



November 2023 Newsletter



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Giving Week With Villages Calgary
P.1

Working For Peace In Wartime
P.2-4

Darkness Of Violence Must Not Kill Hopes For Peace
P.5

Project Ploughshares Statement Regarding Israel and Palestine
P.6

Upcoming Ploughshares Calgary Events
P.7
Events
P.8

Good News
P.9 & P.10

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.

REMEMBER *and* RECOMMIT TO PEACE

**Please bring a notebook, a pen, and a symbol of peace to share*

**WED. NOV 8
7 PM, ZOOM**

Making Peace Visible Again
in our homes, schools and communities

FEATURING ACTIVIST-AUTHOR CAROLYN POGUE



Contact Us:



**VILLAGES
CALGARY**

DON'T MISS

GIVING WEEK

NOV 26 - DEC 2, 2023

**10% of your purchase* at
Villages Calgary during this
event will be donated to
Ploughshares Calgary**

***Rug sales are excluded**



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PLS23



WORKING FOR PEACE IN WARTIME

**Working for Peace in Wartime
Wahat al-Salam / Neve Shalom (Oasis of Peace)
October 16, 2023**

As we experience the fallout from the heinous massacre in the South of the country and watch the looming humanitarian crisis and deaths in Gaza, we reconfirm our belief that only true peace, equality and basic human rights for all can ensure our continued existence in this region.

Dr. Ariela Bairey-Ben Ishay, Chairwoman of the Association of Educational Institutions said: “The brutality that was experienced by all who were exposed to the Hamas attack, both Jews and Arabs, is traumatic and the revenge of Israel on Gaza is utterly devastating.”

In Wahat al-Salam – Neve Shalom, we continue to meet and discuss the situation. Dialogue and discussion are critical to us. As the world around us changes, we need to find our way back to human values, respect and openness to one another’s grief, fears and reactions. The discussions have started with uni-national groups, and it was felt that further uni-national meetings will be needed before binational discussions can take place.

The psychologists and social workers – those who are dealing with the mental health needs of children and adults here in the village and outside of it – organized a healing session in the Spiritual Center to work on supporting others during the crisis, especially children.

The schools have been closed since the beginning of the war, but our primary school staff are not sitting quietly by. Neama, the school principal, is organizing mindfulness lessons online, and she has reached out to children and families who need encouragement and assistance. The schools are meant to reopen gradually, and online classes have been organized. We are trying to get the first and second graders back to the classrooms, as it is more crucial for these children to be with one another and interact on a personal level.



WORKING FOR PEACE IN WARTIME

The School for Peace staff have been working non-stop. “The new situation requires rethinking all of our plans and groups, all of whom are trapped within this process,” said SFP director Dr. Roi Silberberg. They are reaching out to their network of alumni, offering assistance to those in need and asking others in the network to lend a helping hand or ear.

A course they have been planning for some time had its first session on Sunday. This is an online dialogue course between Jewish Israelis and Palestinians living in Europe. Sixteen participants joined from the Netherlands, Britain, Germany, Switzerland and Spain.

One in-person course has been put off for two weeks, the Change Agents in Mixed Cities course, that was meant to have its opening session last Friday and Saturday. But another course, the Climate and Environmental Activists Change Agents’ course, which was already in the middle, held a session by Zoom. The Planners Forum held a Zoom meeting, as well, and SFP staff has invited other to follow suit. The staff has also been working in consulting positions with organizations like hospitals and educational faculty that have binational staffs.

When these immediate crises and days of fighting are over, we’ll remain together committed to our shared path.

Eldad Joffe, the new Chairman of the Municipal Society, started his term dealing with this terrible crisis, and with a new municipal board. In his talks with village members, he reminded us that during wartime, Wahat al-Salam – Neve Shalom is our home and our place to share with our families, and with our Jewish and Arab neighbors. The great pain and shock that has hit Israeli society after the attacks in the South has left many of our members in crisis as they lost friends and loved ones.

The Palestinians and Jews who believe in peace know the situation in Gaza and around is insufferable and we mourn the thousands who have lost their lives or homes, and we see the situation worsen from day to day.



WORKING FOR PEACE IN WARTIME

But as a community, it is important to preserve our values, and at the same time to increase the village security. Some forty village members, men and women, have volunteered for sentry duty.

“It is our duty in these trying times,” he says, “to remember that when these immediate crises and days of fighting are over, we’ll remain together committed to our shared path.”

Ariela Bairey-Ben Ishay has been working with Association staff to help them function during this difficult time. The Association Board has been offering emotional support to heads of institutions and staff, and to parents, to help us all get through the anxiety, fear, grief and pain. “It is not clear how we will all heal from these senseless brutal actions,” she says, adding this was a rude awakening telling us we must work harder still to strengthen the bonds between Palestinians and Jews. Our community and its educational institutions are ever more convinced that we must continue the work and find ways to increase our impact.



Wahat al-Salam – Neve Shalom (pronounced “waahat’ as-salaam/nevei shalom”) is Arabic and Hebrew for Oasis of Peace: is a village of Palestinian and Jewish citizens of Israel dedicated to building justice, peace and equality in the country and the region. Situated equidistant from Jerusalem and Tel Aviv-Jaffa, the community was established in 1970 by Fr. Bruno Hussar on land of the Latrun Monastery. It is a model of equality, mutual respect and partnership that challenges existing patterns of racism and discrimination as well as the continued conflict. The community has established educational institutions based on its ideals and conducts activities focused on social and political change. Many of the village members work in peace, justice and reconciliation projects.

To learn more about Wahat al-Salam / Neve Shalom (Oasis of Peace), click [here](#).





DARKNESS OF VIOLENCE MUST NOT KILL HOPES FOR PEACE

Doug Roche
The Hill Times
October 10th, 2023
Summary

- The attack on Israel by Hamas on Oct. 7, and Israel's attack on Gaza on Oct. 9, coming on top of the continued fighting in the Ukraine war, have set people everywhere on edge over fear of escalating global conflict.
- Roche believes that it is exactly when people's minds are inundated with the brutalities of cascading atrocities that they need to be reminded that the darkness of violence must not kill hopes for peace.
- The reality of these most recent violent attacks is that it grows out of a long-standing conflict, with a 56-year long occupation of Palestine and no political end in sight.
- The Hamas-Israel war and the Russia-Ukraine war have illustrated how regional conflicts in the modern interdependent world have global consequences. Peace remains a global issue. It would take a burst of cooperation among nations to get the world back on track towards peace.
- There is virtually no reporting on the new agenda for peace and the blueprint for sustainable development. António Guterres (UN Secretary-General) recently published "A New Agenda for Peace," which addresses a myriad of challenges the international community faces today. He sets out a comprehensive approach to prevention, linking peace, sustainable development, climate action, and food security.
- The New Agenda for Peace is supported by a new effort made by nations, which last month attended the UN Summit on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 2023 SDG Summit was a call for action to regain the lost ground on the SDGs from the twin blows of the pandemic and the Ukraine war.
- Roche believes that the kind of peace that is possible is common survival. No one is safe in this globalized world until all are safe.

On December 2, from 2:00-3:00, the Honorable Doug Roche will be at Parkdale United Church, speaking about his newly released book, "Keep Hope Alive: Essays for a War-Free World."
 You are warmly invited to join us!



Project Ploughshares condemns atrocities in Israel and Palestine, calls for a ceasefire

OCTOBER 30, 2023

1. We are appalled by, and categorically condemn, the horrific attacks by Hamas against Israel on October 7, 2023. The indiscriminate violence unleashed on innocent civilians included the killing of well over 1,000, the injuring of many more, and the abduction of more than 200 Israelis of different ages and walks of life. There can be no justification for such actions.
2. We are appalled by, and categorically condemn, the devastation inflicted upon Gaza in response to the October 7 attacks. The ongoing Israel Defense Forces (IDF) operation has resulted in thousands of killed and injured civilians – with numbers rising rapidly – in addition to the destruction or damaging of vast amounts of civilian infrastructure. There are now strong indications that some of these actions could constitute war crimes. They have resulted in predictably grave and wholly unacceptable humanitarian consequences for Palestinian civilians.
3. We consider it imperative to emphasize that the right of self-defence and International Humanitarian Law (IHL) are complementary. The legitimate exercise of self-defence does not absolve the obligation to comply fully with IHL.
4. We are disconcerted and dismayed by the tepid defence of IHL by some in the international community. Merely stating known legal obligations, while necessary, is not sufficient. The gravity of the situation demands a vocal denunciation of IHL violations, which are occurring in plain sight and in real time, regardless of who commits them. The international community must call for an immediate cessation and subsequent investigation of such violations.
5. We endorse the call by the International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW) for all parties to the conflict to stop the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. We also endorse the call by the Control Arms coalition for Arms Trade Treaty States Parties to halt the transfer of arms to parties to the conflict.
6. We support the right of Israelis to live in peace and recognize Israel's legitimate security concerns. It is vital that Israelis not be subjected to a constant state of fear stemming from the persistent threat of armed attacks by groups such as Hamas or any other actor.
7. We support the right of Palestinians to live in peace. The ongoing illegal occupation by Israel, along with the steady expansion of illegal settlements in Palestinian territories, effectively constitutes apartheid and must come to an end. The occupation presents an insurmountable obstacle to peace and exacerbates wider regional instability.
8. We stand with the United Nations Secretary-General, not just in his strong condemnation of the October 7 attacks and recognition of the broader context in which they occurred, but in his calls for a ceasefire, which we consider an urgent measure to alleviate the wholesale suffering of civilians and minimize the risk of further escalation.
9. We call upon all parties to the conflict, as well as the international community, to prioritize the safety and well-being of civilians, who are bearing the brunt of the violence. To this end, we urge immediate humanitarian access to provide aid to those in need.
10. We recognize that the pursuit of lasting peace and the enjoyment of human rights must be the goal moving forward. Instead of perpetuating cycles of violence, it is essential to work towards a fair and just resolution that not only safeguards civilians but addresses the root causes of violence.

- ends -



UPCOMING PLOUGHSHARES CALGARY EVENTS

- On Wednesday, November 8th, **Ploughshares Calgary Society will be hosting an educational meeting and discussion titled: Making Peace Visible Again in our Homes, Schools and Communities featuring Carolyn Pogue.** Have you been feeling lately that there is no longer enough presence of the importance of peace in the stories that are told in the media, in our conversations and our society generally? In this interactive session, Carolyn will lead us through a process of remembering peace, even as we look more closely at a world that is experiencing multiple crises. How might we bring forward once more the stories and images that call us to remember and recommit to our common desire for peace? How might we embed anew these reminders of peace in our homes, schools and communities? Please join us for this important, interactive and inspiring session!

Participants please bring notebooks, pens and a symbol of peace to share.

To sign up for this event and receive the Zoom code, please visit our [Eventbrite page!](#)





EVENTS

- On Friday, November 17th, **Urban Society for Aboriginal Youth (USAY) will be hosting an award ceremony recognizing remarkable Changemakers in Treaty 7.** Join us for an exquisite Award Ceremony that will recognize their outstanding contributions. Delight your taste buds with delectable cuisine and be captivated by the mesmerizing performances of Treaty 7's incredibly talented individuals. This event takes place at Calgary Hellenic Banquet Hall (1 Tamarac Crescent, SW) and starts at 6:00PM. Tickets are available on [Eventbrite.ca](https://www.eventbrite.ca)
- On Saturday, November 18th and Sunday, November 19th, **Calgary Justice Film Festival will be hosting their annual Film Festival and Peace Fair.** This event will take place on Saturday from 1:00pm-9:00pm and Sunday from 11:00am-8:00pm. This event is located at River Park Church Theatre (3818, 14a St SW). Ploughshares Calgary Society will be taking part in the Peace Fair, so come on down and see us! To learn more about other participating organizations and the films being shown, click [here](#).





GOOD NEWS

- 72 year old Sam Kaplan of Lawrenceville, Georgia has added many items to his resume over the years. But on May 11th, Kaplan crossed the stage in cap and gown to receive an undergraduate degree in Cinema and Media Arts from George Gwinnett College. His 99-year-old mother was there to see it all and cheered as well as she could. When Kaplan graduated high school in 1969, he went right into the workforce but is now the first of his seven siblings to earn a degree. Kaplan says that it wasn't easy to go back to school. He found it difficult to remember how to study, how to make friends, and all the other skills being a student required. So he committed himself to talking to one student a day; asking about their methods, hopes, and approaches to the class. His classmates really opened up during those chats, and that helped him excel. (Good News Network, October 16th, 2023).
- In September 2021, Marcel LeBrun built a tiny home in his Fredericton backyard. Two years and more than 70 tiny homes later, he's built a community from the ground up to help combat homelessness. The homes sit on a 24-hectare plot of land which is ever-changing. A large social enterprise building is being constructed, a new community garden just went in, and fresh sod is replacing patches of gravel. The plan is to stop at 99 tiny homes. Though LeBrun has received some criticism regarding the close proximity of these homes, so far he believes his 12 Neighbours project has been successful. He said his community is "actively managed" with wrap-around supports, including personal development plans, resident support workers, and addiction recovery programs. He said it is also conveniently located near groceries, amenities and bus routes. (CBC News, September 25th, 2023).



Marcel LeBrun

Photo Credits: Jeanne Armstrong/CBC



GOOD NEWS

- Miriam Roberts is holding her third-annual Pumpkin Drop is being held by Miriam Roberts in northwest Calgary. Just take your pumpkin to 405 11 Street N.W. at Gladstone Road, right behind Kensington Road, and they'll take it off your hands. Roberts says the pumpkins are being donated to The Alice Sanctuary, a vegan farm animal sanctuary just outside Calgary that provides a home to over 200 rescued, surrendered and abandoned farm animals. (CTV News Calgary, November 2, 2023).
- Seth Rogen, Dolly Parton and the Trailer Park Boys have come together in support of the Paddle Project, a fundraiser for Campfire Circle in support of kids with cancer or serious illness and their families. Launched in 2010, this year's Paddle Project is the organization's biggest auction yet with 110 colourful and totally unique paddles on offer from well-known personalities. Alex Robertson, chief executive of Campfire Circle (formerly Camp Ooch & Camp Trillium) says the project raises invaluable funds used to develop programs that promote resiliency, social connectedness and well-being for kids with cancer. (Globe & Mail, October 28th, 2023)



Canada's own Trailer Park Boys paint paddles to raise money in support of kids with Cancer
Photo Credits: The Globe & Mail

