

Minutes of MVPP Meeting, February 22, 2005

The following were in attendance: Don Abbott, Becci Backman, Jane Cadarette, Peter Cameron, Ralph Galen, Bobbie Goldman, Sue Imhoff, Janice Koch, Brenda McCarthy, Brian Quirk, Niki Rosen, Mary Kate Small, Boryana Tacconi, Jim Todd, and Mary Todd. Guests: Joan Sedita, Rosalie Sedita, and Dan Wilson.

Bobbie extended a warm welcome to our guests. Joan and Rosalie came because they had read Mary's recent, eloquent letter to the editor in the Eagle-Tribune (to be reprinted in the March newsletter). Dan, who attends Peter's church in Haverhill, came to learn about us and to share his plans for an event in May.

Bobbie announced that we had received and accepted with regret the resignation of Tom Gale as a board member, because of his several ongoing commitments to peace and justice efforts regionally and far afield. A motion, approved and seconded, was unanimously passed to elect Sue Imhoff to fill this vacancy.

Treasurer's Report: Peter reported that our current bank balance stands at \$5,123.66.

Membership and Sales: Becci reported that recent renewals have brought our paid membership to a total of 90 individuals. Sales continue to go well. We are about to purchase six cases of Palestinian olive oil distributed by the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees, a non-profit organization that develops and markets Palestinian agricultural products. The first shipment of olive oil proved very popular; one of the new cases is already called for. We voted to sell this excellent product at \$12/bottle.

Newsletter: Don requested feedback on the last two issues, especially since they are longer, have few if any pictures or graphics, and tend to be "dense with material." The next issue is well along and slated for mailing next week. Volunteers offered to help with labels and postage.

Action Updates: Bobbie reported and led informed discussion on several important current actions. 1.) The UJP strategic priorities--a.) to block the administration's supplemental request for \$80 billion to fund the ongoing war and occupation in Iraq and Afghanistan; b.) to support bringing the National Guard home; c.) to develop unified approaches to stop the recruitment of youth for war. 2.) Opposition to the development of the BU Bioweapons Lab, a.k.a. "Bio Safety" Lab, in South Boston. There will be an important meeting on this issue at 1:30 pm on Sunday, March 6 at First United Methodist Church in North Andover, hosted by Jim and Mary Todd. Our guest expert will be Prasannan Parthasarathi, associate professor of history at Boston College. 3.) Tom Gale's request that we ask our congressmen to support and cosponsor HR 1673, which would establish a Department of Peace--members signed separate petitions to Reps. Tierney and Meehan. 4.) Postcards to our congressmen asking them to oppose the \$80 billion supplemental request to continue the Iraq War and to support Rep. Lynn Woolsey's (D-CA) congressional resolution calling for immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq. 5.) Letters of support for Drew Plummer, military resister.

Review of Upcoming Events: The March newsletter is covering most of the events we discussed. Of special note: 1.) Hosting the Buddhist monks in the *Walk for a New Spring* as they pass through Andover on Tuesday, March 8, with accommodations preceded by a Potluck Supper at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Andover, being organized by Boryana, Brenda, and Ralph. 2.) The March 12th evening of fun and solidarity for MVPP and other peace groups--*Sing, Swing, Sway and Speak for Peace*—organized and led by Jim at the First United Methodist

Church in North Andover. 3.) A major presentation by peace advocates to high school students at Worcester State College on March 16 from 9:30 am to 11:30 am; Becci and some other members may attend. 4.) March 19 march and rally in NYC on the second anniversary of the invasion of Iraq; some members, including Brian, may attend, while others are choosing to focus on the mobilization on the next day in Boston. 5.) Major, regional mobilization against the Iraq War in Boston Common on Sunday, March 20, 1 PM; UJP and Boston Mobilization are pushing for a very large turnout. We voted to have MVPP officially endorse this action. 6.) Dan Wilson shared his vision and plan for a Peace Rally at Gar Park in Haverhill on May 1, "*Transforming the War on Terrorism into a Campaign for Compassion.*" Working through the Unitarian Universalist Church of Haverhill, he is gathering much early support from regional church leaders.

Finance Matters: Jane announced that Peace Vision Project was withdrawing its request that MVPP accept donations on behalf of its work. A motion was duly made and seconded that we rescind the vote taken previously at our last monthly meeting on January 25, 2005, regarding accepting donations on behalf of Peace Vision Project. The motion passed unanimously. We then voted unanimously to authorize the Finance Committee to decide the most appropriate way in which to handle any gifts earmarked for Peace Vision Project that we may receive in the near future. The sense of the meeting reflected the group's ongoing respect, admiration, and support for the mission of Peace Vision Project. On a separate matter, we voted to spend up to \$500 to purchase a 10x10 tent, with logo if possible, for our outdoor, public tabling activities.

The next monthly meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 22, 2005 at 7:30 PM at North Parish Church, North Andover.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Abbott
Clerk