

EWB Portland Maine Professionals

8/15/17 Meeting Minutes

President Nadia Glucksberg opened the meeting with a welcome to all and updates as follows:

- **EL PROGRESO:** This is a water project in the foothills of the Andes, in Ecuador and we are working to have the FIRST TRAVEL TEAM MAKE THE ASSESSMENT THIS FALL, with many trips to follow. We are hoping to streamline the project to complete it in 2 to 4 years. The NGO has been contacted for more specific information about the project location. If you interested and want to get involved, let Charlie and or Neil know (ceb@smemaine.com and franklinn31@gmail.com) as this team meets separately for planning and completing the EWB requirements. Next project meeting is TBD.
- **HAITI BRIDGE TEAM:** The project is recycling the Fore River temp bridge in Quincy, MA to construct up to 18 bridges in Haiti. With land issues hampering progression, this team is moving towards support to help with road maintenance to prevent seasonal flooding. We are looking for GIS and watershed support. Gabe Sullivan has returned from Haiti with tons of data and options to move forward. If you want to get involved, please let Nick Dempsey know. (Nicholas.Dempsey@hdrinc.com). Next meeting is TBD.
- **DEBRE BIRHAN, ETHIOPIA:** As noted last month, folks are starting to travel again. The parliament voted to lift the state of emergency, and the Denver Chapter is hoping to travel this October. Our portion of this project is the design and construction of a school for 1000 K-12th graders, included a generous donation from Haley & Aldrich of 40 computers, with a grant from Microsoft for free operating systems. Other news: PSU students missed the implementation plan deadline, so will not travel in December. Colleen Kaleda received a \$10,000 grant to create an irrigation system for the bamboo project at the site. If you have an interest in joining the team (traveling, or supporting back home) let Nadia know ([nglucksberg@haleyaldrich.com](mailto:naglucksberg@haleyaldrich.com)). Weekly conference calls continue. Project team meetings occur separately; next meeting TBD
- **ANNUAL YARD SALE:** The annual yard sale was scheduled to be held Sat. & Sun. August 19 and 20 with a set-up BBQ set for Friday night August 18th. Weather predictions of rain for Friday into Saturday forced postponement to Aug. 25 – 27. Please try to make one of these days, especially Friday evening and Sunday afternoon as we always need help for set up and take down. AND if you want to travel, it's a great way to fulfill the requirements in the bylaws. That said, we also understand that this is a voluntary organization so yes, we are begging for help! Please contact Kathy Hillman Reed (khillmanreed@gmail.com) if you can help any time during the weekend.
- **2017 – 2018 OFFICERS:** Chapter officer elections need to be completed. Nadia announced that the VP position is open, as Kathy Kern has chosen to step away. If you're not interested in an officer position (Pres., VP, Secretary, Treasurer), we are also looking for leads to write grants, do

STEM outreach, and lead projects. Current President, Treasurer, and Secretary will continue unless others express interest. Please let Nadia know **ASAP** if you're interested (nglucksberg@haleyaldrich.com).

AUGUST PRESENTATION

We welcomed Captain Lars Whelan, a mariner of note and problem solving project manager, to give an overview of his work on the Greek island of Lesbos during the refugee crisis of 2015 and continuing.

He said he and a friend were inspired by television images of refugees (a child in particular) who drowned while fleeing to Greece from Syria, Iraq, Iran and Jordan. They traveled to Greece to see what they could do to help with the influx of refugees to the island of Lesbos, only 4 miles from the Turkish coast to the north.

Lars described the general chaos on the island that resulted from a huge influx of refugees who successfully made the treacherous 4-mile crossing and the uncoordinated efforts of US and European NGO's there to help. He noted that the majority of refugees were middle class people who could afford to pay 1200 EU to make the crossing. He described boats arriving that were too full of wet, cold people with nowhere to go immediately except to the refugee camps. He also noted the Greek police tended to treat those trying to help the refugees as if they were human traffickers, which was a real problem.

Lars said for the first week of his trip, he worked mainly as a handyman and provided dry shoes to the people landing on Lesbos. He said the uncoordinated efforts of the NGOs created more confusion than anything, so he decided to try to develop plans to coordinate efforts more efficiently. He described the various ways he contributed to coordinating the NGOs' work to handle refugees and the environmental clean-up needs that resulted. He particularly noted that one change was to divert boats from motoring toward the lighthouse on the north end of the island, since they appeared to be unaware that a lighthouse means dangerous waters to be avoided. This resulted in more successful landings.

There was an excellent Q & A period during and following Lars's presentation.

NEXT MEETING IS TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2017 at 6:00 PM at the SEA DOG BREWING CO.,125 WESTERN AVE., SO. PORTLAND, ME.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Hillman Reed, Chapter Secretary