



Flying Focus Video Collective

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Using video as a tool for social change

A project of Peace and Justice Works

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Rest in Power Yvonne Simmons

Longtime friend Yvonne Simmons, who was with Flying Focus since 1991, died on July 2, 2022. Over the years, she recorded videos of her trips helping women, children and animals in war-torn Yugoslavia in the 1990s and poverty-stricken areas of Peru in the 2000s. Her interest in stopping violence against women is reflected in the shows *"The Clothesline Project"* (VB #5.6) and *"Women's Equality Day"* (VB #63.13). Yvonne is featured singing in many programs, mostly with Mary Rose as half of the duo Simmons Rose. Yvonne also recorded international actions and conferences she attended in Europe, Cuba, and in the US. While not an editor herself, Flying Focus members had Yvonne's input to create and produce around 25 programs. We will miss her dearly.



Youth Confront ODOT

Forty percent of Oregon's carbon emissions come from transportation. In the middle of a climate crisis, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and legislators want to expand freeways -- including an \$800 million plan to widen Interstate 5 into the backyard of Portland's Harriet Tubman Middle School, which already suffers some of the worst air pollution in the state. *"Climate Action: Youth vs. ODOT"* (VB #122.4) details why it's such a bad idea... and provides inspiration from Oregon youth. Despairing of a livable future while adults ignore the issue, Sunrise Movement youth have been demonstrating regularly since April, 2021 for climate action and an end to freeway expansion. On December 8, 2021, Flying Focus Field Coordinator PC Peri recorded their protest outside ODOT headquarters.

Turning Up the Heat for Climate Action

For some time now, each UN climate report has been more dire than the last. "We must end fossil fuel pollution and accelerate the renewable energy transition, before we incinerate our only home," said U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in 2022. Meanwhile, it's business as usual for government, media, corporations and the 1%, leaving the rest of us to cope with the increasing effects of climate change.

Portlanders are fed up, leading many to take to the streets to voice their anger with the powers that be. *"Turning Up the Heat for Climate Action"* (VB #123.11&12) covers two such demonstrations: the Scientist Rebellion on April 6 and the Youth Climate Strike Climate Villain Tour on May 20. Focusing on specific "targets" such as the Portland Business Alliance and City Hall, activists march, chant, speak, and push for action. Tune in to see how our neighbors who have studied the situation are responding to the crisis that affects us all.

The show features footage by PC Peri and J Haaken Productions, and was produced by Barb Greene.

End Animal Cruelty for Specialty Food

Foie gras (*fwah grah*) is the fatty liver of a duck or goose sold as a specialty food item at high-end restaurants. To create this "delicacy," the animals are subjected to horrible conditions, force fed and not allowed outside. In late 2021, Portland animal rights groups began testifying at Portland City Council on a regular basis to encourage a ban on the sale of food produced by force-feeding birds. In *"Say No to Animal Cruelty"* (VB #122.12&13), PC Peri interviews Amber Canavan from Compassionate PDX about the campaign. Ms. Canavan describes (in some graphic detail-- viewer discretion on part 1) how the food is made, what she saw when she accepted a foie gras farm's invitation to visit, and how people can get involved. Producer Dan Handelman screen-captured four people testifying to Portland City Council on different dates, each adding details.

Ms. Canavan also talks about a proposed ban on the sale of fur and her own history as an activist, including spending 30 days in jail for her visit to the foie gras farm. If you aren't a vegetarian or vegan yet, this show may change your mind.

On the Russian Invasion of Ukraine

Russia's invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022 caused thousands of deaths and forced millions from their homes. This action was met with horror and condemnation by U.S. leaders and their NATO allies, which is rarely seen when similar atrocities are experienced by people who are not white. Mainstream media continue to cover every aspect of the invasion with shock, but omit the fact that foreign affairs experts have predicted such action by Russia for decades. This is due to the U.S. and NATO's continued expansion into eastern Europe.

"Russian Invasion of Ukraine: the Rest of the Story" (VB #123.3&4) has interviews and photos of Portland demonstrators at two concurrent actions on March 6, as well as an interview with Malcolm Chaddock of Veterans For Peace, Portland chapter, in which he explains the role of the U.S. Rally photos and interviews were provided by Kim Oanh Nguyen; the interview with Chaddock was recorded by PC Peri. The program was produced by Barb Greene with editing help from Dan Handelman and Frank Mahoney.

Justice Rallies for Black Man Shot by Portland Police

Patrick Kimmons was a 27 year old Black man who was shot by Portland Police on September 30, 2018. Police allege Kimmons shot two people during an altercation in a downtown parking lot. The Medical Examiner's report indicates that Kimmons was shot at least four times in the back. As usual, a grand jury found the police were legally justified.

Kimmons' mother Letha Winston has led Justice for Patrick Kimmons (JFPK) rallies for more than three years with an unflagging determination to obtain justice and accountability for her son's murder and all other people killed by police. Our program "*Justice for Patrick Kimmons*" (VB #122.10) covers two of those rallies — one in NE Portland in December and one in the Pearl District in February — and includes footage of the marches, as well as interviews with Ms. Winston and others.

This program is dedicated to the volunteers who were killed or wounded by a white supremacist during a subsequent February 19 JFPK rally which also planned to decry the police shooting of Amir Locke in Michigan. The tragic shootings occurred while the show was being edited.



Police Advisory Group Avoids Controversial Topics

The Portland Police Bureau's Behavioral Health Unit Advisory Committee (BHUAC) was created in 2013 to offer feedback on police training and policies about people in mental health crisis. Both the BHU and BHUAC were included as remedies after the US Department of Justice (DOJ) found police used excessive force against people with mental health issues. The BHUAC never held public meetings until 2021 when they began holding quarterly non-business meetings to explain to the community who they are and what they do.

At the October, 2021 public meeting, Portland Copwatch member (and producer of this Flying Focus show) Dan Handelman asked two questions: Do you ever talk about the shootings of people in mental health crisis by the Portland Police, and why are your meetings not open to the public? The Committee's responses were somewhere between avoidance and annoyance. Judge for yourself by watching "*Advising Police on Mental Health Issues*" (VB #121.13/122.1), online at tinyurl.com/ffvcBHUAC.

Former Guantanamo Guard Calls for Closing the Prison

Steve Wood was a guard at Guantanamo Bay prison as a member of the Oregon National Guard. He was told the detainees were responsible for 9/11. He was assigned to guard Mohamedou Ould Salahi, considered a high value detainee by the US military. Ould Salahi, a Mauritanian man held for 14

years without charge, wrote a book about his experiences ("Guantanamo Diary") which was turned into a 2021 movie ("The Mauritanian"). Guantanamo still holds over 35 prisoners.

On January 13, two days after the 20th anniversary of the prison camp, Wood spoke to Portland's Amnesty International Group 48 on Zoom. He was interviewed by Megan Harrington Wilson. The event was video-captured by Dan Handelman of Flying Focus, who edited and produced the two-part program "*A Former Guantanamo Guard Speaks Out*" (VB #122.6&7). It can be seen online at tinyurl.com/FFVCgitmo.

Ongoing Global Population Growth

In 1993, when Flying Focus produced a show called "Five Billion and Counting," world population was estimated at 5.5 billion people. Twenty-nine years later, we produced a follow up show, "*Almost Eight Billion and Counting*" (VB #123.7&8), and global population is now 7.9 billion people-- 160% of the 1993 number. The show features groups with two perspectives: the organization Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) and the movement "Stop Having Kids." An online interview with Stephanie Feldstein, Population and Sustainability Director from CBD is intercut with Stop Having Kids doing outreach at the Portland State University Farmer's Market. While they both think that the population issue is critical, one focuses on biodiversity and the other on not creating more human suffering.

This show was produced by Dan Handelman (who also conducted the CBD interview), with field footage and interviews by PC Peri. It also includes a Public Service Announcement used with permission of CBD.



Flying Focus Now a Project of Peace and Justice Works!

On July 1, Flying Focus Video Collective officially became a project of Peace and Justice Works (pjw.info). We're very excited about this merger, which will broaden the horizons for both organizations-- now combined as one group! As PJW noted on its website, "Flying Focus brings 30+ years of video as a tool for social change and over 1000 programs on war and peace, human rights, environmental justice and more."

We'll continue our work just as before, and we're still using our own mailing address, phone and voicemail. If you decide to donate online, you need to use Network For Good's "designation" field to indicate the money sent to PJW is for Flying Focus (or, if you already donate to both, how much is for Flying Focus, PJW's general fund or other projects such as Portland Copwatch). Checks and money orders can still be written to Flying Focus. Thanks for your support!