

Who Am I, Anyway?

After six or seven months of writing columns for this newsletter, I've been asked to reveal something of myself.

I was born in New York City, but spent most of my childhood and adult life in nearby New Jersey. By the time I was eighteen, I was getting restless, and so I headed west, sight unseen. My freshman year at Stanford coincided with the Cuban Missile Crisis. Hewlett-Packard is just across the street from Stanford's south gate on Page Mill Road. The word on campus was that HP was a strategic target, so if it went, we would go too, along with just about every other living thing on the planet. From that point on, I've been concerned about the dangers of the nuclear arms race.

By and by, any remaining allegiance to the arms race and my conscience parted company, so in 1965, I filed as a conscientious objector. Eventually that meant meeting a number of people at the core of the peace movement. As many of you know, that also meant contending with the draft which was operating at that point. Luckily I was able to convince my draft board that I was sincere, and so the risk of prison passed. I hadn't planned to run to Canada or Sweden. As I saw it, the United States was my country, too. I then spent the next forty-odd years doing my best to meet my obligations as husband, history teacher, father, and citizen and pulling as much enjoyment out of life as I could.

By the time my wife and I reached retirement age, our son had established himself in Maine. We wanted to live closer to him, and on a tip from a friend, found a very pretty spot in New London, New Hampshire, where we lived nine years starting in 2012. I spent seven of those nine years working with New Hampshire Peace Action, where I learned how to push the state's congressional delegation and presidential candidates with questions about war and peace. I still stay in touch with good friends there. In New London itself, I wrote columns for the local newspaper and drafted three resolutions which passed at town meeting. The first called for overturning the Supreme Court's decision in *Citizens United*, the second for nuclear disarmament, and the third established New London's plan to convert to renewable energy. And in 2016, I was able to help defeat a fetal personhood bill that had been introduced in the state legislature.

In 2021, we discovered that my wife had Alzheimer's, and so we moved to Maine, four miles away from our son and his family. She now lives in an assisted living residence, and I in a condo ten minutes' walk away.

Thanks to my friends at NH Peace Action, I was able to find my way into Peace Action Maine. Along with these columns, I've also drafted a nuclear disarmament resolution which my state senator (how I met her is another good luck story, and I never turn down good luck) has agreed to introduce in the state senate in January.

That's my story. Thank you for reading this piece, which serves as half of my offering to start 2023.