 16th. Orders will be available for pick-up at Parkdale United Church (2919 8th Avenue, NW). More details for pick-up times will be available soon. Please note that you are responsible to pick-up your own orders as we are unable to provide delivery services. Spolumbo's and Ploughshares Calgary Society are not responsible for late or no-show pick-ups.

If you have any questions or need help placing your order, please email our office at office@ploughsharescalgary.ca or contact our office manager, Haylie, at (403) 828-8274.



HAYLIE'S CORNER

I was trying to figure out what I would like to discuss in this month's Haylie's corner when another mass shooting took place in the United States and my thoughts have become consumed by the unthinkable acts of violence that have been taking place to our neighbours down south. According to the New York Times, The United States has already experienced at least 145 mass shootings this year alone (New York Times, April 10, 2023). Last year they totalled 647 mass shootings (New York Times, 2023). And yet, the lawmakers in the United States cease to make any changes regarding gun control for various reasons, but mostly because it's written in the United States Constitution. The Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution gives Americans the right to bear arms, and about a third of U.S. adults say they personally own a gun (Pew Research Centre, 2021).

While "Thoughts & Prayers" are well intentioned, those alone are not going to do anything to save adults and children from gun violence. Until there is understanding from both political parties within the United States, nothing is going to change. How many more violent acts need to take place before true action is taken? How much more innocent blood needs to be shed before lawmakers in the United States decide that enough is enough? I for one cannot understand why action hasn't been taken yet. An example of swift action can be seen in Australia, where in 1996, Tasmania experienced a mass shooting where 35 people lost their lives. Australian governments united to remove semi-automatic and pump-action shotguns and rifles from civilian possession, greatly decreasing the amount of gun violence in their country (Chapman S, Alpers P, Agho K, et al, 2006).

My hope has to lie with the younger generation, fondly referred to in the media as "Gen Z". I have seen countless videos on social media of youth standing up to their local governments demanding change and bravely speaking out about injustice. Soon these students will be of voting age, and I can see that a new wave of bright, young, and resilient people will soon be the ones to have their voices heard and spearhead change.



WAR AND ENVIRONMENT

Summarized by Trudy Govier

Report by Susan Ormiston, CBC, February 20, 2023.

The Ukrainian environmental protection minister Ruslan Strilets described enormous damage to air, ground, and sea, due to the war. Included are serious air pollution, burnt forests, land mines, damage to the Black Sea, and killings and injuries of animals – including, of course, human beings. A case may be made to recover from Russia costs based on this horrendous damage.

Note: Environmental protection and successful climate policy require peace.



THE LIFE OF DANIEL ELLSBERG

Summarized by Trudy Govier

Now 91, the famous whistleblower Daniel Ellsberg has been diagnosed with terminal pancreatic cancer and likely has only a few months to live. In 1971 Daniel Ellsberg famously leaked the Pentagon Papers to the New York Times. The papers revealed that the U.S. government and its agencies had been over-confident and very deceptive about the conduct of the controversial Viet Nam war. Ellsberg was legally charged for making the substantial leak, but the case against him was deemed a mistrial due to evidence regarding government-ordered wiretappings and break-ins in quest of damaging evidence against him. He had expected to spend his life behind bars and has recently expressed gratitude that he did not. Ellsberg was a persistent and prominent anti-nuclear activist.

A New York Times article on March 26 reported that Ellsberg did not regret devoting his life to peace and anti-nuclear efforts, though he did not regard them as successful.



COURTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

- International. CBC Radio July 12, 2021 featured a story “Legal experts push to make ‘ecocide’ an international crime.” Legal experts with the Stop Ecocide Foundation urged that criminal laws should focus on environmental damage as well as injuries to human beings. They defined ecocide as “unlawful or wanton acts committed with the knowledge that there is a substantial likelihood of severe and widespread or long-term damage to the environment being caused by these acts.”
- In Sweden a court has allowed a group of environmental activists including Greta Thunberg to file a lawsuit against the state, for insufficient action on climate. The group, called Aurora, is youth-led and includes more than 600 people under the age of 26. They are claiming that the failure of the state to implement satisfactory climate policies amounts to a violation of human rights.
- In Switzerland, then at the European Court of Human Rights, there is a case regarding climate change and human rights. (“Swiss court case ties human rights to climate change” by Imogen Foulkes and Adam Durbin, BBC News, March 29, 2023.) A group of some 2000 women, called The Club of Climate Seniors, alleges that Switzerland is violating their human rights because of its failure to have adequate policies regarding climate. There are frequent heatwaves in Switzerland, where temperatures are rising more rapidly than is the global average. The case was in Swiss courts for some six years, got nowhere, and is now at the European Court of Human Rights. The older women claim that more older women die during heat waves, and that they suffer such problems as shortness of breath, asthma, nausea, and weakness, resulting in inability to go out in the heat. With the case, these women, average age 73, hope to set a precedent that climate protection is a human right.



UPCOMING PLOUGHSHARES MEETINGS 2023

- May 10: Life Essential Education: Paving the path for a happy, peaceful and thriving Earth presented by Mahendra Singh.**
 Mahendra (M.A., M.Phil in Non-violence and Peace Studies) has been involved in various social, environmental and educational movements over the years. In his quest for a harmonious, sustainable and holistic way of life, Mahendra explored many philosophies. He lived in a Buddhist monastery as well as an Ashram based on Gandhi's way of life. This quest finally led him to the proposal of the Worldview of Harmonious Coexistence, which inspires, empowers and provides the basis for achieving harmony within, with each other and with the environment. He currently facilitates introductory and advanced courses based on this worldview and is engaged in establishing a Life-Essential model of education. He has also been involved in Happiness Education efforts in India. He and his wife are engaged in planning, writing and implementing curriculum as well as developing an educational forest garden along with their family.



EVENTS

- On Thursday, April 13, at 6:00 PM, The Cat 'n Fiddle Pub will be hosting a charity event in support of Hospice Calgary and the Love For Lewiston Foundation, featuring Chef Nicole Gomes. The Love for Lewiston Foundation creates awareness & brings support to local Spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) families. Tickets are available on [eventbrite.ca](https://www.eventbrite.ca).
- On Thursday, April 20, at 7:30PM, The Pioneer will be hosting IRIS 2023. IRIS 2023 is an evening in support of Emma House featuring a performance by Canadian TV personality and Comedian Jessi Cruickshank. Emma House provides safe haven through supportive transitional housing for expectant mothers experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Tickets available on [eventbrite.ca](https://www.eventbrite.ca).



GOOD NEWS

- Bassie Kargbo, Globe and Mail, March 28, 2023. “I fled Sierra Leone but return to build schools and share my good fortune”. This recent article describes successful efforts building schools in Sierra Leone. There was a bitter civil war in that country from 1990 to 2001, and in that war many schools were destroyed. Beginning in 2009, Canadian- SierraLeonan Bassie Kargbo raised funds and worked to have schools built and rebuilt. His background organization is CanSerra.
- Two Calgary post-secondary students are being recognized for their entrepreneurial prowess as finalists in a national competition for student business owners. UofC student, Athy Ambikkumar, and MRU student, Erin Creegan-Dougherty have made it to the top 12 of the Student Entrepreneur National Competition – presented by HSBC Bank Canada. They will pitch their businesses for the \$10,000 grand prize at the 2023 Enactus Canada National Exposition from May 1 to 3 (Calgary Herald, April 11, 2023).
- A restaurant in Staten Island, New York, has an unlikely kitchen staff. Starting the idea that no one cooks a more heartfelt meal better than a grandmother, the restaurant is home to a rotating cast of grandmothers who cook the meals they’ve been providing their families for generations. Owner Joe Scaravella opened his restaurant back in 2007, and since then has had a rotating group of grandmothers from all different ethnicities come into his kitchen and cook meals for customers three nights a week. (Today.com, March 8th, 2023)





GOOD NEWS

- More than 30 children were reunited with their families in Ukraine after a long operation to bring them back home from Russia where they had been taken from areas occupied by Russian forces during the war. Mothers were seen hugging their children as they crossed the border from Belarus into Ukraine on Friday after a complex rescue mission involving travel across four countries. (Global News, April 8, 2023).
- A Florida grandmother won \$2 million dollars just one day after her daughter completed her final round of cancer treatments. Gimblet's daughter said that her mother had taken out her entire life savings to pay for her cancer treatment. Gimblet said that her winning ticket (a scratch-off game) was the last one that the gas station had. (Global News, April 10th).
- An American skier, Francis Zuber, was skiing in a remote area on Mount Baker when he noticed a flash of red out of the corner of his eye. A snowboarder had fallen into a tree well just a few feet away and was stuck head first in the hole. Zuber can be heard on video asking the snowboarder if they were alright; when he heard no response, he hurried over to the snowboarder, removed his skis and started digging him out with his hands. Zuber successfully dug snowboarder Ian Steger out of the tree well and saved his life. Zuber estimates that Steger had only a few minutes left before suffocating. (CBC News, April 2, 2023).



Photo Credits:
Francis Zuber





CELEBRATING BILL PHIPPS

We are pleased to share news about a fund in memory of Bill Phipps. The Bill Phipps Memorial Fund Launch will take place on May 4 at Hillhurst United in Calgary; it will also be live-streamed so everyone can view some of Bill's final words on video, hear about how the fund will support students carrying on Bill's vision, enjoy music and hear from speakers about their experience with Bill.

We would be very grateful if you would attend, and help promote the event. When you share it in announcements, newsletters or emails, you could include the following so people are aware about the vision behind the Fund:

For more than 40 years The Very Rev. Dr. Bill Phipps championed, and led by example, a style of engaged, prophetic ministry that has been central to the ethos and witness of The United Church of Canada. Bill was all about engaging with the wider community in seeking transformative actions from local to global initiatives.

If you plan to attend in person, please register [here](#) before April 27th.

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
FOUNDATION

CELEBRATING THE LAUNCH OF THE
Bill Phipps Fund

IN MEMORY OF FORMER MODERATOR
THE VERY REV. DR. WILLIAM PHIPPS

Save
THE
date

LIVE & ONLINE
MAY 4, 2023.
5:00PM-7:00PM
CALGARY, AB