



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.

February 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

Spirit of Resistance Concert , People's Network

For music lovers and peace and justice activists, the year started with an unforgettable event: a concert honoring the Spirit of Resistance and featuring legendary folk musician and peace, justice and environment activist Pete Seeger along with a pleiad of wonderful performers. Karen Brandow & Charlie King, Karen Brooks, Bev Grant, Joanne Hammil, Tom Neilson, Dean Stevens, Ben Tousley, The Phillips Academy Gospel Choir, Hope Street's The Urban Explosion Dance Company of Lawrence and The Lawrence High School Girls' Choir all contributed to an uplifting musical evening.

The concert took place in Cochran Chapel, Phillips Academy, Andover, MA on January 23, attracting an audience of all ages from across Massachusetts and out of state despite the harsh winter weather. As expected with Pete Seeger in the center of the event, it soon became an enthusiastic sing-along that included everyone present. Beloved classics such as "Over the Rainbow" and "This Little Light of Mine," led by Pete Seeger were followed by a new 4-part round song that Joanne Hammil taught the audience. And who could forget the spontaneous way in which the whole audience stood up and joined Charlie King and Karen Brandow in "Stand Up."

Based on the widely known words of German pastor Martin Niemoller in 1945 ("When they came for the Communists... the Jews... the Unionists... the Priests... the Homosexuals... I didn't speak up. When they came for me, there was no one left to speak up"), the song has been recently adapted by Charlie and Karen, who added: "Now they come for the Moslems, now they come for the Refugees - but now I will stand up and I will ask why; and by the time they come for me, I hope there will be someone standing at my side. A powerful appeal to human solidarity in face of injustice and tyranny, this song will be remembered as one of the highest points in the evening.

The concert was sponsored by the People's Music Network for Songs of Freedom and Struggle, the Phillips

Academy Music Department, the Merrimack Valley People for Peace and the Massachusetts Anti-Corporate Clearinghouse. It opened the winter gathering of the People's Music Network, an organization with more than 500 members across the U.S. and Canada.

Boryana Tacconi

The People's Network Concert opened the winter gathering of the People's Music Network, an organization with more than 500 members across the U.S. and Canada using music and culture to promote progressive ideas and values. Twice a year, PMN members have gatherings opened to everyone where they can swap songs, share stories, experiences and political ideas with each other, attend musical/organizing workshops and perform before a knowledgeable and supportive audience. The Winter Gathering is held in a different location each year.

The Saturday and Sunday activities took place at the Lawrence Council of Aging. One of the reasons Lawrence was chosen: the 1912 "Bread and Roses" strike, one of the foundations of today's labor movement. The Saturday afternoon Plenary was entitled "Lawrence Resistance - Past, Present and Future Thru Music, Art and History". The Plenary focused on the struggles of the Lawrence community from the days of the 1912 strike to the present. It was coordinated and led by Jonathan Leavitt, committed local activist and founder of the Massachusetts Anti-Corporate Clearinghouse. The Reagan Babies - of which Jon is a member- are inspired and inspiring songwriters and performers! Their contributions, and that of Jim Beauchesne from the Lawrence Heritage State Park, made for an informative and entertaining session. Jim's love of the city and wide knowledge impressed all gathered, especially those who took his van tours of Lawrence.

Instead of competition, so often present when artists come together, a general feeling of support was in the air.

MVPP Monthly Meeting – North Parish Church – Tuesday, February 24, 7:30 PM *Printed on recycled paper*

These notes would be incomplete without mentioning the work of several MVPP members who were involved in organizing the weekend: Rebecca Backman, Arthur Brien, Ralph and Angela Galen, Brian Quirk and the Todds, Mary Kate Small, Boryana Tacconi, Don Abbott and all MVPPers who gave their support.

For those who missed the concert - we have a video! Ralph Galen has agreed to let us use the Andover Unitarian Church on Locke Street for a pot luck some March night to see what all the fuss was about. For those who would like to join in, please send M.K. Small an email at marykatespeace@yahoo.com or call (978)474-0606 the list. The great news is that checks were made out for over \$5000 from the profits. These are being distributed to peace, resistance and other great groups.

Mary Kate Small

Recent news reports confirm what we, the worldwide movement against the Iraq war, said last year. Former U.S. chief weapons inspector **David Kay** has stated that the government was utterly wrong about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. Secretary of State Colin Powell now says there was no Iraqi tie to Al-Qaeda.

Opposition to the Patriot Act On February 4, the Council of the City of New York approved a resolution denouncing parts of the Patriot Act and affirming that security measures [must] enhance the public safety without impairing constitutional rights or infringing on civil liberties. The resolution makes New York the 251st "civil liberties safe zone" and raises the zone's population to 43 million nationwide, according to the Bill of Rights Defense Committee, which tracks the movement and encourages communities to join in a national debate on these issues. Four of the country's five most populous cities—New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Philadelphia—are now "safezones" along with the states of Alaska, Hawaii, and Vermont.

Despite an unprecedented public relations offensive by Attorney General Ashcroft and a veto threat from the White House, Congress is moving toward revising the Patriot Act's most dangerous provisions.

Buoyed by the groundswell of opposition, momentum is building for legislation that would correct PATRIOT Act provisions that allow for unwarranted investigations of personal records, authorize secret "sneak and peek" searches and roll back judicial oversight.

This corrective legislation -- the SAFE Act -- would not repeal commonsense provisions in the PATRIOT Act, but would instead revise those provisions that infringe on our civil liberties without making us any safer.

The Year in Review: Surprise Victories from

ActForChange: Throughout 2003, ActForChange members expressed their views on issues ranging from the environment and judicial nominees to energy policy, media ownership and Iraq. Over 2.2 million e-mails and petition signatures sent in 2003 to decision-makers worldwide, despite that helped win some important victories, including:

--Succeeded in convincing judicial appointee Miguel Estrada to withdraw his name from consideration for a seat on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

--Supported ongoing filibusters to block the judicial appointments of Charles Pickering, Carolyn Kuhl, William Pryor, Priscilla Owen, and Janice Rogers Brown. --Blocked the destructive energy plan and once again defended the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from oil drilling.

--Convinced California's Secretary of State to require that all e-voting machines in the state must produce a voter-verifiable paper audit trail by 2006.

--Urged California Governor Davis to support affordable health care for California workers by signing SB 2, groundbreaking legislation that provides health insurance coverage to millions of California's workers.

--Convinced Congress to rescind an insidious rider that would have allowed poultry and livestock producers to use non-organic feed, but still label their products as organic.

--Successfully pressured EPA administrator Michael Leavitt to drop the administration's effort to revise the 1972 Clean Water Act which would have opened large areas of wetlands habitat to development.

Raytheon peacemaker and noted peace scholar, Michael True is in India until March 6th. True is visiting the University of Delhi, the University of Rajasthan and other universities interested in or committed to peace, conflict, and nonviolence studies.

ACTS OF RESISTANCE

The Chain Reaction Affinity Group that was arrested at BAE in Nashua is awaiting a consolidated trial date for their action, ideally in early March

Lawsuit Against Bush: Two wars, thousands of deaths, more mutilations, the doctrine of preemptive war, and a promise of war without end have been justified by the terrorist attacks of 9-11. There are questions about Bush administration complicity in those terror attacks, at least in allowing them to occur. In New Hampshire, one of the 911 widows, Ellen Mariani of Derry, has refused to participate in the government's compensation fund and is instead suing Bush and associates for prior knowledge of 911 and allowing it to happen. Her web site www.911forthetruth.com has complete documentation, including the brief itself.

The New Pearl Harbor: Disturbing Questions about the Bush Administration and 9-11 Theologian David Ray Griffin, argues that the Bush administration was complicit in the 9-11 attacks. Rosemary Reuther's review in the National Catholic Reporter states: "Until recently I dismissed the suggestions that the Bush administration might have been complicit in allowing 9/11 to happen as groundless conspiracy theory...I found Griffin's book both convincing and chilling. If the complicity of the Bush administration to which he points is true, then Americans have a far greater problem on their hands than even the more ardent antiwar activists have imagined. If the administration would do this, what else would it do to maintain and expand its power."

Considering the Israel/Palestine Wall

Much of the peace and social justice movement in the United States has long chosen not to address the occupation of the Palestinian territories by Israel. With the advent in 2002 of construction of the "Security Fence" by Ariel Sharon and the Likud government of Israel, the human rights violations and injustices occurring daily in the Palestinian territories are so extreme that the US peace and justice movement can no longer remain silent. All over the US, local chapters of United for Peace with Justice, in conjunction with other organizations whose focus is the Middle East, undertook construction of mock "security fences," that would be portable and could be used to illustrate what is being built by the Israeli government.

In the Boston chapter, United for Justice with Peace (UJP), of which MVPP is a member, the Israel/Palestine Task Force worked with local peace organizations to construct a thirteen-foot high mock-up of the "security fence," referred to locally as "the Wall." On the Wall are maps showing the route of construction, pictures of the bulldozing of homes and fields, statements of fact, and a banner saying "Israel Tear Down the Wall." Coinciding with the tenth anniversary of the demolition of the Berlin Wall in November, 1993, the Wall toured various Boston area communities everyday during the week of November 9 -15.

Members of the Israel/Palestine Task Force, at the invitation of MVPP, set up the Wall in downtown Andover at our weekly vigil on November 22. Many brochures and articles written by Israelis were handed out explaining the route of the Wall which will usurp as much as 50 percent of the land deemed to be Palestine as established in 1967, and commenting on the separation of Palestinian villages from their schools, fields and water sources. The cost to construct the Wall is estimated to be \$2 million per kilometer, largely funded by US aid. Comments for and against the mock-up were heard. The following letters were subsequently published in the Andover Townsman and posted on the MVPP web site. The issue has proven to be controversial to some of our membership as well. One MVPP member is now a member of the Israel/Palestine Task Force. We will continue to have articles about the subject available at every event where MVPP sets up a table and will post periodic updates to the web site. We urge all members to learn about the topic and write to our national leaders to educate them.

We note that the Wall currently faces two court challenges, one in the Supreme Court of Israel and the one in the International Court of Justice in The Hague. The Israeli government has started to back down under world pressure, and has said Israel is working to reroute parts of the security fence to make it less burdensome on the Palestinians. We sincerely hope that they will act more responsibly and appropriately and at least change the route of the wall closer to the Green Line or the 1967 boundary.

Letters About the Israel/Palestine Wall

The Andover Townsman printed a letter December 4, 2003

Middle East and terrorism

'Myopic view' in front of Old Town Hall.

two MVPP members replied. Printed December 11, 2003.

Israel wall hurts efforts toward peace in region

In Middle East, walls make for worse neighbors

We are two of the Andover residents who have vigiled regularly in front of Old Town Hall, since the invasion of Iraq, to demonstrate our commitment to global peace. We were instrumental in helping to bring to Andover a representation of the wall being constructed by the Sharonist government in the occupied Palestinian territories. This representation is an effort by the Israeli-Palestinian Task Force of the coalition of peace and justice organizations, United for Justice with Peace, to educate Americans about the reality of the Separation Wall, the so-called "security fence."

The issues faced by Israel and Palestine are complex, steeped in history which can be variously interpreted and will not be resolved without fierce determination by both sides. But it is the contention of thoughtful and dedicated people worldwide that walls of this sort never lead to lasting peace. Indeed, history teaches us that the opposite is true. One need only remember the Berlin Wall and the misery it wrought.

The Israeli peace organization, Gush Shalom, has compiled extensive research on this issue. Its Web site, www.gush-shalom.org offers a comprehensive discussion of the realities of the Separation Wall. Billed by Sharon as a temporary measure, the cost to construct the wall is estimated at \$2 million per kilometer, meaning a staggering \$1.5 billion to complete. In places it is 26 feet high, topped by barbed wire, with 13-foot-deep trenches on either side. And the "security fence" is not being constructed along the agreed upon 1967 border. Instead, the wall intrudes deep into the West Bank, usurping as much as 40 to 50 per cent of what was agreed in 1967 to be Palestinian land. Countless Palestinian homes have been razed. Families are now in makeshift refugee camps. Villages are separated from their water supplies and farmers are separated from their livelihoods, their fields. 83,000 Palestinian olive trees have been destroyed. The town of Qalqiliya and the village of Jayous are completely surrounded by the wall, with residents being required to pass through a control gate to enter and exit. Recent reports of the US military surrounding an Iraqi village, Abu Hishma, with a barbed wire fence reflect a strategy learned from the Israelis. This tactic has not led to peace in Israel; it is not promoting understanding and trust in Iraq. It is unlikely to lead to anything but more terrorist attacks in both Israel and Iraq; occupation breeds terrorism.

In all of recorded history, there is no instance where fighting injustice with injustice leads to a reasoned result. Have we learned nothing from experience? No one suggests that the Palestinians are blameless, but this wall is not a defensive measure against terrorism. It is instead a direct assault on the two-state solution that has almost universal

support as the most likely resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The route of the wall renders a Palestinian state impossible. Even the Bush administration has balked at the route, for this very reason. Pope John Paul II has pleaded with the Israeli government: "In reality, the Holy Land doesn't need walls, but bridges." We agree.

An organization of which we are members, Merrimack Valley People for Peace, seeks to promote programs with local groups, including synagogues and churches. As US taxpayers, we deplore the use of our dollars to construct this wall. We call on all Americans, of every ethnic and religious persuasion to learn the facts. We all. To that end, we will continue to read, to listen and to talk in forums and with passersby in front of Old Town Hall.

Donald Abbott Rebecca Backman
300 South Main Street 19 Pomeroy Road

A reply to that letter was printed December 25, 2003 titled:
Israeli and Palestinian people want same thing

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR From Members

January 21, 2004 Lawrence Eagle Tribune

Dr. King Opposed War (submitted as Civil Rights Leaders Opposed War)

As we remember Rev. King's accomplishments, we who oppose war today continue his means of peaceful protest. I am a member of the Merrimack Valley People for Peace.

When Martin Luther King Jr. was a teen in the 1940's, Gandhi was using non-violence to free India from the British Empire. In Chicago, the Congress of Racial Equality (C.O.R.E.) was opposing racial discrimination.

After W.W.II, US citizens were proud to have fought to make the world more fair, so there was growing feeling that minorities should have equal rights. Protests increased and were noticed.

The 1955 Montgomery bus boycott brought the civil rights movement and Martin Luther King Jr, national attention. By 1964, non-violent protests helped persuade Congress to pass the Civil Rights Act.

Dr. King spoke, connecting issues of poverty, labor relations, and war. By opposing the growing war in Viet Nam, as did some other black leaders, Dr. King risked offending the government that had just passed the Civil Rights Act. On April 4, 1967, Rev. King spoke at the Riverside Church in New York:

"...I speak for those whose land is being laid waste, whose homes are being destroyed, whose culture is being subverted. I speak for the poor of America who are paying the double price of smashed hopes at home and death and corruption in Vietnam...The initiative to stop it must be ours...This way of settling differences is not just...A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is

approaching spiritual death..."

(<http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/45a/058.html>
www.forusa.org/nonviolence/MLK_Day_Resources.html)

A year later Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. Today's situation in Iraq calls for the wisdom and resolve of Dr. King. Let us continue to use nonviolent means to bring peace with justice.

Brian Quirk, Lawrence

December 8, 2003 Lawrence Eagle Tribune

Protesters are speaking out for peace and justice

While thousands of protesters were marching around London decrying the evil of war, in Whitehall Palace George W. Bush spoke glowingly of the US/UK partnership in the illegal preemptive attack on Iraq and subsequent occupation. Granted, he didn't describe it in just that way.

A recent column in the Eagle-Tribune labeled the marchers as Reds, anarchists, and that most fear-some of words - pacifists. The author ridiculed their actions saying: "they chanted their little chants and sang their little peace songs."

Bush referred to the people in the streets and got a chuckle when he said, "I've been here only a short time, but I've noticed that the tradition of free speech - exercised with enthusiasm - is alive and well here in London. We have that at home too." And for good measure he threw in - "They now have that right in Baghdad, as well."

It is wonderful that in the United States we still have the right of free speech. At least the last time I checked we did. Sadly, those who exercise it are often slammed as traitors or ignorant or advocates of doing nothing.

People aware of injustices become outraged. They muster their courage, join with other outraged people and march with signs to wake us up. If they were editors of newspapers, they could polish off a column and be read by thousands. If they were talk show hosts, they could do their monologues and get people all excited about the way they see things. And people would act. But if they are ordinary people, by the time they are out marching many have written hundreds of letters-to-the-editors, spoken to their Congressmen, called the President's Hot line and nothing happened. Some discover it is their duty under international, constitutional and moral law to commit civil resistance.

In the Civil Rights Movement courageous, outraged people risked their lives, went to jail. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. went to jail with them many times. They were considered agitators. They were slammed for exercising their free speech. Today we applaud them and have a holiday for Martin who understood and taught the power of nonviolence. Nonviolence doesn't mean doing nothing. Consider the velvet revolutions in the Philippines, Czechoslovakia and most recently in the former Soviet Republic of Georgia.

We shouldn't deride the protesters in the streets of London or the 7,500 people arrested in our country this year for protesting the war against Iraq. They are the prophets of

today. If one picture is said to be worth a thousand words, imagine how many people are represented and inspired by one person standing up for justice and peace.

Jane Cadarette North Andover

October 30, 2003 The Newburyport Daily News

Build Peace in Response to Violence

I have continued to think about your editorial urging us to remember our anger about the terrible losses of 9/11. To what important end? Would we consider bombing a part of Boston to destroy a group of people we consider dangerous? No. Such an action simply does not make sense. There is no justice obtained without a fair trial, no thought to the workings of justice. Further, people, jobs, buildings - the foundations of life created with years of collective thought and work - are destroyed in a moment. What is lost is far greater than any possible gain.

How is it then, that we extol our system of justice here, but ignore it when we try to solve problems with the rest of the world? We spend incalculable amounts of money on the research and creation of weapons that do not protect, but endanger us - we use them and we sell them to other countries. We accuse other nations of building and storing weapons of mass destruction, yet lead in the arms race, talk of using nuclear weapons in a first strike, and build bombs that use depleted uranium, a substance that appears to leave radiation in the soil to disease those who touch it. We ignore the treaties that were created by people who fought and suffered in wars and saw, from the wisdom of experience, the unmitigated horror of war - let alone a war of nuclear weapons. We ignore treaties that protect our environment. What future are we creating?

We never hear, on the news - or scarcely anywhere else - of those US agencies that successfully negotiate and educate toward peaceful resolution of conflict such as the Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School and the United States Institute of Peace. We do little to support the work of the United Nations, created for the just representation of all citizens of our world. Can we imagine what might have been if we had, through appropriate judicial process, brought Saddam Hussein and his sons before the International Criminal Tribunal? Or if we took responsibility for our sale of weapons to and our support of governments who ignore human rights?

We have the right to protect ourselves, but there are no rights sustained with weapons that destroy peoples and lands for millions of years and no victory for any nation. Systems of justice should provide more protection and security than any weapon. We must act to give a peaceful world to our descendents, stop this escalation of violence and create more enlightened programs in their place—while it is still possible.

Trish Walker

United for Justice with Peace Coalition: Report on the January 25th Strategy Conference

The conference was a great success - thanks to the interest, the work and the participation of many, many people.

It was wonderful to have Leslie Cagan, from the national coalition United for Peace and Justice, with us for the entire conference. She began the day with a discussion of the national agenda "Turn Up the Heat". Her talk was followed by a panel discussion on the role of the peace and justice movement in this election year. The morning session closed with a training by Paul Saba on how to develop an issue campaign.

At the heart of the day were the afternoon break-out groups! This is where we accomplished what we set out to do: begin the process of developing regional coalition wide campaigns for the next 6-8 months. All of the groups were well attended and people worked hard. Some of the campaigns had already been adopted by UJP: Bring the Troops Home Now and Stop the BU Bioweapons Lab; these campaign break-out groups brought in new activists, and continued to work on next steps. The other breakout groups had good discussions of proposals submitted and important beginnings of campaigns.

We will be presenting the campaigns at the next community brunch on Sunday, February 29th. (Location to be announced) Meanwhile, most of the campaigns have scheduled their next meetings. (see below for the schedule) Hope you will join in working groups now! And come to the brunch! It's going to be an exciting next period!

** Campaign coordinators, campaign meeting times - and strategic planning materials distributed by Paul Saba - are available on the website: justicewithpeace.org. The Campaign proposals are also on the UJP website

More alternative sources of news and information

"Yes, A Journal of Positive Futures" P.O. Box 10818, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110-0818, (800-937-4451) www.yesmagazine.org

"Shift: At the Frontiers of Consciousness", 101 San Antonio Road, Petaluma, CA 94952-9524, www.noetic.org

"Timeline A bimonthly publication of the Foundation for Global Community", 222 High St, Palo Alto, CA 94301, (601-328-7756). www.globalcommunity.org

"The Nation", P.O. Box 55149, Boulder, CO 80322. www.thenation.com

VISIT: www.Merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.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.

COMING EVENTS

Monday, Feb. 23, 7pm at Stage 2 Cinema Pub in Amesbury, "The Invisible War". Doors open at 6pm for food & drinks. See this film about DU (**Depleted Uranium**), which MVPP sponsored in September. MVPP member, John Schuchardt, and other members of Veteran's for Peace, will speak and answer questions after the film. This "Imagine Studios Film Forum" will show films the last Monday of every month.

Mon, Wed & Thurs, Feb. 23, 25 & 26 at 7:00 pm: "THE FOG OF WAR," Movie: Portsmouth Music Hall, 28 Chestnut St., Portsmouth, NH: www.themusicall.org
Rated PG-13, (603) 436-2400, 95 min,

At eighty-five, Robert MacNamara, Secretary of Defense in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, is sharp as a tack. He radiates charisma, and articulates well, informed by his exposure to some of the most volatile circumstances in recent history. Filmmaker Errol Morris has crafted an intimate biography and study of human fallibility. Paul Goodwin hosts discussion after the Wednesday screening.

Feb. 26- March 20, 2004, Third Annual Walk For a New Spring to be in North Andover **March 9**. See Events page on MVPP web site.

Sunday, March 7 10:30 am worship, 1:30 pm presentation, at First United Methodist Church in North Andover. Rev. Mary Lawrence, an ordained elder in the United Methodist Church and a member of the **Christian Peacemaker Team in Hebron in the West Bank**, will preach, and after lunch will show a presentation on the work of the Christian Peacemaking Team. "The wall" from UJP will be in the set up. To come for lunch, please let Jim or Mary Todd know (mtodd@mdc.net or 978-687-7864). There is no charge.

Monday, March 8 - Howard Zinn will talk at 5 pm at Athol-Orange Community Television, 165 South Main Street, Athol. It will be followed by a potluck supper, a staged reading of "The Trial of the Catonsville 9. Seating is limited. The event is cosponsored by North Quabbin Women in Black and Friends of the 1794 Meetinghouse in New Salem.

Tickets: email Cathy Stanton at cstanton@tiac.net. or call Hattie Nestel or Marcia Gagliardi at Haley's Antiques (800-215-8805). \$10.00 / \$8.00 children and seniors.

Saturday, March 13 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. - War Stories: Tales of Courage and Hope at the Pollard Memorial Library Ground Floor Conference Room (enter through side door next to lot). 401 Merrimack St Lowell, MA. Join Greater Lowell for Peace and Justice for an afternoon of stories from those who have lived through war. Hear diverse voices speak about their experiences. Some of our storytellers include: David Tierney, veteran, on Vietnam; George Capaccio of Voices in the Wilderness, a witness in present-day Iraq; and Soady Ouch and Domnang Pin, artist, on Cambodia. This event is free. RSVP not required, but appreciated. Please call 978-446-9119 or send an email to: info@greaterlowellpeace.org

Saturday, March 20 GLOBAL DAY OF ACTION Demonstration in New York City, and around the world: THE WORLD STILL SAYS NO TO WAR! Call for an end to the occupation of Iraq and Bush's militaristic foreign policies. See the MVPP web site for bus information.

March 20 - April 4, March to Abolish Poverty, sponsored by the Economic Human Rights Project, Green-Rainbow Party and Sisters Together Ending Poverty. Groups will march through low income communities in Massachusetts, and will come through Lawrence and Lowell on March 31; then on to Lynn, Salem, Chelsea, Somerville, and Cambridge, ending in Boston on Sunday, April 4. See www.Abolishpoverty.org, or call the Economic Human Rights Project at 617-776-3895.

Wed, March 24 7:15-9:15 John's United Methodist Church, 80 Mt Auburn St, Watertown. Phyllis on a new policy of Common Security.

Saturday, April 3, 7:30pm, Newburyport City Hall. Michelle Shocked in concert.

Saturday April 10: Death and Taxes Event, Raytheon.

July 23-25, Boston Social Forum (BSF)

Details on www.Merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org under Coming Events. The web site also has more details for -The Feb 26 Walk

-The April 10 festival at Raytheon

To continue to receive this newsletter...

We Invite You to Join /Rejoin Us

\$20.00 Individual
\$10.00 Student/Senior
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\$50.00 Supporting
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Return to MVPP P.O. Box 573 North Andover, MA 01845
MVPP is registered with the IRS as a non-profit organization -contributions are tax deductible. "2004" on your mailing label indicates that your membership is paid through May 2004.

MVPP Minutes, January 27, 2004

Attendance: Don Abbott, Becci Backman, Lou Bernieri, Jane Cadarette, Peter Cameron, Stewart Coffin, Mary Dow, Michael Frishman, Bobbie Goldman, Brian Quirk, Kathie Robinson, Mary Kate Small, Boryana Tacconi, Jim Todd, Mary Todd, and Jacob Zar.

Treasurer's Report: Peter reported a current balance of \$3,540.13, including \$345.00 in proceeds from recent sales at the January 23rd concert of the People's Music Network for Songs of Freedom and Struggle. Gifts in memory of Alison Ceplikas now total \$370.00.

Membership Report: Becci reported that we now have 99 paid members. Individuals have recently offered unsolicited compliments for our newsletter.

The People's Network Concert and Workshops: Kudos to Mary Kate and her colleagues for the huge success of the well-attended concert and weekend workshops. In this connection, Becci announced the Arlo Guthrie Concert at 8 PM on February 14 at Nock Middle School in Newburyport. She seeks permission to set up an MVPP table at the event.

Program: Don briefly reported on the range of ideas discussed at the January 9th Pot Luck Dinner, at which time members expressed their particular "personal passions" ranging from "dethroning" George Bush, becoming more activist in a critical election year, and further educating about issues such as the new generation of nuclear weapons, depleted uranium, environmental degradation, and the Separation Wall. A possible Mother's Day march, invoking Julia Ward Howe's original proclamation, was also considered for May 2004.

We decided to organize a vigil at Old Town Hall in Andover on Sunday, March 14, marking the anniversary of the Sunday evening in March 2003, when 250 citizens gathered to vigil for peace prior to the invasion of Iraq. Don, Jim, Peter, and Brian will work on planning details for this opportune moment to engage more people locally.

There also was strong interest for MVPP members to speak, write, and stand out as the March 2 primary approaches.

Lou announced the upcoming showing of the film about genocide in Rwanda, "100 Days," Thursday, January 29 at Kemper Auditorium at Phillips Academy, and urged members to attend.

Newsletter Planning: Lou led a brief discussion of possible articles for the upcoming newsletter, whose production he will oversee during Barbara Haack's absence.

The balance of the meeting was devoted to a long, frank, and open-ended discussion about the decision-making process in MVPP, especially related to our engagement with public programs on controversial issues such as the conflict in Palestine/Israel. No formal action was proposed or taken, but it is hoped that our dialogue created a better understanding for future decisions.

Respectfully submitted, Don Abbott, Secretary

A Letter to MVPP About Alison Ceplikas

Dear Friends,

Enclosed is a small gift...in memory of Alisson Ceplikas. Alison lived a life that is a model for all of us to follow. Her kindness and compassion were legendary and her skills in keeping people focused on especially good goals were remarkable. She would be very proud of what her organization has become, and I am so pleased that she lived to see it blossom as it has recently.

My gentle white-haired friend was and is a giant and I encourage you to stand on her shoulders and see, like she did, that the future is filled with hope. My best memory of Alison is of her persistence and stamina in the face of what some thought were overwhelming obstructions. Oh, how I miss her, but like all great women, she lives on in the hearts and minds of the hundreds of people she touched.

I really wish I could be with you to continue her work, but my poor health stands in the way.

Peace, Ed Meagher, Sr, 1/14/04

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**PEACE IS
PATRIOTIC!**



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SENATORS TO MAKE YOUR VIEWS KNOWN**

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Every legislator knows one letter is worth a thousand votes.