



Merrimack Valley People For Peace

Serving the communities of the Merrimack Valley

Merrimack Valley People for Peace, Inc. works for a sustainable future for all life on our planet. Our members commit themselves to the interrelated activities of education for peace and justice, the prevention of war, an end to arms sales, the abolition of nuclear weapons, and protection of the environment.

August -- November 2009

Merrimack Valley People for Peace joins the United Nations and peacemakers around the world in proclaiming the years 2001-2010 to be the "International Decade for the Culture of Peace."

GOOD NEWS

New Book about Lois and Don Booth

Finding Our Way is an inspiring document about the life and times of Lois and Don Booth, lifelong activists for peace and justice, co-founders of the New Hampshire Peace Action and MVPP members. It is drawn from an abundance of original diaries and letters so it is mostly written in the times that they describe. The book traces the growth of their lifelong commitment to concerns of peace and justice and simple community living. From the years before they met, through more than a half century of a strong and inspiring marriage partnership. They certainly have lived full lives, and have certainly met some very interesting people along the way!

The Booth children have donated the cost of printing this book, so that the entire sale amount can be donated toward the new Concord Friends Meetinghouse now under construction. - a cause near and dear to Lois & Don. They're asking a donation of \$25 for the book, plus \$4.95 USPS Priority Mail shipping. Please send check to Steve Booth, 50 Baptist Rd., Canterbury, NH 03224

The 2009 Right Livelihood Awards went to four recipients who with their life and work *"demonstrate concretely what has to be done in order to tackle climate change, rid the world of nuclear weapons, and provide crucial medical treatment to the poor and marginalized."*

The Honorary Award goes to **David Suzuki** (Canada) "for his lifetime advocacy of the socially responsible use of science, and for his massive contribution to raising awareness about the perils of climate change and building public support for policies to address it."

Three recipients were honored and received cash awards of € 50,000 each:

René Ngongo (Democratic Republic of Congo) "for his courage in confronting the forces that are destroying the Congo's rain forests and building political support for their conservation and sustainable use."

Alyn Ware (New Zealand) "for his effective and creative advocacy and initiatives over two decades to further peace education and to rid the world of nuclear weapons."

Catherine Hamlin (Ethiopia) "for her fifty years dedicated to treating obstetric fistula patients, thereby restoring the health, hope and dignity of thousands of Africa's poorest women."

Founded in 1980, the Right Livelihood Awards are presented annually in the Swedish Parliament and are often referred to as 'Alternative Nobel Prizes'. They were introduced "to honor and

support those offering practical and exemplary answers to the most urgent challenges facing us today."

US Official Resigned Over the War in Afghanistan. In late October **Matthew Hoh**, the former top American civilian working in the Zabul province of Afghanistan, resigned from the Foreign Service to protest the Afghan war (His letter is dated September 10). He said he quit because he had come to believe the war was simply fueling the insurgency and that the United States is asking its troops to die for what is essentially a far-off civil war. In his resignation letter, Hoh wrote, *"I have doubts and reservations about our current strategy and planned future strategy, but my resignation is based not upon how we are pursuing this war, but why and to what end."* Hoh is a thirty-six-year-old former Marine who fought in the Iraq war. He is the first US official known to resign in protest over the Afghan war.

Another American diplomat, the US ambassador to the UN mission left Afghanistan involuntarily, in mid September. **Peter Galbraith's** "... 'pointed' questions to the Independent Election Commission (IEC) were evidence of a much tougher line towards the Afghan authorities than the 'softly-softly' approach of [his boss, Kai] Eide, who heads the UN mission to Kabul." Galbraith later told National Public Radio, 'What we had in this election was wholesale fraud.'

Mr. Hoh did not specify that his resignation was supporting Mr. Galbraith, but both have seriously questioned their leaders.

MVPP Meeting – November 24, 7:30 PM First United Methodist Church, N Andover

<http://www.merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org/>

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You can view newsletters on line (where most links work) at <http://www.merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org/oldmins.htm>

International Day of Climate Action, October 24. Activists across the globe rallied on October 24 to call on world leaders to take strong measures at the upcoming climate talks in Copenhagen. In the most widespread day of environmental action in the planet's history, people in 181 countries held over 5200 events centered on the number 350. Scientist say 350 parts per million is the safe upper limit for carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Presently, the count is 387.

Highlights of the day included events around the shore of the Dead Sea where Israeli activists made a giant 3, Palestinians a huge 5 and Jordanians a 0. The figure 350 appeared on mountaintops, underwater, in streets, parks and on beaches. There were over 300 events in China, more than 200 in India, and nearly 2,000 in the United States.

The international climate campaign, 350.org, founded by well-known environmentalist Bill McKibben and fuelled by the enthusiasm of an international team of youthful coordinators initiated the events. The campaign is dedicated to building a movement to unite the world around solutions to the climate crisis and insist that they be the solutions that science and justice demand. For more information and for hundreds of amazing photos of the October 24 action, see www.350.org.

Amherst, MA votes to Welcome Cleared Guantanamo Prisoners. The town of Amherst, MA has passed a measure that would welcome up to two Guantanamo Bay prisoners if they're cleared for release into the United States. It is the first such action by a US municipality.

Victory for Green Justice Coalition. On October 27, Massachusetts adopted a \$1.4 billion plan that will cut greenhouse gas emissions, create high-quality jobs in the state's highest-unemployment communities, and provide up-front financing to low-to-moderate income residents to do deep retrofits on their homes. This is a victory for the Green Justice Coalition, a community-labor-environmental alliance that was launched less than one year ago. An essential part of the plan is do energy efficiency outreach campaigns through community-based groups; to sign up hundreds of residents for home retrofits and "bundle" them together into a single contract; and to make sure that the retrofit contractors hire community residents for "good green jobs" with livable wages, benefits and training for lifelong careers. The plan calls for several pilot programs which the Green Justice Coalition is now negotiating with the state's two largest utility companies, NSTAR and National Grid.

Washington Voters Expand Rights for Gay Couples. Voters in Washington State have approved a measure to expand rights for gay couples. The so-called "everything but marriage" law grants registered domestic partners rights previously given only to married couples. Gay rights advocates say the vote marks the first time a gay equality measure has been approved on a state ballot.

CIA Operatives Convicted in Italy. In a landmark ruling, an Italian judge has convicted twenty-three Americans, mostly CIA operatives, for kidnapping a Muslim cleric, Egyptian Abu Omar, from the streets of Milan in 2003. He was then taken to US bases in Italy and Germany before being sent to Egypt. He says he was tortured there during a four-year imprisonment. Abu Omar was never charged with a crime and ultimately set free.

The former CIA base chief in Milan was sentenced to eight years in prison, everyone else was given five-year sentences. The Americans were all tried *in absentia* after the United States

refused to turn them over. The convictions turn the CIA agents into international fugitives who risk arrest abroad. The case marks the first time any American has been convicted for taking part in a so-called "extraordinary rendition."

When national conservative organizations pressured the local Republican, NY state Assemblywoman Dede Scozzafava, to drop out of the race for US House of Representatives, the Adirondacks, Republican since the Civil War, elected the Democrat, Bill Owens. In the only other congressional race, California Lieutenant Governor John Garamendi kept a Democrat seat.

Actions

Four Women Arrested for Breaching Vermont Yankee Security

At the Vernon, Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant, four Massachusetts women opposed to nuclear power crossed the plant's security gate .

Within half an hour, the four were arrested by state troopers and Vernon Police Chief Kevin Turnley. Charged with trespassing and ordered to appear December 15 in Windham County District Court are Ellen Graves, 69, of Springfield; Frances Crowe, 90, and Paki Wieland, 66, of Northampton, and (MVPP member) Hattie Nestel, 70, of Athol.

Acting on behalf of the **Shut It Down** affinity group, the four women wanted to demonstrate that inadequate safety at Vermont Yankee is not limited to radiation leaks and collapsing cooling towers, according to Nestel. Women from Shut It Down have been arrested seven times previously at the Vernon plant or at headquarters in Brattleboro. Each time, they have pointed to the unsafe, inefficient, and unreliable characteristics of nuclear power, Nestel said.

The women carried signs calling for the closure of the nuclear plant. Nestel carried an additional sign reading "Yom Kippur / September 28 / Time To Atone / Shut Down Vermont Yankee." The action got coverage in local media and on DemocracyNow.



Watch it on [youtube](#)

Weekly Vigils

Andover: Sunday, noon-1 pm; Shawsheen Square, Junction of Routes 133 and 28; Lawrence Friends Meeting/
Shawsheen Peace Witness; Allan Sifferlen, asifferlen@sbra.com.

Andover: Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 7-8 pm; Saturday, 10:45 am-noon (in good weather, 10-noon);
Old Town Hall, 20 Main St.; Merrimack Valley People for Peace; Lou Bernieri, lbernieri@andover.edu.

Andover: Tuesday, 6:30-7:30 am; in front of Raytheon plant near Routes 133 and 93; Raytheon Peacemakers;
Arthur Brien, 978-686-4418.

Gloucester: Saturday, noon-1 pm; Grant Circle.

Marblehead: Tuesday, 6:30-7:19pm in front of the high school and Community Center at the lights at the intersection of
Humphrey-Pleasant and Lafayette Sts.; Tom Gale, 781-631-1218.

Nashua, NH in front of Nashua City Hall from 11 to Noon every Sat. www.nashuapeace.org

Newburyport: Sunday, noon-1 pm; Market Square; Niki Rosen, 978-463-3208.

Reading: 2nd Saturday/each month, 11 am-noon; Reading Square; Reading People for Peace; Bob Connor,
bobconnor1@yahoo.com.

Rockport: Wednesday, noon-1 pm; First Congregational Church (silent for peace).

Salem, MA: Saturday, 11-noon; Riley Plaza (by the Post Office).

John Schuchardt's speech

Copley Square, Boston

October 17, 2009

editor: John's impassioned delivery made this an inspiring moment on an uplifting day:

We gathered here today undoubtedly hold this truth to be self-evident: War is the problem, not the solution. There is actually something unhealthy, even sub-human, in thinking violence is a solution for anything.

Shortly after "the new Pearl Harbor" of September 11, Dick Cheney said, "We may have to...sort of work the dark side."

In Dr. King's vision, "War is the most colossal of all evils," melding racism, economic exploitation, and militarism. Iraq and Afghanistan are drenched in blood, crushed under invading armies, all in the name of "peace, freedom, 'n democracy." That's the dark side. That's the wrong side of history.

Kidnapping, secret prisons and torture: the Constitution betrayed, the Bill of Rights torn up, spying, surveillance, every airport a checkpoint. The paranoid politics of fear. That's the dark side. That's the wrong side of law and morality.

We are being dragged, as Dr. King prophesied, "dragged down the long, dark, shameful corridor of time reserved for those who possess power without compassion, might without morality, and strength without sight."

The U.S. is a tiny 5% of the human family, yet spends as much on the military as the other 5 billion, 700 million people. That's "humanity hanging on a cross of iron," in Eisenhower's words. The military-industrial complex he warned against in 1961 has metastasized.

I was asked to give an overview of US/NATO policy in the Middle East and Central Asia region.

Tragically, it can be summed up in words all beginning with P. First, Propaganda and Project for a New American Century. You can read their September 2000 plan, on line. The attack on Afghanistan was approved 6 months before 9-11. The global strategy for a uni-polar world, has nothing to do with Osama, Al Qaeda, or Taliban. Terrorist is a technical term which means a) "any citizen seeking to live with dignity in their own country" and b) "which country the U. S. intends to attack."

Next, pressure & preparation, pillage & plunder, privatization & profits, partition & Palestinianization, permanent.

Pressure and Preparation. Afghanistan is the strategic crossroads of Central and South Asia, from which to exert constant pressure on Russia, China and Iran. The U.S. has built huge new bases in more than a dozen different countries in preparation for possible attacks on Syria, Iran, and another clash with Russia. Turkey, a pawn of NATO, has massive U.S. bases. Israel has four nuclear armed submarines and shares U.S. command integration and First Strike Policy. Read, on line, The U.S. Space Commands Vision for 2020. Full Spectrum Global Dominance, directed from satellites, to protect U.S. investments.

Pillage and Plunder. Of course oil and pipelines. But one of the greatest prizes is the plunder of the United States: one thousand billion dollars a year pipelined from the Public Treasury to the Pentagon. More than a trillion dollars every year. The Pentagon is bleeding every city and town, which is why Health Care is a Red Zone and Warfare is a Green Zone. Why there's money for prisons but not for schools.

Profits. Commandant Smedley Butler, after 33 years of wars and interventions confessed, "I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street (1933)." "First, the dollar goes overseas seeking 100% profit, then the flag follows the dollar, and then soldiers follow the flag." "War is a racket."

Privatization is one of the goals of the Shock Doctrine, so corporation carpet-baggers, contractors and mercenaries soon come to outnumber soldiers, in-country.

Palestinianization. Look at Gaza, look at Baghdad, and there you see the policy, and the mushrooming future.

Permanent. You don't build permanent bases and the largest embassies in the world, for some of the smaller countries, with the idea of Exit. NATO has metastasized from 19 to 32 nations. 42 nations have invaded Afghanistan. New American Century. Pax Americana. Which brings us back to Propaganda. The killing of beautiful people stops, once the American people wake up.

Yet, despite a history of ruthless plundering, capitalism still went bankrupt on us last year. That's because the profit motive is a social disease, not the basis of a sustainable economic system. They are bailing out a sinking ship.

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\$20.00 Individual

\$10.00 Student/Senior

\$30.00 Family

Circle One

\$50.00 Supporting

\$75.00 Sustaining

\$100.00 Peacemaker

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ E-Mail _____ Date _____

Return to MVPP is registered with the IRS as a 501(c)(3) organization. Contributions to MVPP are tax P.O. Box 573 deductible. Last year, approximately one-third of our members joined/renewed at higher than North Andover, MA 01845 the basic rate. **Check here if you prefer to receive your newsletter via e-mail.**

No house divided against itself can long stand. Joblessness, aimlessness, prison for the poor...impunity and profits for bankers and stock traders. A white male NATOized command and World Bank dominating two-thirds of the human family who live in starvation and subhuman destitution

My generation suffered the Bright Shining Lie of War on Communism.

To the rising generation I say, don't let the Pied Pipers of patriotism do to your generation what they did to mine! The War on Communism was an insane fraud that forced humanity to the brink of self-destruction. Don't let the demonic propaganda of the War on Terrorism finish the job, in a region where 8 nations (U.S., England, France, China, Russia, India, Pakistan, Israel) are seething with enough nuclear weapons to undo the works of Genesis.

The survivors of World War II tried to warn us. Gen. Omar Bradley said, "Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants. We've unlocked the secrets of the atom but not the lessons of the Sermon on the Mount."

Yes, we have voices of courage and conscience who say, "We are not afraid." Saying with Dr. King,

"We are tied together in a single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. And whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. This is the way God's universe is made; this is the way it is structured."

So, with the inner light of conscience, we must vigil and protest and resist the lie of endless war against invisible enemies. With the inner warmth of compassion we must tear down the walls, welcome the stranger in our land, comfort the broken-hearted.

Yes, we have other voices across the land. Countless individuals are standing up, speaking out, crossing the line, saying, "We are not afraid." Every candle lit drives out the darkness.

When leaders debate escalation and mock negotiation, when they glorify death and destroy life, when they profit and others suffer the pain, it is time for every voice to cry out. Come home, America. End the nightmare, build the dream. Let America act with malice towards none and with mercy towards all.

Come home, America. Come home to the Light.

Summaries of Recent Meetings

Recent Events and Coming Events are later in the newsletter.

August 25

- We need to order peace flags, 100 or more, arranging with others to buy big enough quantities.
- We planned for the Bread and Roses festival, and updating handout supplies.
- Mary reported on the progress and great challenges of helping fifteen Iraqi families settling in Lowell. They face many of the same problems as are illustrated by the International Rescue Committee on <http://www.theirc.org/special-report/iraqi-refugee-crisis.html>.
- We planned our part for the October 17 rally
- We planned for Andover Day (but it was postponed due to rain to Oct. 17, so we did not set up. We went to the Boston rally.)

September 22

- Peace flag ordering is in process.
- Our president, Kathie Robinson, has a new e-mail, katherine.robinson.architect@gmail.com.
- There are now nineteen Iraqi families in Lowell. Generous donations and offers to partner are increasing and Dee offered to help with the administrative work.

October 27

- The Iraqi families fund has increased to \$1,831, even after expenditures of \$1,272. One contribution was \$1000. There may be an article in the Globe soon.
- Michael reported that the UJP restructuring is progressing. UJP has a DVD available, titled "Rethinking Afghanistan." We will show it at a meeting, and maybe on local cable stations.
- Masood will order more Palestinian olive oil. The group decided to support the Palestinian olive farmers and purchase some for each Iraqi family. One of the MVPP members will split the cost and will give a bottle of olive oil to each Iraqi family from MVPP during the holidays. We'll get extras for members to get some.

Recent Events

On August 6, MVPP members and friends held a **vigil to commemorate the bombing of Hiroshima** and to remember all the victims of nuclear war including those killed in Hiroshima and Nagasaki by atomic bombs and those harmed in Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan by depleted uranium munitions.

About twenty five people gathered in front of Old Town Hall in Andover. In former years we stood in a circle, sharing thoughts, music and readings. This time we decided to have a silent vigil, facing the traffic on the street and holding up the beautiful signs that Arthur Brien had made. Arthur himself was solemnly ringing the bell (courtesy of the North Andover Fire Department, thanks to Jane Cadarette) in memory of the many thousands whose lives were needlessly lost.

There was a lot of positive response from the passersby (with the only exception of a driver who yelled: "Thank God for President Truman!") A photo of the vigil, along with an extensive caption appeared in the *Andover Townsman*.

MVPP was one of the sponsors of the **Tommy Sands concert** organized by The House of Peace in Ipswich on August 20. Legendary North Ireland singer/songwriter, social activist and peace advocate Tommy Sands offered the concert as a benefit for The House of Peace and their work with The Iraqi Children's Project which is providing medical treatment for burned and wounded children from Iraq.

"We invite all our friends and neighbors to a reflective, spirit-awakening evening of soul-healing, in order to renew and deepen our commitment to abolish war and all weapons of war," said House of Peace co-founder Carrie Schuchardt in the press release.

And what an evening it was!! Tommy Sands together with his daughter Moya and his son Fionan, both of the wonderful young musicians, led the audience through an enchanting program full of joy and sorrow, of deep anguish about the tragedy of war and violence - and of celebrating life. Local musicians Dean Stevens, David Dodson and MVPP members Mary Kate Small and Pat Scanlon together with a big group of Veterans for Peace also joined the program. The audience was enthusiastic. It was a standing-room-only crowd and everyone had a great and inspiring time.

Boryana and Mary Kate went to the **Peace Abbey** for a concert by Dean Stevens the next evening. Mary Kate was invited on stage. Boryana urges us, especially as shareholders in the Peace Abbey, to visit there to support the bed and breakfast program.

Lou, Brian and Boryana joined a **universal health care vigil in Haverhill** in September. It was a small but spirited demonstration which got a lot of honks from passing cars. A great photo of Brian holding a candle and sign appeared in the *Eagle Tribune*.

On September 7, MVPP's blue canopy opened again at its traditional place at the **Bread and Roses Festival** in Lawrence. Arthur, Peter, Katie, Lou, Brian, Niki, Dee, Michael and Boryana spent most of the day there. We sold quite a lot of buttons and bumper stickers and had good conversations with folks who came to our table as well as with folks to whose tables we went. The music was a treat as always at this festival. Also, we were very lucky this year to have as immediate neighbors Bread and

Puppet from Vermont, so when their show began, we had seats right in the first row.

On October 9 **Dean Stevens**, folksinger, songwriter, peace activist and Central America activist gave a benefit concert for the North Shore Coalition for Peace and Justice. MVPP was one of the co-sponsors of the concert. Several of our members drove to Essex on a rainy evening to spend a couple of inspiring hours with a great musician and human being. Dean shared the stage with composer, comedian and political activist Marsie Silvestro. He later was joined by singer/songwriter David Dodson and by our own Mary Kate Small. It was a beautiful and uplifting evening.

Eight Years of War, How Many More? On October 17 New England activists held a **rally and march at Copley Square** in Boston to protest the Afghanistan/Pakistan war, the continued occupation of Iraq, the militarist U.S. policies with respect to Palestine, Iran, and nuclear weapons, and the impact of the military budget on human needs at home. The mobilization was organized by over 100 peace and justice groups throughout New England.

In their moving speeches, Afghan Women's activist Zoya, IAW member Matthis Chiroux and The House of Peace founder John Schuchardt laid bare the roots and disasters of U.S. war policy. Sergio Reyes, Sarah Fuhro, Sarah Roche-Mahdi, Charlie Derber, Angela Kelly and Peter Knowlton spoke about their experience in the peace and justice movement and showed the interconnection of the many struggles which are coming together to resist the corporate and military destruction of people's lives in the U.S. and around the world.

There was good music from Bojah and the Insurrection, The Constitution Brass Band of Vermont and others. A very special treat was the presence and participation of political satirist and singer/songwriter Roy Zimmerman.

MVPP was among the endorsers of the event. Members participated in the rally and march and we had a table at Copley Square.

October 18th at St. Anne's Episcopal Church in Lowell, Mr. **Abdulsattar Younus from La'Onf**. spoke with Iraqi refugees. Over 50 Iraqis and American friends met to hear Mr. Younus speak to the group about his organization in Iraq that teaches and works for nonviolence.

There are 19 Iraqi families in Lowell. The families are resettled through the International Office for Migration, Massachusetts Office of Refugees and Immigrants and the International Institute of Lowell. Members and friends of Merrimack Valley People for Peace are working closely with the families to assist in their adjustment to life in the United States.

Mr. Younus was the 2009 winner of the *International Pfeffer Peace Prize*, established in 1989 by Leo and Freda Pfeffer to honor those around the world working for peace with justice. He is a member of the La'Onf network of Iraqi nonviolence communities. Abdulsattar Younus is also a member of the board of directors of La'Onf which is based in Iraqi Kurdistan. He traveled from Iraq to receive the award on October 11th in New York City. He was accompanied at the Lowell event by Terry Rockefeller of September 11 Families for Peaceful Tomorrows, the coalition of family members of those who lost their lives on September 11th, 2001, and who work for peaceful resolution of

conflict in the United States and worldwide. More about the work of La'Onf can be seen at www.laonf.net.

Special thanks to Mary Todd for organizing the event, planning the transportation and for her daily selfless involvement in the lives of our refugee friends.



On October 18, Barbara Haack attended the Amesbury Friends Peace Center presentation of Afghanistan Women activist, **Zoya**, who spoke about the status of women in Afghanistan. Zoya showed many photos and felt the US must withdraw from Afghanistan; the US is not helping the situation there, it is only making it worse. The people of Afghanistan must figure it out themselves. MVPP was one of the co-sponsors of the event.

Several people attended a lecture on October 22nd with **Howard Zinn**, James Carroll, Ellen Goodman, and Mary Gordon about the expectations and reality of Obama's presidency, followed by a lively discussion with the audience.

Barbara represented MVPP on November 1 to celebrate the **opening of the Amesbury Friends Peace Center**. She was one of the readers in "The Human Cost of War": a dramatic reading of stories of U.S. Iraq veterans and their families, followed by audience dialog. There were readers from Veterans for Peace, The House of Peace, MVPP, Amesbury Friends Meeting, SEED (Seacoast Energy and Environmental Design Coalition) and the Chaplaincy Institute of Maine

November 11, Smedley D. Butler Brigade, **Veterans For Peace, marched again in the Boston Veteran's Day Parade**. This year they had obtained a permit for their own speaking event on City Hall Plaza, since the American Legion had canceled theirs. The event was led by Pat Scanlon, VFP and MVPP member.

Speakers from Veterans For Peace, Military Families Speak Out and Iraq Veterans Against The War included John Schuchardt (another great speech within three weeks!) John Niles USMC (as Maj. Gen. Smedley D. Butler), Sarah Fuhro and Capt. Paul K. Chappell, author of *Will War Never End? A Soldier's Vision of Peace for the 21st Century*.

As one speaker noted, the protest two years ago has brought freedom of speech closer to Boston. (In 2007, 15 veterans and three supporters were arrested for standing in front of the stage

with bandanas over their mouths and signs reading "The American Legion Silences Peace Messages from Veterans") The Leftist Marching Band provided royal entertainment.

Several MVPP members marched in solidarity with the Veterans For Peace and later attended two more exciting events of the day: the Veterans Day Forum with Howard Zinn at the BU, organized by the Coalition for Social Justice, and a Veterans For Peace Fundraiser with great music including Pat Scanlon and Friends.

Coming Events

November 20-22, **School of the Americas Watch** Fort Benning, Georgia

Tuesday, November 24 at 6:30 PM, **The "Stone Soup" supper** at the First United Methodist Church, North Andover is free and guests are invited to bring a small amount of precooked vegetables to add to the pot. A free will offering will be taken for OXFAM, a development, advocacy, and relief agency working to combat poverty and hunger worldwide. Following the meal, guests are invited to stay for a group discussion and brief business meeting. We will have a video, "Rethinking Afghanistan."

Sunday, December 13 at 8 PM premiere of **Howard Zinn's documentary "The People Speak"** on the History Channel. MVPP is planning a house party so we can watch it together!

Friday, January 8, 6:30 pm **Annual MVPP Potluck supper** at St. Annes Church in Lowell.

Letters

Take a Long Look First

Gloucester Daily Times Aug. 12, 2009

All of us, especially in these times, can get frustrated and, then, angry at the turn of events or at other peoples' perceived behavior or even our own. The reactions that follow aren't as caring or balanced as they could be if we were following our innate instincts.

Life is a test. The grades that we give ourselves depend on outcomes but who's in charge of those? Passing or failing grades don't always grow out of realities on the ground but out of pre-suppositions, other people critiques of what we're up to or even a plea to Dr. Phil.

If we stand back and ask ourselves some basic questions would we pierce through assumptions that are inaccurate? Is this person we think we have little use for, more human and humane than we realize? Does he or she take the measure of situations, sorting out what is constructive, merely neutral, or downright negative and assigning the matter to the forefront of the brain for further study? Does he or she take account of the common good and act accordingly? Does he or she listen at a deep level, seek to understand other points of view and refrain from trying to impose long-held ideas on others?

An evolving human being can be seen as increasingly pragmatic, sympathetic, analytical about matters that affect communal liv-

ing, often actively involved in that community and devoted to projects that can further a group's well-being. Living from the messages of the heart, using the mind to best effect and acting ethically guarantee an authentic person we can all take to.

Is there anyone who comes to mind on the local scene? Yes, Congressman John Tierney who has been the recipient of misdirected frustration.

Cynthia Fisk (responding to attacks on Rep. Tierney's views on health reform)
Gloucester, MA

Response to your recent inquiry

From: Congressman John F. Tierney
To: Cynthia Fisk October 02, 2009
Gloucester

Dear Ms. Fisk:

Thank you for forwarding Nicholas Kristof's recent column in the New York Times entitled "The Afghanistan Abyss" to Gary Barrett of my Peabody office.

As you are aware, the situation in Afghanistan is certainly complex. Essentially, all U.S. officials engaged -- from the State Department to the Department of Defense -- acknowledge that sole reliance on military activity will not accomplish U.S. security interests nor totally resolve the terror concerns of the international community. After seven years without a comprehensive national policy for the region, it is fitting that the Obama Administration is quickly seeking a review that is anticipated to result in a comprehensive strategy.

In my capacity as Chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, I am, as you may know, actively engaged in this issue. During the past two years, I have led three Congressional delegations to Afghanistan and held many related hearings. I share the view that we need a strategy that clearly defines our goals and maps a course -- more than just military in nature -- that will address our interests and allow safe and foreseeable re-deployment of our forces home.

In that vein, you may be interested to know that I am an original co-sponsor of H.R. 2404, a bill which would require the Defense Secretary to report to Congress, not later than December 31, 2009, on a U.S. exit strategy for U.S. military forces in Afghanistan participating in Operation Enduring Freedom. This bill is currently under consideration by the House Committee on Armed Services. As this bill moves through the legislative process, be assured I will continue to work for its passage.

Again, thank you for taking the time to contact my office. Please feel free to do so regarding any matter of concern to you.

Sincerely,
John F. Tierney
Member of Congress

Electronic Newsletter

This newsletter is available on the web as a .pdf. file
You can view newsletters back to 2003 at:
www.merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org/index.htm On the

menu at the left, click "Newsletter" or "archived minutes and newsletters."

The pdf newsletters have working links, and a table of contents that can jump to your article, as well as pdf search tools.

To save MVPP money, you can **choose to receive your newsletter by e-mail instead of paper** by e-mailing brian@quirk.ws.

Dues

Please use the form in this newsletter (page 4).

Media Watch

Worth Reading:

The Nation November 9, 2009 printed 10/21:
"Obama's Fateful Choice: Afghanistan - A Special Issue"

Eight essays including:

"High Costs, Long Odds" by Stephen M. Walt, professor of International Affairs, Harvard's Kennedy School

"The Ethnic Split" by Selig Harrison, director of the Asia Program at the Center for International Policy

"How to Get Out" by Robert Dreyfus, *Nation* contributing editor

Peter Cameron

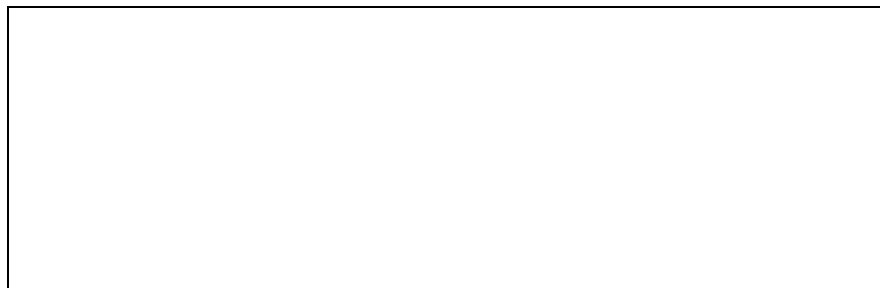
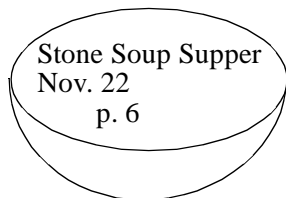
Song

The bombs will cease
We shall know peace
If we but see one another
as all the same
no hate no blame
truly sister and brother

Love, Mary Kate

At the Curb

Enjoying an Indian Summer Sunday vigil, someone had told Don "I thought the government said we won Iraq war." Then we were pleasantly startled by three vans on 133 full of young people honking, with people hanging out windows cheering for peace. People on two motorcycles heading up 28 then honked and flashed peace signs. Kathy was just arriving and missed it, but the three vans were stuck at a long light, and gave her another round when they got the green.



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Every legislator knows one letter is worth a thousand votes.

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