



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, economic diversification, and protection of the environment.

April 2004

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

Accolades for MVPP! The Swarthmore College Peace Collection (SCPC) was impressed with our newsletter and requested a subscription to document our peace-work! SCPC is a research library with archives devoted to the peace movement, concentrating on disarmament, nonviolent activism and social change, and conflict resolution.

Worldwide protests March 20. United for Justice & Peace estimates that there were more than 575 protests around the world against war and occupation, on the one-year anniversary of the Iraq War. More than 300 events took place in the United States, including a march and rally in New York City that drew an estimated 100,000 participants. Twelve MVPP members participated in the demonstration in NYC (see our website for pictures). Taken together, these events mark one of the largest ever outpourings of grassroots action for peace.

A Successful candlelight vigil: No More Victims, held at Old Town Hall in Andover on March 14th on the anniversary of the large gathering the Sunday evening before the start of the war, was attended by about 75 people. This is the largest number we have had in Andover since the initial vigil the previous year, partly in response to a featured article in the Lawrence Eagle Tribune the day before the vigil.

Retired generals & admirals urge delay in U.S. antimissile shield. 26 March –Forty nine former U.S. generals and admirals are urging President George W. Bush to postpone the scheduled deployment this year of a multibillion dollar missile shield and instead spend the money on securing potential terror targets. Retired Admiral William Crowe, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 1985 to 1989, described the complex technology as untested and a poor use of scarce defense dollars.

Maine becomes fourth state to vote for civil liberties. In a move indicative of ongoing nationwide disquiet over the state of civil liberties since 9/11, Maine passed a resolution asking Congress to revisit the Patriot Act and other civil liberties infringements. The Maine resolution follows statewide measures in Vermont, Alaska and Hawaii. Statehouses in New Mexico and several other states have considered similar pieces of legislation.

Most urge the U.S. Congress to revisit the USA Patriot Act, passed in haste a mere eight weeks after the attacks, and try to prevent local authorities from engaging in racial profiling and other civil liberties abuses. The Maine resolution puts the tally of communities that have passed such resolutions at 275, encompassing almost 50 million Americans in 38 states.

Comanche helicopter contract cancelled. Women's Action for New Directions (WAND) reports that the U.S. Army has decided to cancel the contract and instead redirect authorized funds towards upgrading helicopters already in use, thus being a better steward of taxpayers' money.

Victory for University of Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, activists! After 6 months of protests, ROTC is out of the campus, with the ultimate goal of eliminating the ROTC program on all campuses.

Activism

Statement to the State of New Hampshire, Nashua District Court. In the matter of the 11 members of the Chain Reaction Affinity Group, arrested at BAE on December 22, 2003. Presented By Clare Gillingham, Concord, NH.

MVPP members Hattie Nestel and Mary Kate Small were co-defendants with Clare Gillingham.

Your honor, I feel proud to be standing here today among a group of loyal patriots, young and old, who love their country so much that they are not afraid to address its errors.

When I was young, I learned about the utter devastation and dehumanization of war in the aftermath following WWI. For three years I lived in a war-battered town in northern France. Most of the town, including its cathedral, railway station, and schools were still in ruins; water was available one hour a day at a public faucet; soldiers who had no way of returning home to their families slept in empty cellars which once had homes above them.

These sights one doesn't forget. But what I remember most are the thousands upon thousands of temporary wooden crosses bearing the inscriptions: "Known Only To God."

My brother, Rudy, was born in that war torn town, and 20 years later, as a young corporal, was killed in (continued p. 2)

MVPP Monthly Meeting – North Parish Church – Tuesday, April 27, 7:30 PM *Printed on recycled paper*

More alternative sources of news and information

For now you can listen to alternative news on the web at: <http://www.airamericaradio.com>

Democracy Now! Daily email digest. <http://www.democracynow.org>

Pax Christi USA www.paxchristiusa.org

Peace Abbey www.peaceabbey.org

You can subscribe to the Nuclear Week in Review, at <http://www.nuclearpolicy.org/Issues.cfm?NewsTopicID=34>, NPRI's roundup of the latest news in the nuclear world, with analysis and a survey of the latest stories in the news. Also, see:NPRI's Bomb Factory home page: <http://www.nuclearpolicy.org/bombfactory.cfm>

Andrew Lichterman of the Western States Legal Foundation produced an excellent paper describing the new policies: Mass Producing Weapons of Mass Destruction- U.S. Plans for a New Nuclear Weapons Factory and the Global Resurgence of Nuclear Arms (requires adobe acrobat)
<http://www.wslfweb.org/docs/mpfinfo.pdf>

Reader's Corner

MVPP member Peter Cameron suggests the following:

The Nation March 8, 2004. "Bush's Junk Science- Its more fiction than fact", Robert F. Kennedy, Jr, a senior attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council and President of the Waterkeeper Alliance. <http://www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml?i=20040308&s=kennedy>
The Nation, March 29,2004. "The Empire Backfires", Jonathan Schell, also the author of, The Unconquerable World Power, Non-violence and the Will of the People, Metropolitan. <http://www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml?i=20040329&s=schell>

Normandy in WWII. It was his first - and last - return to the country where he was born.

Yes, war is cruel. Yet, here in Nashua New Hampshire, we are still manufacturing weapons to continue this killing.

Your Honor, how can we say we believe in peace if at the same time we relentlessly prepare for war?

Even if the weapons that BAE manufacturers are never used to kill and maim, they still contribute heavily to the unnecessary death and suffering of countless numbers. Companies like BAE are given billions of dollars to make war equipment and then we are told that there is no money for the life saving work of hospitals, the building of new schools for a growing world population, or even the barest shelter for the homeless.

Your honor, as members of the human family, we cannot sit by while people suffer and starve needlessly. We must raise our voices and, yes even sometimes use our bodies, to make our voices heard. We beseech you, your Honor, to rule that nonviolent people who try to reduce the hostility among nations are not disorderly people. We planned our actions carefully, notified the company and police of our intentions, and obeyed their requests

We beg all world leaders to end war and to sit down and reason together for the benefit of all humankind.

And your Honor, let there be peace on earth. Let it begin with us, you and all those before you today.

Thank You.

March 20th in New York: Another Day of Progress .

by Don Abbott

Each of the 100,000 peacewalkers who filled the streets of New York on March 20, and certainly the 12 MVPP members* who joined the march, could fill countless newsletters across the country with stories and impressions of this highly successful demonstration. I have been asked to share just this one.

It is shortly after 5:30 PM at the end of a long, uplifting but bone-weary day, and I finally get off my feet, slumping to the floor in front of Gate 30 in Grand Central to cradle a cup of coffee and collect my thoughts before boarding the train to spend the night up country with my son, daughter-in-law, and two grandchildren. Throngs of people, many from the march, scurry to catch the early evening trains. And fatigue utterly consumes me, along with a touch of post-march depression brought on by the vitriol of young men who five minutes earlier had confronted me and my sign, "**Occupation Breeds Terrorism**," as I crossed 39th on Park. The darkness in their fear and the bite of their hatred still vex and unnerve.

Suddenly, a serene presence has emerged out of nowhere. It is Sister June, one of the Buddhists from "Walk for a New Spring," who had spent a night with us in Andover several days before. Exchanging a warm recognition and silent greeting, she sits beside me and begins to partake of her provision of rice. After a few minutes, she inquires of several of her Andover friends, and we share our mutual fondness for these good people. Another sip of warming coffee and then I ask, "How was the day for you?"

"Oh, last year, everyone was mostly young, angry too. This year, so many people, old and young and children--Muslims and Latinos and Jews and Blacks and all kinds--and their spirits were fine."

"That must seem like progress for you," I reply.

"Oh, Don, every day is progress for me."

The endless years and miles of her peaceful sojourning flash across my mind. At once, no longer tired, I feel whole again.

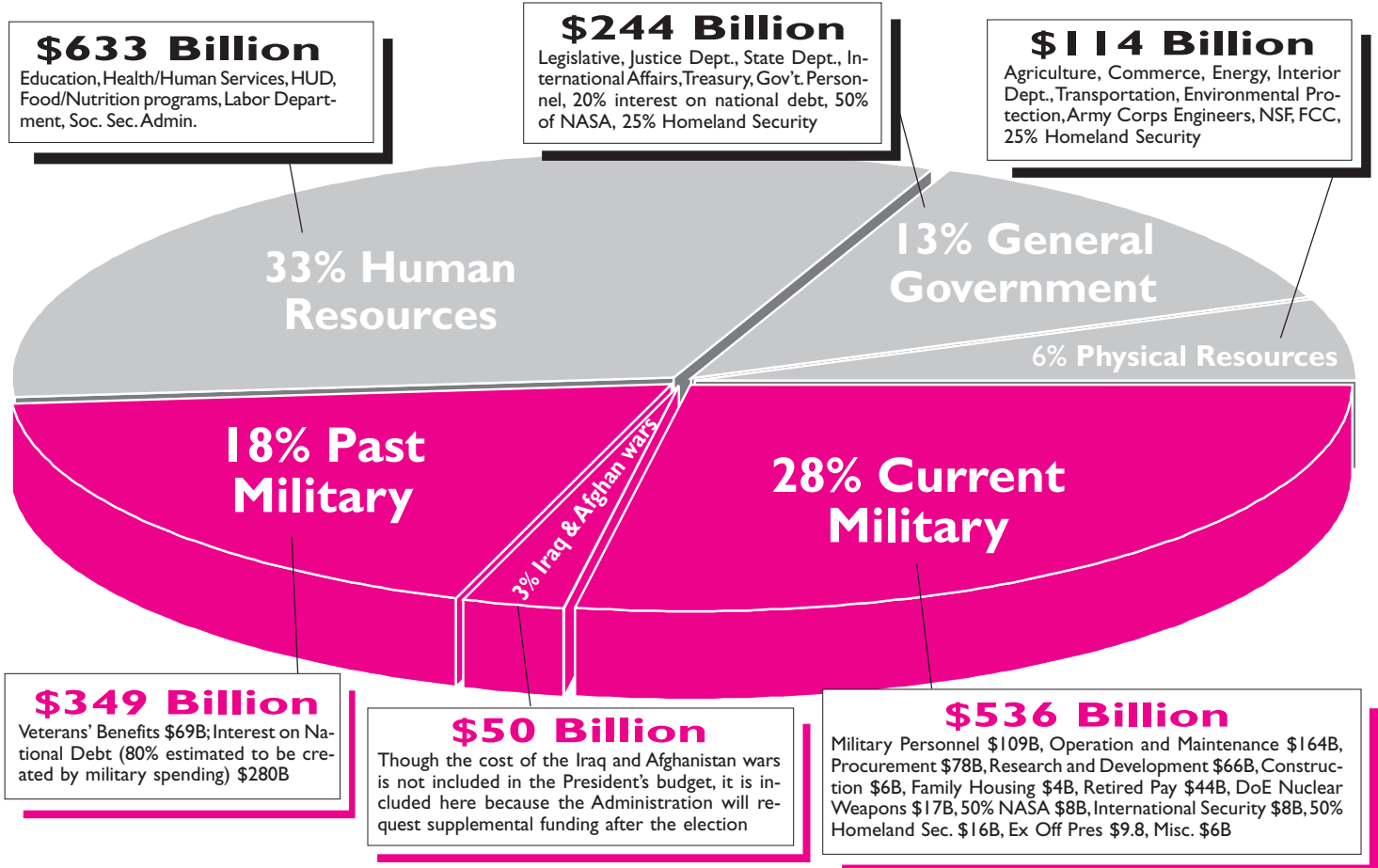
*Arthur, Barbara, Becci, Bobbie, Boryana, Brian, Don, Hattie, Henry, Mary, Masood, and Ralph



WHERE YOUR INCOME TAX MONEY REALLY GOES

The United States Federal Budget for Fiscal Year 2005

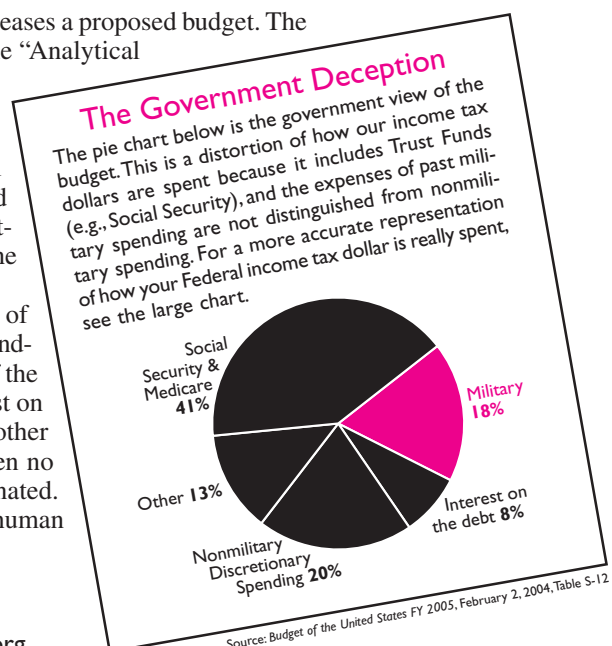
Total Federal Funds Outlays \$1,926 Billion



HOW THESE FIGURES WERE DETERMINED

WAR RESISTERS LEAGUE creates this leaflet each year after the President releases a proposed budget. The figures here are from a line-by-line analysis of projected figures in the "Analytical Perspectives" book of the *Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2005*. The percentages are federal funds, which do not include trust funds such as Social Security that are raised and spent separately from income taxes. What you pay (or don't pay) by April 15, 2004, goes only to the federal funds portion of the budget. The government practice of combining trust and federal funds (the so-called "Unified Budget") began in the 1960s during the Vietnam War. The government presentation makes the human needs portion of the budget seem larger and the military portion smaller.

"Current military" spending adds together money allocated for the Dept. of Defense (\$431 billion) plus the military portion from other parts of the budget. Spending on nuclear weapons (without their delivery systems) amounts to about 1% of the total budget. "Past military" represents veterans' benefits plus 80% of the interest on the debt. Analysts differ on how much of the debt stems from the military; other groups estimate 50% to 60%. We use 80% because we believe if there had been no military spending most (if not all) of the national debt would have been eliminated. The government willingly borrows for war, but finds nothing extra for crises in human needs. For further explanation, please go to www.warresisters.org/piechart.htm.



WAR RESISTERS LEAGUE

339 Lafayette Street • NY, NY 10012 • 212-228-0450 • www.warresisters.org

Source: Budget of the United States FY 2005, February 2, 2004, Table S-12

COSTS OF WAR IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN

DOLLARS & CENTS

Cost of Invading Iraq **\$26 billion**

(paid by FY2003 supplemental funding [below])
Department of Defense Comptroller Dov Zakheim, April 16, 2003

Ongoing Military Operations in Iraq **\$3.9 billion/month**

Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, July 9, 2003

Ongoing Military Operations in Afghanistan **\$1 billion/month**

USA Today, September 8, 2003

Supplemental Funding for FY 2003 **\$62.4 billion**

Congress approved April 2003 (10/02-9/03)

Supplemental Funding for FY 2004 **\$65.8 billion**

Congress approved November 2003 (10/03-9/04)

Supplemental Funding for FY 2005 **\$50 billion**

(Fall 2004, according to the Bush Administration)

“This budget attempts to hide the true cost of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan by delaying funding on all known and necessary costs of the war until a supplemental appropriation can be approved next year.”

—Sen. Jack Reed (RI), Armed Services Committee, 2/2/04

Sources for this information and more: www.costofwar.com; Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, www.csbaonline.org; Council for a Livable World, www.clw.org; Pew Research, <http://people-press.org>; www.unknownnews.net/casualties.html; Center for Defense Information, www.cdi.org; Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, www.cbpp.org; National Priorities Project, www.natprior.org; World Policy Institute, www.worldpolicy.org/projects/arms; www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/s947282.htm

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Demonstrate and leaflet during tax season and on the last day of filing, Thursday, April 15, 2004, at the IRS or a post office.
- Bring the **Stop the Merchants of Death** Speakers Tour to your community to learn more about corporations profiting from the war and military occupation, paid for by your tax dollars. See www.warresisters.org or call (212) 228-0450.
- Write the President and Congress and demand that war money be used for services instead. Write letters to the editor of your local paper. **Send them all copies of this flyer.**
- Refuse to pay the 3% federal excise tax on your phone bills. This tax has been used symbolically as a war tax since World War I. Though illegal, nonpayment of the tax is almost risk-free. See www.hanguponwar.org for details.
- Refuse to pay all or part of your income tax.

Though illegal, thousands of Americans are openly participating in this form of protest. You can take control of your paycheck and avoid contributing to the military. Contact us for information or referral to a counselor near you.

- Contribute resisted tax money to an organization working to help people or to an alternative fund that pools tax money from resisters and gives grants to human needs and peace groups.
- Contact the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee, PO Box 150553, Brooklyn, NY 11215, (800) 269-7464; www.nwtrcc.org. Support the Peace Tax Fund bill to allow 100% of your taxes to fund nonmilitary programs: (888) 732-2382; www.peacetaxfund.org.

RESOURCES

- Additional copies of this leaflet are available for 10¢ each (1-199), 7¢ each (200 - 499), 6¢ each (500+) plus 20% postage or call for exact amount.

SENSELESS

Lives Lost in Afghanistan & Iraq (as of Jan. 31, 2004)

- Over 600 U.S. troops and 100 “coalition” troops killed
- Over 3,000 U.S. troops and 300 “coalition” troops injured
- Over 15,000 Iraqi & Afghani troops killed
- Over 11,000 Iraqi & Afghani civilians killed
- Over 17,000 Iraqi & Afghani civilians injured

More Lost Lives

- 24,000 people worldwide die daily from chronic malnutrition
- 300,000 veterans go homeless each year in the U.S.
- 14,000 people worldwide die daily for lack of clean water

Lost Freedom

- U.S. holds over 10,000 prisoners in Iraq
- U.S. holds 660 prisoners at Guantanamo Bay, against the Geneva accords
- International Red Cross has visited over 1,200 detainees held by Afghan or U.S. forces in Afghanistan
- The Patriot Act gives the U.S. government new power to spy on its own citizens without judicial review, and to arrest and detain “suspects” without charges for indefinite periods

Friends: Lost and Found

- 53% of Europeans believe that the United States is a threat to world peace
- Mega-corporations like Halliburton, Bechtel, and DynCorp (all Bush/Cheney friends) are sharing no-bid contracts totalling more than \$5 billion—and counting—for Iraq Reconstruction
- Weapons contractors Lockheed Martin and Raytheon Company see profits jump thanks to increased military spending

Lost Security

- 48% of Americans believe the U.S. is less secure because of the Iraq war
- Former U.S. Marine and UN weapons inspector Scott Ritter warned that invading Iraq would be a long and horrific invitation to terrorism

- For sample brochures and resources on war tax resistance, send a self-addressed stamped (60¢) envelope to War Resisters League at the New York address below.

- *War Tax Resistance: A Guide to Withholding Your Support from the Military*, 144-page handbook with history, methods and resources. \$15 plus \$2 bookrate or \$4 priority mail.

LOCAL CONTACT:

WAR RESISTERS LEAGUE

339 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10012
Tel (212) 228-0450
Fax (212) 228-6193
wrl@warresisters.org
www.warresisters.org



Weekly Vigils

Andover, Sunday, Noon-1, Shawsheen Square, Route 133 and 28 Lawrence Friends Meeting/Shawsheen Peace Witness
asifferlen@sbra.com

Andover, Mon, Wed, Fri 7-8pm, Saturday 10:45-Noon (In good weather, 10-Noon),
Old Town Hall, Main St, - Lou Bernieri 978 475-6847, lbernieri@andover.edu
Merrimack Valley People For Peace, Bobbie Goldman, bg@comcast.net

Andover, Tuesday, 5:45-6:45 AM, in front of Raytheon plant near Routes 133 and 93, Raytheon Peacemakers,
Arthur Brien, 978-686-4418.

Haverhill, Sunday 3-4 pm, Monument Square, Northern Essex Peace Coalition

Newburyport, Sunday, 11:30, in front of Unitarian Church on Pleasant Street, -Call Pat Hurzeler, 978 465-0697

Reading, 2nd. Saturday each month, 11-12, Reading Square, Reading People For Peace, Bob Connor, bobconnor1@yahoo.com.
You can buy a Rainbow Peace Flag, or a button or bumper sticker at a Saturday Andover vigil.

Some signs seen at the march in New York City March 20, 2004.

Impeachment is patriotic Preemptive Peace
Uproot the shrub Fossil fuels make hostile fools
Bush Bin Lyin' War is so twentieth century
US out of Vermont Americans want democracy, too
The Patriot Act is Soooo 1984
War on Terrorism? War is terrorism!



Voices in the Wilderness Update

Kathy Kelly and (Rev.) Jerry Zawada were sentenced to federal prisons April 6 to six and seven months, respectively, for crossing a line onto two feet of government grass at Project ELF, in northern Wisconsin, on Mother's Day in May, 2003.

The ELF site houses an Extremely Low Frequency tower used by the US military to command the launch of nuclear missiles from Trident submarines. Its primary use would be in the event of a first-strike US nuclear weapon attack. However, during the recent Shock and Awe warfare against Iraq, the ELF site was used to "fast-track" launches of Tomahawk Cruise missiles that bombed Iraq.

Jerry and Kathy explained to the judge that because they were in Iraq during the massive bombing that began on March 20, 2003, they felt a particular responsibility to help close Project ELF because they'd seen the lethal and brutal civilian suffering that Tomahawk Cruise missiles caused when civilian homes, shopping centers and roadways were bombed.

Delegation to Colombia

Ecology, Spirituality and the War in Colombia. To be led by MVPP member, Sean Donahue. June 13-30, 2004.

Colombia has endured almost four decades of brutal national armed conflict between the army, leftist guerrilla movements, and right-wing paramilitary forces. Overwhelmingly, the victims of this conflict have been and continue to be civilians - primarily community leaders, human rights workers, and local labor organizers. The environment has been devastated by uncontrolled fumigation and the Amazon Jungle, also known as "The Lungs of the Earth" is facing extinction. To this the U.S. government is contributing billions of dollars in mostly military aid to Colombia."

Witness for Peace, New England invites you to Colombia to examine the human, ecological, economic, and spiritual impacts of war and repression and investigate the U.S. role in Colombia's civil war.

- While on this delegation you will have the opportunity to:
- Meet with a wide range of experts to hear analysis of the impact of U.S. policy in Colombia
- Learn about the economic roots of Colombia's conflict and why the "war on drugs" is failing
- Hear personal testimonies about the affects US policy in Colombia has on the environment and spiritual beliefs
- Travel outside Bogota to see the impact of military assistance on the Amazon, farmers and other civilians
- Share in solidarity with those seeking peace and justice in Colombia
- Gather tools and skills needed to educate and influence U.S. policymakers

Sean Donahue - 978-975-4438 - karunaawakening@aol.com
Through Witness For Peace

We Invite You to Join /Rejoin Us

\$20.00 Individual
\$10.00 Student/Senior
\$30.00

Circle One

\$50.00 Supporting
\$75.00 Sustaining
\$100.00 Peacemaker

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ E-Mail _____ Date _____

Return to MVPP
P.O. Box 573

MVPP is registered with the IRS as a non-profit organization
-contributions are tax deductible. "2004" on your mailing label indicates that your

Letters to the Editor

One year later: Were we right to invade Iraq? In answer to the question posed by the north shore newspapers, March 20,

No, Bush and his gang were not right to invade Iraq a year ago, nor have they since then made our country or the world any safer. How disheartening that this newspaper (3/16/04) editorializes and joins in the administration's duplicity by stating that we invaded Iraq to free the people "of the shackles of Saddam Hussein's bloody regime", forgetting that the real reason for the invasion was Bush's lie: "There is no doubt the Iraqi regime continues to possess the most lethal weapons ever devised".

Yes, Saddam was evil, but what adjective can we apply to ourselves for allowing the deaths of over 500 US soldiers, for the thousands more wounded, and for the more than 10,000 Iraqis, civilians as well as soldiers, who have died since the US bullied its way a year ago into that impoverished country which already had suffered the consequences of the first Gulf War, leaving thousands of children bereft of health, family and education.

This newspaper—and others-- has failed to report the consequences about the US aggression in retaliation for the 9/11 attacks. Instead, it has given the President carte- blanche, allowing him to change his tune to fit the evolving news. Clinton was impeached by Congress (and the press) for his sexual peccadilloes, yet Bush is committing one of the worst evils of all-- lying to the world about Iraq's non-existent weapons of mass destruction in order to gain control of that country, with Congress and the press saying nary a peep. "These are the cold-blooded killers", Bush said on Wed. 16 March 2004, referring to the Spanish bombers, unconcerned about how many people are dying in Iraq.

Barbara Haack
March 19, 2004

Bush Lied, American Soldiers Died And Continue To Die.

Dear Letters Editor, Lawrence Eagle Tribune:

It is time that President Bush is held accountable for misleading us into this unilateral, pre-emptive and immoral war.

It has now been established that President Bush was planning for war with Iraq from his first days in the White House. The decision had been made. The tragedy of 9/11 was the excuse he was looking for. The President ran a campaign of misinformation, hype and hysteria to lead America into an unnecessary war.

Before the war, President Bush was repeatedly told that there was no definitive evidence that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction. He also knew that Iraq had neither nuclear weapons nor means to deliver them. He knew that there was no Iraq connection to 9/11. Iraq posed no imminent threat to the United States. There was no case for a pre-emptive war.

Yet he relentlessly deceived and led us into a war that has cost more than 550 American lives, left more than 3,000 seriously injured, and wasted tens of billions of dollars --- stolen away from education, health care and jobs for Americans. Additionally, more than 10,000 innocent Iraqi civilians have been killed.

With his mad-cowboy attitude he has turned the tremendous goodwill for America generated after 9/11 into unprecedented hatred for America.

The US Congress must act to hold President Bush accountable for his lies, and our senators, Edward Kennedy and John Kerry must lead this effort.

Sincerely,
Masood A. Sheikh
North Andover

Upcoming Events

April 21, at 7 pm: "How 'Free Trade' Subverts Democracy and Widens the Wealth Gap - and What We Can Do About It" with Andy Davis at South Church, 292 State St. in Portsmouth. Andy is a political activist and storyteller who co-directs the World Fellowship Center in NH. He has recently returned from the Third Annual Hemispheric Encounter Against the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) in Havana, Cuba. His talk will be about the FTAA and the Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), and stories of resistance struggles from throughout the Americas. For more information contact Amy Antonucci amy44@juno.com, phone 750-7506.

April 25, at 6 pm: FORD HALL FORUM presents a free public lecture and discussion, The Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons with Tadatoshi Akiba, Mayor of Hiroshima and President of Mayors for Peace. In the Raytheon Amphitheatre / Egan Center / 120 Forsyth Street on the campus of Northeastern University, Boston. Presented in association with THE JAPAN SOCIETY OF BOSTON and WOMEN'S ACTION FOR NEW DIRECTIONS (WAND). For more information about this program or the pre-lecture reception with Mayor Akiba, call Ford Hall Forum at (617) 373-5800 or go to <http://www.fordhallforum.neu.edu>.

Amy Goodman, host of the national daily radio/TV program Democracy Now! is on a national tour to mark the launch of her first book, The Exception to the Rulers: Exposing Oily Politicians, War Profiteers, and the Media That Love Them (co-written with her brother, journalist David Goodman.) The tour includes fundraisers for Pacifica radio stations and affiliates that carry Democracy Now! <http://www.democracynow.org/book>. She will be at the following locations:

April 29, 7:30pm--Cambridge, MA - Cambridge Forum, First Parish (Unitarian Universalist) Cambridge, 3 Church Street, with Noam Chomsky and her co-author/brother David Goodman. Voluntary contribution \$1-\$5; first come, first served. For more information: <http://www.cambridgeforum.org>

April 30, 12:30pm--Boston, MA. Borders Books & Music 10-24 School Street, Boston. With Amy Goodman and her co-author/brother David Goodman. For more information: (617) 557-7188

April 30, 8pm. Anne Azèma, voice and Joel Cohen, lutes and voice, of the Boston Camerata perform Medieval & Renaissance French Love Songs at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 26 Pleasant St. Newburyport. This is a concert to benefit the Greater Newburyport WAND Peace Fellowship, which is a Scholarship that will be open to young adults in the Greater Newburyport area to provide funding towards college tuition, leadership training, internships and support and mentoring in order to empower youth to work toward peace and environmental protection. Suggested donations \$15 adults, \$10 students. Call Karen Solstad 978-388-0233 or K.solstad@verizon.net.

April 30-May 2. MVPP has invited the **WHEELS OF JUSTICE TOUR BUS** to stop in our area. The Tour Bus is traveling the country, challenging and educating North Ameri-

cans on the occupation of Iraq and Palestine. They will be joining us for our Saturday morning and Sunday noon vigils. Further details of where and at what times you will be able to interact with the bus tour team will be posted on our website as they are confirmed. Please mark your calendars for one event that weekend - Political Satirist Dave Lippman, featuring George Shrub, will be appearing on Sat. evening, May 1st, 7:30 p.m. N. Parish Unitarian Church, 190 Academy Rd. N. Andover. Admission: \$7 (students \$5) Check out the WOJ website <http://www.justicewheels.org/mission.html> for information re the tour's mission, platform and bios of the team. For the latest local information, please call Mary Kate at 978.474.0606 or check www.merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org

The Wheels of Justice Tour Platform

- We call for adherence to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- We oppose all violence against any civilians; every human being has a right to live.
- Through education, outreach, nonviolent actions and personal witness, we stand in opposition to the violence and injustice of war, terror and occupation.
- We recognize that to find peace, the root injustices must be sought, seen and directly dealt with.
- We seek and practice nonviolent alternatives to the current violence and advocate solutions to the roots of war in Iraq and Palestine/Israel and our own communities.

May 1, from 11 am to 11 pm: **SolarFest celebration** at UNH, Durham. In the spirit of compassion SolarFest is a completely solar powered celebration of peace and the diversity of life. Inclusive of all cultures, with music, art, and movement we will gather in the light of May Day to express our appreciation for local and global community. SolarFest is an outdoor celebration that will be centrally located on campus and highly visible. For more information contact Matthew Kochka, The SolarFest Visionary Committee, at detritivore@care2.com.

May 15, from Noon-5 PM. A conference "Peacemaking in Israel/Palestine: Is It Possible?" in Weston at the First Parish Church in Weston Center. Speakers include Sara Roy and Leila Farsakh. Free admission.

June 18, Save the date for our annual MVPP meeting. We will have a potluck dinner starting at 6:30, followed by a brief business meeting and a celebration of our 20 years of working for peace, including entertainment by the Raging Grannies.

July 23 - 25, Boston Social Forum - Another Boston is possible. Another world is possible. At the University of Massachusetts at Boston (UMB)-just before the Democratic National Convention-a coalition of Boston area, progressive, community organizations, unions and collectives will be hosting what promises to be an exciting event-the Boston Social Forum (BSF). In addition, we are planning cultural presentations and other community-based events and tours throughout the Boston area before, during and after the three-day anchor event at UMB.

A regional forum within the World Social Forum process, the BSF has been called to help progressive activists answer the basic questions: What kind of future do we want for Boston? For our nation? For the world? What is our vision? Through a series of workshops, plenary sessions, and giant convocations of the entire forum, we are encouraging progressive organizations of all kinds to showcase their best analysis of the present, and their best projections for the future, across the breadth of human knowledge-politics, economics, science and technology, culture and faith-in the context of corporate globalization. The goals of the event are simple: encourage various social movements to exchange information, network with one another, form new alliances, and push our movements forward a bit more towards the next stage of our development.

We'd like to do our part to help progressives seize the high ground of ideas in this society, and then, having captured people's imaginations, move forward to become a more significant political force.

We invite all progressive activists to come to the BSF. Watch this website over the coming months for information on preregistration, and on how to propose workshops and plenaries. Artists and performers should also watch this site for announcements on how to plug into and shape the events. For more information click on the web site at

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

Click here for a basic outreach flyer for the event in PDF format.

<http://www.bostonsocialforum.org/BSFflyer.pdf>. For more

information, please send an e-mail to

Info@BostonSocialForum.org

Aug. 29, Mass worldwide protest during the Republican Convention in New York City. On February 15, 2003, millions of people all over the world took to the streets in protest with the message The World Says No to War. On August 29, 2004, we will come together in New York City and in cities throughout the world to say The World Says No to Bush! There will also be a protest on Thursday, Sept. 2, 2004, the day of Bush's official selection as the presidential candidate of the Republican Party, initiated by United for Peace and Justice (<http://www.unitedforpeace.org>), a U.S. anti-war coalition with more than 600 member groups. UFPJ looks forward to working with many other organizations on this day of protest, so please contact them at info@unitedforpeace.org or 212-603-3700 if your group wants to work collaboratively on these actions and to let them know about other actions being planned to coincide with the Republican Convention.

Minutes of MVPP Meeting, March 23, 2004

The following were in attendance: Don Abbott, Becci Backman, Lou Bernieri, Jane Cadarette, Peter Cameron, Anne Donahue, Bobbie Goldman, Barbara Haack, Barbara Jordan, Brenda

McCarthy, Brian Quirk, Kathie Robinson, Masood Sheikh, Mary Kate Small, Boryana Tacconi, Jim Todd, and Mary Todd.

Treasurer's Report: Peter reported a current balance of \$3,992,45.

Membership: Becci reported that our membership has now reached the 100 mark. She also shared recent expressions of gratitude from organizations to which we have made recent donations.

Newsletter: We expressed much appreciation to those who had a hand in the production of the recent newsletter, especially Lou and Brian. We discussed suggestions for upcoming articles, and volunteers stepped up to submit them.

Brief Reports on Recent Activity: **a.** "Walk for a New Spring": the vigil, potluck, and overnight visit with the Buddhists were memorable and successful. Henry joined the procession on the next day, and Boryana and Becci walked the final leg on the last day; **b.** March 14th vigil, "No More Victims," in Andover's Old Town Hall Square: it received excellent advanced coverage in the *Eagle-Tribune* and was attended by approximately 75 people. Brian's bagpiping in the extreme cold was heroically effective. Don's opening remarks are on the website. **c.** March 20th Demonstration in NYC: it was attended by 12 MVPP members, each of whom reported the event to have been memorable, powerful, and highly successful.

Endorsements: **a.** We voted officially to endorse the petition for the resolution to Congress for the U.S. government to undertake a full, fair, and expeditious investigation into the death of Rachel Corrie, the 23-year-old U.S. peace activist who was killed by an Israeli Defense Force bulldozer while trying to prevent nonviolently the demolition of a Palestinian house in the Gaza Strip on 3/16/03. **b.** We voted to send \$50 to Toxics Action to co-sponsor their conference on April 3. **c.** Following up on our earlier endorsement of the International Campaign to Ban Depleted Uranium Weapons (ICBUW), we decided to donate to Memorial Library in Andover a copy of the book we have for sale, *Hiroshima: Appeal for Banning DU Weapons*.

Upcoming Events: We checked on who would be attending the following (At least a few members were planning to participate in each): the March 25th demonstration in Boston when President Bush attends a fundraiser at the Park Plaza, the town meeting on "Prospects for Peace in Israel" at Temple Shalom in Newton on March 25; the UJP brunch on March 28, the movie "*Peace, Propaganda & the Promised Land: U.S. Media & the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*" at the MFA on March 28; the March to Abolish Poverty in Lawrence and Lowell on March 31 (endorsed and supported by MVPP), about which Anne Donahue kindly shared updated information; and the Michele Shocked concert in Newburyport on April 3 that is a benefit for The Boston Social Forum (the MVPP table of goods will be at this event). We also discussed with much interest the upcoming Wheels of Justice Tour by members of Voices in the Wilderness during the first days of May. The group hoped that we could support this touring group and its highly educational message.

Mary Kate volunteered to try to pull off the logistics for a venue, hospitality, etc.

Annual Meeting: We decided to hold the annual meeting at 6:30 PM on Friday, June 18 at North Parish Church in North Andover. It will begin with our traditional potluck supper. Program suggestions were discussed, and we hope to have plans in place by mid- end of April.

Program Planning: We continued our earlier discussions about program priorities for the future. A September benefit concert remains high on our list, as part of our 20th Anniversary celebration. An October program, in the month prior to the Presidential election, has appeal as well, especially if it is geared to overriding, economic issues. Individuals named or reaffirmed the most pressing issues as they see them--Iraq, Israel and Palestine, depleted uranium, changing the political leadership in America, conscientious objection and the draft, outreach to and solidarity with military families, the economy, and the environment.

In advance of our next monthly meeting, Don will convene a smaller group to refine program plans and suggestions.

Next Meeting: Tuesday evening, April 27 at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Don Abbott, Secretary

Poem

"Another Intelligence Failure" by Don Abbott
Intoning extremes of unction,
He lied without compunction.

The Emperor's clothes
(in Orwellian prose)
Had a political wardrobe malfunction.

Quotes

...Moreover, Marx had revealed the danger of the profit motive as the sole basis of an economic system; capitalism is always in danger of inspiring men to be more concerned about making a living than making a life. We are prone to judge success by the index of our salaries or the size of our automobiles, rather than by the quality of our service and relationship to humanity--thus capitalism can lead to a practical materialism that is as pernicious as the materialism taught by communism. -*Martin Luther King, Jr.*

"Civil disobedience is not our problem. Our problem is civil obedience. Our problem is that numbers of people all over the world have obeyed the dictates of the leaders of their government and have gone to war, and millions have been killed because of this obedience. . . Our problem is that people are obedient all over the world in the face of poverty and starvation and stupidity, and war, and cruelty. Our problem is that people are obedient while the jails are full of petty thieves, and all the

while the grand thieves are running the country. That's our problem." *Howard Zinn "Failure to Quit" p 45*

Why We Still Vigil

We stand and work for peace and justice and there is much more work to do.

We believe the U.S. invasion of Iraq was unnecessarily, illegal, and unjust.

We believe that non-military actions, through diplomacy and international law, are the best means of settling differences.

We believe that the actions of the present administration - before, during, and after the Iraq War - are causing the destruction of international law, weakening the value of the United Nations peace-keeping and humanitarian-serving functions, and making the world more insecure and dangerous for US citizens.

We denounce the present administrations doctrine of: 1) the US right to global military supremacy; 2) the US right to preemptively attack any sovereign nation assumed by the US to be a potential threat; and 3) the US right to first use of nuclear weapons.

We oppose any use of nuclear weapons and call for global nuclear disarmament.

We denounce the use of depleted uranium weapons, deployed in Iraq in the Gulf Wars I and II, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan, which have caused extensive damage to people (all troops, including our own; innocent civilians; and the unborn) and the environment.

We plead with our government to act responsibly to clean up the war-related radiated soils and waters of Afghanistan, Bosnia, Iraq, Kosovo, Kuwait, and the US.

We denounce cuts in Veterans Benefits and the refusal of our government to treat war related health problems of veterans and civilians.

We condemn the waste of our country's human and economic resources: billions of tax dollars diverted from education, jobs, health care and housing.

We support the establishment of a cabinet level Department of Peace.

We call on all citizens to reclaim our democracy: honor, dissent, run for office, vote, demand a free press, oppose abusive corporate power, and protect every citizen's right to privacy.

We stand and work for peace and justice and there is much more work to do.

Please join us in Andover: *Old Town Hall, Main Street Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 7 PM to 8 PM; Saturdays 10:45 AM to 11:45 AM; and at*

Shawsheen Square (North Main and Lowell Streets) Sundays Noon to 1 PM.

Insets

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**PEACE IS
PATRIOTIC**

The MVPP Newsletter is printed monthly and has a current mailing of 120. We are grateful for suggestions, comments, and help with publication. (2004 on your mailing label indicates that your 2003-2004 dues have been paid.)
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Newsletter Editors: Barbara Haack, Lou Bernieri, Bobbie Goldman, Brian Quirk, Arthur & Marguerite Brien

**CALL AND WRITE YOUR REPRESENTATIVES &
SENATORS TO MAKE YOUR VIEWS KNOWN**

Every legislator knows one letter is worth a thousand votes.

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