

Peace Action Maine met for our annual membership meeting on Oct 27, 2018 at Talbot Hall at the University of Southern Maine in Portland. At the meeting, we recognized the achievements of past board members, elected our board, and shared our priorities for the organization in the coming year. Martha Spiess has agreed to serve as chair of the board for another year. She is joined on the board by incumbent board members Stephen Oliver and Devon Grayson-Wallace, and new board member Morgana Warner-Evans. Joseph DeRivera will continue to serve on the board in an advisory role. We honored previous board members Seth Berner and Stan Scott with our Peacemaker Award for their many years of hard work and dedication to Peace Action Maine. If you are interested in joining the board, we invite you to attend a few meetings and see if you would like to join us.

Devon Grayson-Wallace, our emcee for the evening, led membership in a discussion of what they wanted to see the organization focus on in the coming year. Some of the ideas suggested were teaching nonviolent communication to students, supporting the BDS movement against the occupation of Palestine, working with the Friends Committee on National Legislation's Maine Advocacy Team, mobilizing support for a nuclear weapons ban, and supporting new Mainers and others impacted by the violence of poverty by donating winter clothing to the Preble Street Resource Center. The meeting was followed by a lecture from DC-area activist Medea Benjamin, who spoke about the travesty of US support for Saudi Arabia's war in Yemen and the resulting humanitarian crisis, how the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi has changed the global narrative around military support for Saudi Arabia, and the importance of interrupting and divesting from weapons companies that are profiting from sales to Saudi Arabia and other countries where the US empire is waging war.

We were fortunate to have three students from Freeport High School in the audience for the evening. They were recognized by Joseph DeRivera for their winning essays from our essay contest last year. During her talk, Medea mentioned students' success in the movements for Black lives, divestment from fossil fuels and justice in Palestine, and the importance of young people drawing connections between US foreign policy and the movements that they participate in locally.

We would like to extend a thank you to our membership for making this meeting possible and for allowing us to continue our thirty-six years of grassroots mobilization to end war and occupation and to abolish nuclear weapons.