



# 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.

February 2005

*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

Compiled with the help of Boryana Tacconi

**In mid-January, a minor miracle: MVPP's contribution of \$250 for tsunami relief was hand-delivered by Barbara Haack's brother-in-law to a local NGO in the village of Meulaboh in Aceh Province in Sumatra,** very close to the epicenter of the devastating earthquake of December 26. Our contribution provided immediate assistance to a local organization known as **SHEEP: Society for Health, Education, Environment and Peace.** Local workers for SHEEP reportedly were overwhelmed that a like-minded community of people in Merrimack Valley, USA, could reach them so directly with aid for victims. Barbara will report further about this in the March newsletter.

**Breaking the silence on the need for election reform, activists have moved mountains since November!** While the major media again refused to cover significant issues affecting the future of democracy in the U.S., relentless grassroots pressure in Ohio and on the internet took over. It put the spotlight on the systematic corruption of our electoral process, and it again laid bare the racist roots of the issue. On January 6, thirty-one congressional democrats--led by the Congressional Black Caucus and joined in their challenge by Sen. Barbara Boxer--forced both houses to hear debate and to vote. It was only the second such challenge since 1877, and it did more than just stall the inevitable certification of the Electoral College vote. Electoral justice is an issue that can no longer be stonewalled. A marker has now been laid down. And it would not have happened without the mass movement of the consciences of thousands of people.

**Poets who resist war continue to enliven our imagination, all over the world.** As Sam Hamill, American poet who leads *Poets against the War (PAW)*, wrote recently: "Like kindred organizations in countries around the world, we (PAW) have reminded millions of people of the noble traditions of poetry, of its role in every culture. I have seen time and again tears of gratitude in the eyes of the Italians, French, Lithuanians, etc, and have received innumerable messages of hope, support and kinship from all over the world. These people are grateful to be reminded that (at least) half of the U.S. objects to the direction this country's taken, and that we are eager to listen to and work cooperatively with them so that all of our voices (and various positions) may be heard while we stand together. In the ecology of the soul, thrift is ruinous. We look forward to a productive new year filled with mindful actions, generosity of spirit, heart-felt compassion, and of course a lot of good poetry" (for further information: <http://www.poetsagainsthewar.org/>).

**Hundreds of Israeli and international peace activists recently joined Palestinian villagers and planted olive trees** at the site of a planned new Israeli settlement next to Qalqilya, once known as the "West Bank's bread basket." Despite a threatening Israeli police presence, they planted hundreds of olive saplings on the very plot of land where bulldozers of the

settlers in the previous week had uprooted hundred-year-old olive trees. The peaceful demonstrators, carrying Israeli and Palestinian flags, bore signs reading "Stop the land grab" and "We will build trust, not walls." One peace activist, a Syrian immigrant and resident of the historic Jewish settlement Rishon Le-Zion southeast of Tel Aviv, commented, "This is a token act of solidarity and joint struggle of Israelis and Palestinians, a campaign that will continue to grow in strength until the walls and fences are brought down, and the settlements and the Occupation itself."

**A death penalty sentencing statute in Kansas was ruled unconstitutional, on December 17.** With this ruling the Kansas Supreme Court followed a similar decision last year by New York's highest court. At issue was a death penalty statute that says when juries find arguments for and against execution equal, their decision should favor a death sentence. But a majority of the justices said such a requirement violates the 8th and 14th amendments of the U.S. Constitution. The Court reportedly ruled that the statute does not allow for a reasoned moral response to the evidence, nor does it comport with the human dignity required by provisions of the Constitution.

**MVPP Monthly Meeting – North Parish Church – Tuesday, February 22, 2005, 7:30 PM**

*Printed on recycled paper* <http://www.merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org>

## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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.

**Gloucester:** Tuesday, 7-8 pm; Fisherman's Wives Memorial.

**Ipswich:** Saturday, 11-noon; at the bottom of Town Hill (Junction of Route 133).

**Lawrence:** Saturday, noon-1 pm; Broadway and Essex Streets; Lawrence Peace Coalition; Martina Cruz, [martina\\_m\\_cruz@yahoo.com](mailto:martina_m_cruz@yahoo.com).

**Marblehead:** Wednesday, 5-7 pm; at the Peace Pole, Memorial Park (by the YMCA); Tom Gale, 781-631-1218.

**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](mailto: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).

**Salem, NH:** Saturday, 12:30-1:30 pm; at corner of Routes 28 and 97; Henry Misserville, 978-470-0663.

*You can buy Rainbow Peace Flags, buttons, bumperstickers, etc. at Saturday vigils in Andover.*

## On January 11, six coal-burning power plants in upstate New York, including the state's two largest, agreed to significantly reduce emissions that cause smog and acid rain.

Officials consider this NY's largest settlement ever for reducing air pollution. According to the New York Times, the agreements announced by Gov. Pataki and Attorney General Spitzer, require cutting pollution by a level equivalent to removing 2.5 million cars from the state's roads, as well as every diesel truck and bus in the country. These actions will cut by more than half the amount of sulfur dioxide, the principal cause of acid rain, produced by all power plants and factories in NY: an important win for clean air and the environment.

## Opening the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for oil and gas drilling received a recent setback,

when the largest oil company in Alaska, ConocoPhillips, dropped out of Arctic Power, the single-issue lobbying group that promotes such drilling. For two years, shareholders in ConocoPhillips had joined environmentalists to push the company to realize that Arctic Power's pro-drilling efforts were not in the company's best interest. The corporation is the second oil company, following BP, to drop out of Arctic Power. A coalition of socially responsible investors and environmental organizations can effect positive change. Next in line are resolutions calling for similar action this year by Chevron Texaco and ExxonMobil.

## Tens of thousands protested across the country on Inauguration Day, January 20.

All across the nation, people walked out of work and school and found a multitude of creative ways to show their disapproval of President Bush's policies as he was sworn in for his second term. In Market Square, Newburyport, 30 people from Women's Action for a New Direction (WAND), North Shore Peace and Justice Coalition, and MVPP held a special evening vigil. In New Orleans, over 1,500 participated in the unique "Jazz Funeral for Democracy," affirming the determination of people to keep democracy alive and to continue opposing the war. Larger protests took place in dozens of other cities, including San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, Austin, Phoenix, as well as in South Korea, Japan, Germany, Australia, and Puerto Rico. Even the mainstream media took some notice. In Washington, D.C., some 10,000 protesters marched in a demonstration organized by the DC Anti-War Network. Amid the tightest security in inaugural history, thousands more lined the parade route holding signs "War Criminal," "Bring the Troops

Home Now," "Worst President Ever," and "End the War," and they turned their backs on the presidential motorcade. The A.N.S.W.E.R. coalition obtained a permit to stage a counter-inauguration protest at John Marshall Park, which lasted throughout the day. C-SPAN 2 gave it nearly 4 1/2 hours of live coverage. It was the first time in inaugural history that the antiwar movement was able to have bleachers, a stage, and a sound system for a mass antiwar demonstration directly on the parade route. It was really heartening to see the predominance of young people among the protesters, who demonstrated their opposition to a wide range of policies of the Bush administration, but particularly the occupation of Iraq.

**Michael Moore's "Fahrenheit 9/11" won best film at the 31st Annual People's Choice Awards.** The winners were chosen by 21 million on-line voters. In his acceptance speech, Moore dedicated the award to all mothers and fathers across the country with sons and daughters serving in Iraq.

**At confirmation hearings and debates about the nomination of Condoleezza Rice to be the next Secretary of State, several senators excoriated the administration's reasons for the Iraq War,** reflecting the growing dissatisfaction of a majority of Americans over our government's handling of the ongoing occupation.

**Voices of "U.S. Out of Iraq" are rising daily in numbers and volume.** There are several indications that the grassroots antiwar movement is becoming increasingly powerful:

1. Merrimack Valley's (MA, District 5) Congressman Marty Meehan, called on January 15th for a timetable on our pull-out from Iraq over the next 12 to 18 months.
2. On January 12, sixteen Democrats in the House of Representatives sent a letter to President Bush calling on him to begin the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops. A nationwide push has been made for individuals to write their representatives to join the call.
3. On January 8, North Carolina Republican Rep. Howard Coble, head of the House Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism and Homeland Security, who comes from a largely conservative district, declared that "it's time for the U.S. to consider withdrawing."
4. Recent opinion polls in our country indicate that a majority of the U.S. people believe that invading Iraq was wrong or

not worth the price (only 44% believe the war is worth fighting according to a Washington Post-ABC poll)--despite the President's insistence on January 14th that his re-election was a ratification of his approach toward Iraq.

5. In a year-end press conference on December 30th, Navajo President Joe Shirley Jr. joined other Native American leaders in speaking out against the continuation of the war, criticizing our government's policies because of their grave costs to the American people.
6. In late December, Puerto Rico's governor-elect Anibal Acevedo Vila criticized the war in Iraq and urged U.S. troop withdrawal.
7. On December 22, the American Friends Service Committee called for the immediate withdrawal of American troops from Iraq. AFSC's statement declares that "the United States has lost the moral standing to achieve the necessary healing (in Iraq), but remains responsible to support financially those institutions and agencies which can do so."
8. Friends Committee on National Legislation has published a policy statement, "Free Iraq: The Responsibility of Withdrawal," in which it says: "Some argue that U.S. responsibility under international law to restore security and protect civilians in Iraq demands that the U.S. military remain and help stabilize the country. In fact, the presence and offensive operations of U.S. troops have become the greatest threats to Iraq's future." See [http://www.fcnl.org/issues/item.php?item\\_id=1180&issue\\_id=35](http://www.fcnl.org/issues/item.php?item_id=1180&issue_id=35)
9. "An Appeal to Global Science", drafted by Tom Hayden, was posted on January 15th on Alternet (<http://www.alternet.org/waroniraq/20996/>) with suggestions for action at local community levels.
10. The editorial in the February 2005 issue of The Progressive, "Bring the Troops Home," addresses several objections to our leaving Iraq now and provides cogent answers for consideration by those who wish we could but are hesitant to advocate withdrawal by the U.S. (<http://www.progressive.org/feb05/com0205.html>).
11. It was reported on January 26th that Rep. Lynn Woolsey (D-CA) planned to introduce a congressional resolution calling on President Bush to begin the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq.
12. On January 27, Sen. Ted Kennedy, in a major speech before the Johns' Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, DC, laid out a five-point plan for withdrawal from Iraq.

These voices are not singing in unison; yet they provide an enlarging platform for public discussion, advocacy, and resistance at a critical juncture in U.S. history. We urge everyone's reflection on the articulate Statements of Conscience, recently updated by Not in Our Name, which follows.

## Not In Our Name

### Statements of Conscience against War and Repression

(Promoted by *Not in Our Name*, 305 W. Broadway, #199, New York, NY 10013, that seeks as many signatures as possible. See <http://www.nion.us/> for further information)

George W. Bush is about to be inaugurated for a second term as President of the United States. Let it not be said that the people in the United States silently acquiesced in the face of this shameful coronation of war, greed, and intolerance. He does not speak for us. He does not represent us. He does not act in our name.

No election, whether fair or fraudulent, can legitimize criminal wars on foreign countries, torture, the wholesale violation of human rights, and the end of science and reason.

In our name, the Bush government claims to justify the invasion and occupation of Iraq on baldly false pretenses, raining down unspeakable destruction, horror, misery and death to as many as 100,000 people. It destroys entire cities in the name of so-called democratic elections, while intimidating and disenfranchising tens of thousands of African-American voters at home. It holds an entire nation hostage, forcing on its people torture, hunger, and unimaginable privation and humiliation.

In our name, it holds in contempt both international law and world opinion. It has carried out torture and detentions without trial all over the world and proposes new assaults on our rights of privacy, speech and assembly. It has already stripped the rights of Arabs, Muslims and South Asians in the US, denying them legal counsel, holding them without cause, stigmatizing, and deporting tens of thousands.

Could we have imagined a few years ago that core principles such as the separation of church and state, due process, presumption of innocence, freedom of speech, and *habeas corpus* would be discarded so easily? But under this government anyone can be declared an "enemy combatant" by Presidential decree with no meaningful redress or independent review, by a President whose rationale for concentrating power in the executive branch is "trust me." Its choice for Attorney General is the legal architect of torture from Guantanamo to Afghanistan to Abu Ghraib.

As terrifying "trial balloons" are floated about invasions of Syria, or Iran, or North Korea, about leaving the United Nations, about new "lifetime detention" policies, there is no telling what further crimes this government will commit in our name against nations or individuals deemed to stand in the way of its goal of unquestioned world supremacy.

The Bush government seeks to impose a narrow, intolerant, and political form of Christian Fundamentalism as government policy. We must face the fact that this extremist movement is no longer on the margins of society. It aims to strip women of their reproductive rights, to drive gay people from public life back into the closet. It seeks to drive a wedge between spiritual experience and scientific truth, smugly denying thousands of years of human scientific achievement.

We believe all people must be free to find meaning and sustenance in whatever form of religious or spiritual belief they choose. But we will not surrender our right to think to extremists and the President in whom they have their strongest ally. The Grand Canyon was not created by a biblical flood. Women are not human incubators. Breast cancer is not retribution for having an abortion. AIDS is not a punishment from God. Evolution happened. Religion can never be compulsory. This government may claim to make its own reality, but we will not allow it to make ours.

Millions of us worked, talked, marched, poll watched, contributed, voted, did everything we could to defeat the Bush regime in the last election. It was a massive effort, bringing forth new energy, new organization, and new commitment to struggle for justice. It would be a terrible mistake to let our failure to stop Bush in this way lead to despair and inaction. On the contrary, this broad mobilization of people committed to a fairer world, a freer world, a more peaceful world must move forward. We can-

not, we will not, wait until 2008. The fight against the second Bush regime has to start now.

The movement against the war in Vietnam never won a presidential election. But it blocked troop trains, closed induction centers, marched, spoke to people door to door -- and it helped to stop a war. The Civil Rights Movement never tied its star to a presidential candidate; it sat in, freedom rode, fought legal battles, filled jailhouses -- and it changed the face of a nation.

We must change the political reality of this country by mobilizing the tens of millions who know in their heads and hearts that the Bush regime's "reality" is nothing but a nightmare for humanity. This will require courage and creativity, mass actions and individual moments of courage. We must come together whenever we can, and we must act alone whenever we have to. This will require extraordinary acts from ordinary people.

We give our love and support to the soldiers who have refused to fight in this immoral war, and we pledge to create community that backs courageous acts of resistance. We applaud the librarians who have refused to turn over lists of our reading, the high school students who demand to be taught evolution, those who brought to light torture by the U.S. military, and the massive protests that voiced international opposition to the war on Iraq. We stand with the tens of millions of people throughout the world who fight every day for the right to create their own future.

It is our duty to stop the Bush regime from carrying out this disastrous course. We believe history will judge us sharply should we fail to act decisively.

## Local Actions

### Activists Protest Once More at BAE in Nashua, NH

For 30 hours on the weekend of December 11, 2004, BAE Systems of Nashua, NH, was again the focal point of protests by dozens of peace activists around New England. Included among those bearing witness to the fact that BAE is producing illegal weapons of war (including depleted uranium munitions) was MVPP member Mary Kate Small, a participant with the Chain Reaction Affinity Group (CRAG). What follows is from her journal on that experience:

*Journal of a CRAG Insomniac* by Mary Kate Small

*12:30 AM - Saturday, December 11, 2004. Cubby the cat has just woken me up. It's raining very hard and I immediately think of my friends standing out in it at British Aerospace Electronic Systems (BAE). "Getting arrested has gotta be easier than this," I think, as I start to pile on the layers of clothing that will keep me relatively warm and dry as I join my friends in Nashua.*

*For the first time in many years, there will be no civil disobedience here around the December 10th International Human Rights Day. 85-year-old Ruth McKay, now on dialysis, joined this year's event in a wheelchair earlier on Friday. It started at 11AM yesterday and will go until 5PM this afternoon. A 30-hour presence on the sidewalk in front of the Spit Brook Road headquarters is the plan. Some members of the Chain Reaction Affinity Group (CRAG) who planned this action will be fasting. I became a member of CRAG when I snapped the padlock into place last year, connecting myself to Ruth and nine others in a very tangible way!*

*But the connection to that wondrous woman started two years before. Watching her at 82 doing Tai-Chi in a holding cell was a sight to behold. That night a woman joined us who was in trouble for some family disputes. After talking a while, she looked at my partner in crime and said, "Are you Ruth McKay? You used to drive me and my sister to Sunday School when we were little!" The year after that I chided the sheriff's men for putting shackles on our heroine. She, however, was the model of patience and love for these brothers of ours.*

*3 AM - Saturday. The first man I see as I pull up to the vigil is none other than Quaker activist and long-time friend of MVPP, Don Booth. He is his usual congenial self. During our time together he shares that he will turn 88 next week! Two other members of CRAG are holding a sign with him. As some go in to the Ramada Inn to rest, others come out to take their place. Teenaged girls, middle-aged men and women ... even a passerby at 4 AM or so decides to come and stand with us as his girlfriend drives on for groceries. We talk and sing our way to 6 AM, and then I realize it's time for part two of my night's sleep.*

*3:45 PM - Saturday. Back to Nashua to finish up the vigil with more familiar faces: Amy from Seacoast Peace Response, Tom Jackson, some Veterans for Peace. It's been a good day and a half. "What are the costs of war?" was the large sign held out to the holiday shoppers. No doubt this presence caused some of them to reflect upon that question.*

For a complete report on the 30-hour vigil: <http://nhindymedia.org/newswire/display/2067/index.php>

### Ruth McKay's Statement: Why Another Vigil in Front of BAE?

Published in the [Nashua Telegraph](#), 12/5/04

I am an 85-year-old New Hampshire woman who, for over 20 years, has stood vigil in front of weapons manufacturer BAE Systems in Nashua. Each year I am asked, "Why?" and so today I try to answer that question.

Why do I stand vigil? Why do I stand at BAE?

Because every day another soldier dies. Another child goes hungry. Another family mourns its losses. Because these are the true costs of war.

Today I read the number of U.S. soldiers killed in Iraq is up to 1,256. Six of those are from New Hampshire.

As it is official policy of the U.S. government not to count the dead of our enemy, it is harder to find the number of Iraqi dead. But a recent article in the prestigious medical journal *The Lancet* reported the number to be at least 100,000, most of those women and children.

*100,000 Iraqis dead. 1,256 Americans dead. The costs of war.* I also read that at least 9,326 U.S. soldiers have been wounded in Iraq. But since the Pentagon only reports those wounded in action, I can only imagine what the true number is.

And how many, like veterans of the first Gulf War, are returning home with exposure to depleted uranium radiation or post-traumatic stress syndrome?

I have read that over 35 GIs have committed suicide in Iraq or upon returning home, although again the Pentagon does not keep those records either.

*Wounded on the outside. Wounded on the inside. The costs of war.*

There is also a financial cost to war. We have spent over \$147 billion dollars on the war and occupation of Iraq. That is \$5 billion a month. Over \$166 million a day. New Hampshire citizens alone have spent \$68 million to date.

To pay for this, we place the burden on those who can afford it the least: our children and our grandchildren, who will have to pay off the federal deficit which now tops \$477 billion.

Our state budget which is trying to cut Medicaid and Medicare to the poor and elderly. Our cities and towns must raise taxes to simply maintain level funding for our schools.

*The costs of war.*

For me, as a woman of faith, the greatest cost is the one we all share equally and painfully - the cost to our souls, our humanity. The cost of knowing the truth of what our government is doing in our names and not being able to stop it.

The truth, as even Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld admits, that we are creating enemies faster than we are killing them. The truth that each and every Iraqi death leads to a deeper desire for revenge, breeding rather than diminishing terrorism. The truth that violence begets violence. And war, the ultimate terrorist act, begets more terrorism.

*The costs of war.*

So this year, as we have for 20 years, we will again stand vigil in front of the weapons manufacturer BAE Systems in Nashua.

We choose to stand at BAE for two reasons. BAE is one of the world's largest weapons manufacturers. It reaps tremendous financial benefits from the horrors of war, from the death of children and women, from the destruction of homes and schools. We stand in opposition to BAE and to all who profit from war.

BAE is also the largest manufacturing employer in New Hampshire. The men and the women who work there are talented, skilled and caring people.

We vigil in support of these workers and encourage an industry conversion from the development of weapons to the creation of life-supporting infrastructure.

This year, like most years, we chose U.N. Human Rights Day.

The United Nations states that "Human Rights Day should provide us with an opportunity to pay tribute to human rights educators - indeed, human rights defenders - who, in formal and informal settings, in small or large communities, and often encountering difficulties and hazards, contribute to building a universal culture of human rights."

It is in this spirit that my brothers and sisters and I and vigil at BAE. We will stand in front of BAE on Spit Brook Road for 30 hours, from 11 a.m. on Friday, Dec. 10, through 5 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 11.

I hope you will join us.

**Chattin' on the Curb** (from recent Andover Vigils)

12/5/04:

Vigiler's Sign: "We Don't Belong in Iraq"

Passing Driver (smiling): "Thank you! My son's over there."

1/8/05:

Pedestrian: "If you were in Baghdad, you'd be shot in the head and lying in that gutter. You know that, don't you!"

Vigiler: "I thought we liberated Iraq!"

1/9/05 (in sub-zero, wind chill):

Pedestrian: "You're brave to do that!"

Vigiler: "No, it's our soldiers who are brave. They're out there all the time."

Pedestrian walks on, pauses, and turns:

"I meant it's so cold out here."

Vigiler: "I know you did. And I meant something else."

(Pedestrian almost speaks, but walks on.)

1/29/05:

Driver: "Go Philadelphia Eagles!"

Vigiler: "We support your right to dissent!"

## Global Perspectives

### 2004 Nobel Peace Laureate Embodies Peace Activism through Local Environmental Preservation and Political Empowerment

*"I would like to call on young people, in particular, to take inspiration from this prize. Despite all the constraints that they face, there is hope in the future in serving the common good. What my experiences have taught me is that service to others has its own special rewards."*

--Wangari Muta Maathai

It is fitting that Kenyan environmental activist, Wangari Muta Maathai, received the Nobel Peace Prize on December 10, 2004, the very day recognized as International Human Rights Day. She is the first African woman and the first environmentalist to receive this prestigious award.

The Nobel Peace Prize Committee announced her award with the following declaration: "*Peace on earth depends on our ability to secure our living environment. Maathai stands at the front of the fight to promote ecologically viable social, economic and cultural development in Kenya and in Africa. She has taken a holistic approach to sustainable development that embraces democracy, human rights and women's rights in particular. She thinks globally and acts locally.*" In a recent interview with The Associated Press, Maathai said, "*Many of the wars in Africa are fought over natural resources. Ensuring they are not destroyed is a way of ensuring there is not conflict.*"

The founder and leader of the Green Belt Movement, Maathai rose to international fame in the late 1980s and 1990s for campaigns against government-backed forest clearances in Kenya, as she directed a successful movement to plant 30 million trees to stave off deforestation. In the process Green Belt provided work for tens of thousand of women through preservation activity now replicated in several other African countries. Denouncing widespread deforestation, she once declared, "*It's a matter of life and death for this country. The Kenyan forests are facing extinction and it is a man-made problem.*"

For almost 30 years, often in the face of governmental vilification and at times violent opposition, Green Belt has sought to empower women, improve the environment, and fight corruption throughout East Africa. Guided by Maathai's vision, it has made critical connections between deforestation, soil erosion, and the failures of one-party rule in Kenya. As Maathai said in a recent interview with [motherjones.com](http://motherjones.com), "I got pulled deeper and deeper and saw how these issues become linked to governance, to corruption, to dictatorship."

In 1992 riot police clubbed Maathai and three other women unconscious during a demonstration in central Nairobi. She has been tear-gassed, threatened with death by anonymous callers, and arrested more than a dozen times. Several Green Belt colleagues have been killed, and the Movement was once nearly outlawed. Never demoralized throughout this period, she states, "I knew in my mind I was doing the right thing." In December 2002 democratic elections ousted the autocratic president, and in 2003 Maathai was elected to Kenya's Parliament by an overwhelming majority. She currently is the Assistant Secretary for Environment, Wildlife, and Natural Resources.

The Nobel Peace Prize Committee traditionally has honored those who have been pivotal in resolving violence and armed conflicts around the world. By broadening its definition of what promotes peace by including environmental activism, it has taken an important, yet by no means a popular stand. But as the courageous lifework of Wangari Muta Maathai displays, there are inseparable connections between peace, democracy, and the environment. Indeed, the center of the most volatile global conflict today, the Middle East, is full of disputes related to oil and water.

Excerpts of Maathai's acceptance speech last December in Oslo follow:

*"My fellow Africans, as we embrace this recognition let us use it to intensify our commitment to our people to reduce conflicts and poverty and thereby improve the quality of life of our people. Let us embrace democratic governance, protect human rights and protect our environment. I'm confident that we shall rise to the occasion. I have always believed that solutions to most of our problems will have to come from us..."*

*"Recognizing that sustainable development, democracy and peace are indivisible is an idea whose time has come. Our work for over the past 30 years has always appreciated and engaged these linkages. My inspiration partly comes from my childhood experiences and observations of nature in rural Kenya. It has been influenced and nurtured by the formal education I was privileged to receive in Kenya, the United States of America and Germany. As I was growing up I witnessed forests being cleared and replaced by commercial plantations which destroyed local biodiversity and the capacity of forests to conserve water..."*

*"...in 1977 when we started the Green Belt Movement, I was partly responding to the needs identified by rural women, namely lack of firewood, clean drinking water, balanced diets, shelter and income. Throughout Africa, women are the primary care takers, holding significant responsibility for tilling the land and feeding their families. As a result, they are often the first to become aware of environmental damage as resources become scarce and incapable of sustaining their families. The women we worked with recounted that unlike in*

*the past they were unable to meet their basic needs. This was due to the degradation of the immediate environment, as well as the introduction of commercial farming which replaced the growing of household food crops, but international trade controlled the price of exports from these small scale farmers and a reasonable and just income could not be guaranteed.*

*"I came to understand that when the environment is destroyed, plundered or mismanaged, we undermine our quality of life and that of our future generations. Tree planting became a natural choice to address some of the initial basic needs identified by women. Also, tree planting is simple, attainable and guarantees quick, successful results within a reasonable amount of time. These are all important to sustain interest and commitment. So together we planted over 30 million trees that provide fuel, food, shelter and income to support the children and education and household needs. The activity also creates employment and improves soils and watersheds. Through their involvement, women gained some degree of power over their lives, especially their socioeconomic position and relevance in the family. This work continues..."*

And the people say, "Amen."

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*"There is no discussion taking place in the world today that is more crucial than the debate about strategies of resistance." --Arundhati Roy*

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**"Granny D" says, "We know what is next for us: our sacrifice."**

Doris "Granny D" Haddock, spoke these words at a Counter-Inaugural rally in Washington, D.C. on Thursday, January 20, 2005, just hours after her daughter died in a nearby nursing home. "Granny D" will celebrate her 95th birthday on January 24, 2005. The full text of her remarks follows:

*"We have honored Dr. King this week. When we honor him we honor many others, all the way back in time to the Sermon on the Mount and beyond, who have given us, if we will but use them, the political tools of love and their great power over all other human forces.*

*"Gandhi taught us that, when used right, non-violent non-cooperation always wins. He gave us five principles to remember in its use: First, know that you are dealing with the truth. Do your research. Bring in the experts. Know the truth before you dare speak for it.*

*"Second, ask those in authority to remedy the problem at hand, and give them a reasonable time to act. Don't ask them to do more than they can.*

*Third, involve the wider community's conscience in the problem. Share the problem widely.*

*"Fourth, if those in power will not remedy the problem, show the extent of your moral concern through your personal sacrifice. Stand in the way of the injustice with your own body, doing no harm to others, for it is your moral courage that will move the conscience of society toward awareness and action. If you have not won yet, your sacrifice has been insufficient.*

To continue to receive this newsletter... **We Invite You to Join /Rejoin Us**

\$20.00 Individual	\$50.00 Supporting
\$10.00 Student/Senior	Circle One \$75.00 Sustaining
\$30.00 Family	\$100.00 Peacemaker

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Return to  
P.O. Box 573  
North Andover, MA 01845-0573

MVPP is registered with the IRS as a non-profit organization. MVPP Contributions are tax deductible. **“2004” on your mailing label indicates that your membership is paid only through May 31, 2004. 2005 means you are paid till May 2005.** We now have 123 members counting family members within a member group. Last year, approximately one third of those members joined/renewed at higher than the basic rate.

*“The fifth principle, because the previous four will give you control of the issue, is to graciously allow the opposing side to save face in the final settlement, as you must love them, too, and will meet them again.*”

*“We have the power to win, to serve justice, to protect our neighbors and our planet, but victory comes at the price of our courage and our pain.*”

*“So we have our issues. A warming planet, an unjust war, a long list of policies that do great harm to the people and places of the world. We have done our homework and know the truth. We have petitioned for the redress of our grievances and we have waited. We have informed the world so that many are involved. We know what is next for us and it is the fourth principle: our sacrifice.*”

*“So that our great grandchildren will look back and say of us, yes, in the first years of the 21st Century, they faced the most difficult of times with extraordinary courage. They knew they would not live forever and they cared that their lives and deaths should mean something. They saved American democracy and the life of the planet with their creative resistance and their courage. While others around them slept through grey lives, they were awake, they saw, they acted, they overcame all the great forces against them. They saved the forests and mountains, the oceans, streams, the air, the Constitution and its Bill of Rights, they saved our ancient hope for a just world, for a peaceful world, where the highest potential of every human might be understood as the greatest resource of every society and nation.*”

*“Well, we know where we are and who we struggle against. I have been in their jails and it's not so bad. I know many of you have been in their prisons and felt the sting of their batons and bullets and gasses, and it is not so bad, compared to losing our freedom or the life of our planet.*”

*“The limousines of monstrous presumption whisk by us today, but we need not feel powerless, for the real power of history is always in the people's hearts and hands. All the power of change is given by fate and history to the courageous, who fear the loss of liberty and justice more than that brief glimmer of life that sparkles through the eternity of who we are. And so we take our parts in the great struggle between dark and light, fear and love, between the withering decomposition of separation, and the living joy of combination, cooperation and growth.*”

*“Let our neighbors, who have voted another way or not at all, see what we are made of and what we are willing to do for love, for life, for justice. Only a few more of them need step forward to our side for love and life and justice to win. They will not step forward if we are not full of courage and grace and beauty and most of all love. We will inspire them with awe. For, from this time forward, our courage must rise to end the war and the coming wars, to end the destruction of our land and its people, and of our planet and its life. With love in our hearts, with a vision before us of a better America made visible in our own lives, we will do what history demands of us now.*”

*And so say us all.”*

## Recent Events

Reported by Jim Todd

### Annual January Potluck Supper

On Friday, January 7, 2005, more than three dozen people gathered at First United Methodist Church in North Andover for our annual winter potluck supper hosted by Mary and Jim Todd, with the space provided at no cost to MVPP. The array of food was tantalizing, abundant, and multi-cultural! No one went hungry, for sure. This evening is planned as a social event, and business details were kept at a minimum. Most agenda matters were forwarded to our regular monthly meeting on January 25.

A special feature of the evening was the presence of four individuals from the Selimiye Mosque, 105 Oakland Avenue, Methuen, MA, who attended at the invitation of MVPP member, Masood Sheikh. These special guests were Mustafa Aktas of Methuen and originally from Turkey, Imam of the Mosque; Saban Catalbas of Methuen and originally from Turkey, President of the Mosque; Sultan Z. Chowdhry of Windham, NH and originally from Lahore, Pakistan; and Shuja Saleem, M.D. of Windham, NH and originally from Turkey. We are pleased as well that other guests attended from peace groups in Beverly, Groton, Ipswich, Newburyport, and Reading.

The aim of the evening was to celebrate one another's presence, especially as we prepare for the solemn observance of second anniversary of the U. S. invasion of Iraq and continue to mobilize our resistance to this ongoing war and occupation. Following the supper we gathered in a circle for conversations between our peace communities and our Muslim guests. There was sig-

nificant sharing and support for one another to encourage our country, in these times, to offer dignity and respect to all persons, regardless of their origin, race, culture and faith.

Everyone was invited to return to First United Methodist Church for a special evening of music and dance on Saturday, March 12, 2005: a celebration of all that we strive to do as peace-loving people and peace-making organizations. (See the special notice on p. 11, plan to attend, and bring your friends.)

### **One Goal Achieved! Thanks to So Many!**

At the MVPP meeting at the end of October, Jane Cadarette proposed that the organization fund \$1,000 to see if it would be possible to bring a young Iraqi woman, Ahlam Nijim, to the U.S. in an effort to restore her sight, lost when she was shot in the face while working for a U.S. reconstruction contractor. Those present at the meeting unanimously voted to allocate this funding, provided an effort was made to replenish the MVPP account with new gifts totaling \$1,000. Jim Todd volunteered to spearhead the effort. We are pleased to receive the report of MVPP treasurer, Peter Cameron, that as of January 14, \$1,070 has been received from members and friends of the organization. Sincere and heartfelt thanks go to all who embraced the vision and shared from their resources to surpass this goal for initial assistance. At the monthly meeting on January 25, we expect to receive an update on the status of Ahlam and the attempt to bring her to the U.S. for restorative surgery.

### **You are needed...do you need to be needed? Think about it!**

Mary and Jim Todd are helping to form a Peace and Justice Work Area in First United Methodist Church in North Andover. About eight persons have responded so far. The group includes both church and community members. Meetings are on the second Sunday of each month from 6-7:30 pm and begin with food for thought: biblical foundations for justice-doing, sharing about what is possible and the planning of activities within and beyond the local church. The next meetings are on February 13 and March 13. Please communicate with the Todds (978-687-7864) about inquiries.

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*“To every Pharaoh, there is a Moses.”--Persian Proverb.*

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## **Letters**

### **Bush should admit error and end Iraq war**

Lawrence Eagle-Tribune; published January 25, 2005

To the editor:

The top American weapons inspector in Iraq, Charles A. Duelfer, wrapped up his work there recently. This ends the search for Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction officially.

Mr. Duelfer issued a comprehensive report last fall that acknowledged that Iraq had destroyed its chemical and biological weapons in the early 1990's, years before the American invasion of 2003. Mr. Duelfer had concluded this after overseeing the work of the Iraq Survey Group, a 1,200-member military organization that carried on the search for these weapons.

President Bush and his top advisors had described the Iraqi arsenals of weapons of mass destruction as the central reason for the pre-emptive war on Iraq.

It is time that the President and his advisors admit their lies and deceptions, apologize to the Americans, the Iraqis and the World and end the illegal war now. Too many lives have been lost already.

Masood A. Sheikh, North Andover

### **Support our troops**

Newburyport Daily News; published January 21, 2005

To the editor:

I hope that everyone who displays a yellow ribbon proclaiming their support for the troops keeps in mind the real support that returning veterans will need in the years to come. The Army predicts that tens of thousands of returning veterans will suffer serious mental health problems that will require care for the next 35 to 40 years. Are people ready to work to make sure that none of these veterans become homeless, jobless or hungry; that all veteran's health problems will receive adequate medical care for as long as it is required; that pensions will be paid and the families of veterans will be cared for?

Is the Army ready to acknowledge the dangers to those exposed to toxins such as Agent Orange, depleted uranium and others used in warfare? Are we prepared to insist that troops not be sent to fight unnecessary or illegal wars, wars that increase the level of danger in the world and alienate other nations? Will we ensure that young people are not lied to or sold on doing something they do not understand by over-zealous military recruiters?

Supporting the troops requires more than cheerleading. Supporting the troops requires paying attention to what's being done by the administration and in Congress, examining why a war is being fought, refusing to let lies and the manipulation of people's fears force the country into unnecessary, illegal wars.

Diana Philip, Newburyport

## **Upcoming Events**

Compiled with the help of Sue Imhoff

### **“Still Present Pasts: Korean Americans and The Forgotten War,”**

Jan. 29 through March 19 at Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center, 41 Second Street, Cambridge. Multimedia exhibit of installation and performance art, documentary film and oral history exploring the legacies of the Korean War. Visitors are invited to reflect on oral histories and art and to contribute to deepening collective memory and understanding of the Korean War as a horrific catastrophe that must not be re-ignited. Call 617-577-1400.

**Iraq War Veterans Tour**, Friday, Feb. 4 at Roxbury Community College; 11:30 am to 1 pm. Contact: [rkiefson@hotmail.com](mailto:rkiefson@hotmail.com). Friday, Feb. 4, sponsored by the Harvard Social Forum at Harvard University, Science Center, Lecture Hall D; 4 pm to 6 pm. Contact: [aguilera@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:aguilera@fas.harvard.edu). Friday, Feb. 4, sponsored by the Arlington and Watertown member groups of United for Justice with Peace and Watertown Citi-

zens for Environmental Safety, at St. John's Methodist Church, 80 Mount Auburn Street, Watertown; 7 pm to 9 pm.

**Iraq War Veterans Tour**, An Evening in Solidarity with The People of Haiti, Saturday, Feb. 5, place TBA in Boston; 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm. Contact: 857-829-0892 or [josuereaud@yahoo.com](mailto:josuereaud@yahoo.com).

**UJP Strategy Conference**, Saturday, Feb. 5 at Northeastern University School of Law, Cargill Hall Room 97; 9 am to 5 pm. For more information, call Bobbie Goldman at 978-661-9009.

**Iraq War Veterans Tour**, Sunday, Feb. 6 at Community Church of Boston, 565 Boylston Street; 11 am to 12 noon. Contact: Rev. Carl Olson at 617-266-6710.

**Petition to Close the School of the Americas (SOA),**

Monday, Feb. 7, at the office of Congressman Tom Allen in Saco, ME; 4:30 pm. If you are interested in closing the SOA Jamilla El-Shafei has arranged this appointment with Congressman Tom Allen, who is co-sponsoring a bill to close the SOA. Jamilla is also circulating a petition to close the SOA, which she will present to Congressman Allen at their meeting. To circulate and/or sign the petition contact Jamilla at work (207-439-5800) or [jamilla@wellinformed.org](mailto:jamilla@wellinformed.org).

**Ski for Peace**, Saturday, Feb. 12, Canterbury (NH) Shaker Village; 9 am to 4 pm. Sponsored by American Friends Service Committee and NH Peace Action, this third annual event of skiing, hiking, and snowshoeing, including a cross-country ski-athon, supports efforts for peace, social justice, relief of suffering, and non-violent resolution of conflict. Pre-registration: 603-783-4401 or e-mail [grheath@totalnetnh.net](mailto:grheath@totalnetnh.net). In the event of a storm, reschedule date is Sunday, February 13.

**Potluck/Book Discussion** of Don't Think of an Elephant: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate by George Lakoff (see "Books of Note" on p.10), Tuesday, Feb. 15 at the home of Lynn Clowes, 62 Beacon Street in downtown Concord, NH; 6 pm. Food, conversation, and creative thinking! RSVP in a timely manner at the NH Peace Action offices 603-228-0559 or e-mail Anne at [anne@nhpeaceaction.org](mailto:anne@nhpeaceaction.org).

**Concert by Political Songwriters & Singers Dave Rovics and Robb Johnson**, Wednesday, Feb. 23 at the UU Church, 292 State Street, Portsmouth, NH; 7 pm. A benefit for WSCA-LP: Portsmouth Community Radio. Sponsored by WSCA-LPFM, Seacoast Peace Response & The Seacoast Alliance for Democracy. Listen to David's music at [www.davidrovics.com](http://www.davidrovics.com) and Robb's at [www.robbjohnson.co.uk](http://www.robbjohnson.co.uk). Contact Amy at 603-750-7506 or [amyla44@juno.com](mailto:amyla44@juno.com)

**An Evening with Noam Chomsky and Mirna Perla about El Salvador, "Out of the Headlines, Still in the Struggle,"** Thursday, March 10 at Hope Church, 20 Seaverns Avenue, Jamaica Plains; 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm. A commemoration of the 25th Anniversary of the martyrdom of Archbishop Oscar Romero and a celebration of 20 years of working for peace with CRISPAZ, Christians for Peace in El Salvador. Admission \$10 (advance ticket purchase strongly recommended). Call 617-445-5115 or e-mail [info@crispaz.org](mailto:info@crispaz.org).

**Sing, Swing, Sway and Speak for Peace** (see ad on p. 11.)

**Make All things New: Ecumenical Advocacy Days for Global Peace with Justice**, Friday, March 11 through Monday, March 14 in Washington, DC. The third annual, broad-based, ecumenical gathering addressing urgent global issues. Planned and sponsored by the National Council of Churches. Call 202-543-4150.

**Global Day of Protest on the Two-Year Anniversary of the Iraq War**, Saturday, March 19 in Central Park, NYC. The "Second Superpower," so named in a front page article of the New York Times bylined by Patrick Tyler on 2/17/03, will be in the streets around the world, under the slogan "Out Now." A massive march and rally is planned by a major coalition of labor, community, and anti-war organizations. For more details on transportation, etc., call Bobbie Goldman at 978-661-9009.

**AFSC Peace and Justice Conference, "Hope & Hard Work: Organizing to Meet the Crises Head On,"** Friday, April 8 and Saturday, April 9 at M.I.T. in Cambridge. A major, New England-wide conference to analyse, strategize, and organize the political and social resistance now called for. Contact Joseph Gerson at 617-661-6130 or at [JGerson@afsc.org](mailto:JGerson@afsc.org).

**The Music for Peace Project 2005**, April 8 through 10. An unprecedented effort, this project calls for 500 simultaneous concerts for peace by musicians worldwide over a three-day weekend. For more information, or to register your planned performance, visit <http://www.m4p.org>. Send e-mail to [info@m4p.org](mailto:info@m4p.org) for additional information.

**Death & Taxes Resistance Festival**, Saturday, April 9, 12 noon at the IRS Building, Rte. 133, Andover. Resist government and corporate control over our tax dollars. Rally and dance from the IRS to Raytheon. Call 617-338-9966 or e-mail [administrative@massglobalaction.org](mailto:administrative@massglobalaction.org).

**National Disarmament Demonstration in Support of "Mayors for Peace Emergency Campaign to Ban Nuclear Weapons,"** Sunday, May 1, march and rally in New York. Precedes a month-long meeting at the United Nations to discuss the fate of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. See <http://www.abolitionnow.org>.

## Announcement

### Help AFSC Grow World Peace through Cross-Cultural Exchange

Never before has cross-cultural understanding been more important. Between the Iraq War, AIDS and genocide in Africa, and the recent Asian tsunami disaster, cross-cultural understanding is needed as a basis for building strategies of hope, healing, and change. Begun by ambulance workers who served in WWI and saw the need to increase cultural understanding, the cultural exchange program, American Field Service (AFS), provides an opportunity to grow world peace, starting at home.

**Host Families Needed:** AFS is currently seeking local families to host foreign exchange students for academic year 2005-2006. Foreign students experience American culture by living with a family and studying at an American high school.

**Opportunities for American Students:** AFS is also seeking American students interested in living abroad for summer and year programs.

For further information, please contact: AFS District Representative, Ginny Cohen, 978-475-7153 or email: [gfcohen@comast.net](mailto:gfcohen@comast.net). Check out websites: [http://home.comcast.net/~andover\\_afs/wsb/html/view.cgi-home.html-.html](http://home.comcast.net/~andover_afs/wsb/html/view.cgi-home.html-.html), <http://www.usa.afs.org/>

# Summary of Monthly Meeting, January 25, 2005

(See our web site for the postings of full minutes:  
<http://www.merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org/MinFeb05>)  
Don Abbott, Clerk

Our current bank balance stands at \$6,480.83, including a total of \$1,070 donated by members and friends to replenish the account for the \$1,000 voted last fall to enable Peace Vision Project to begin to assist Ahlam Nijim, Iraqi civilian victim of the war.

We authorized Becci Backman to order 5 cases of Palestinian olive oil for future MVPP sales and to add to that order requests from other peace groups.

Sue Imhoff made a budget presentation on behalf of the working group that has been studying budget and donation issues. We reviewed a 2002-2004 budget summary and the projected 2005 budget. In an effort to reduce expenses, we considered the option to receive the MVPP Newsletter by email. We shall offer this option in the March issue of the Newsletter and during membership renewals. Regarding donations, it was recommended that our ability to give donations immediately should be based solely on the balance carried forward from 2004. We identified two options: a.) Keep half in reserve and donate the other half immediately, and b.) Donate \$1,000 per quarter over the course of 2005. Going forward, it would be preferable to evaluate recommendations for donations on a quarterly basis to ensure that we have enough capital to cover operating expenses. Also going forward, all expenses will be itemized monthly. And careful attention will be taken to record sources of income and the associated costs of events, to help us make more educated decisions in the future. The March meeting will continue these discussions. In addition, in the meantime, Arthur Brien will research questions raised about external audits.

Brenda McCarthy and Boryana Tacconi have kindly agreed to coordinate program planning for MVPP.

We voted \$150 to support an ad campaign being planned by Mass Peace Action, as long as it is about bringing our troops home now.

Barbara Haack reported on the wonderful way our \$250 donation for tsunami relief has been put to use (see Good News).

We voted to send a total of \$250 to Adopt-A-Minefield, including the amount raised at our January Pot Luck Supper (\$115).

We voted to continue through June 30, 2005, to accept donations on behalf of Peace Vision Project, without reservation.

We voted to join the coalition of groups that are sponsoring the Global Day of Protest on the Two-Year Anniversary of the Iraq War in NYC on March 19th.

We want to join other regional peace groups in sponsoring forums with Representative Tierney and Meehan on the costs of the Iraq War. Further information will be forthcoming.

# Books of Note:

Recommended Reads, compiled by Don Abbott

**Daniela Gioseffi, ed.: Women on War, An International Anthology of Writings from Antiquity to the Present**, Feminist Press, 2003. Vivid and visionary writings--from poetry, history, politics, and prose--largely absent from the standard history books, this collection hearkens the growing power of a global peace movement by women. Edited into accessible and meaningful units: prophecies and warnings, violence and mourning, courage and resistance, hope and survival.

**Daniel R. Katz, ed.: Why Freedom Matters**, Workman Publishing, 2003. A highly readable anthology of speeches, letters, essays, poems, and songs from 1776 to the present, all manifesting the spirit of the Declaration of Independence. A testament to the values that sustain American democracy, this book is filled with several relatively unfamiliar gems. A timely resource (Eleanor Roosevelt's speech in 1939, "Keepers of Democracy," is like the North Star!) at a moment when the current administration and the corporate media force "liberty" and "tyranny" through their narrow ideological prism.

**George Lakoff: Don't Think of an Elephant!-- Know Your Values and Frame the Debate**, Chelsea Green, 2004. Lakoff has become "the pied piper of media framing," gaining prominence among those who seek to empower the progressive movement. He explains how extreme ideas once considered far out of the mainstream have become national policy. A "handbook" on how progressives can reframe the debate about the values that are central to our society.

**David W. Orr: Earth in Mind, On Education, Environment and the Human Prospect**, 10th anniversary edition, Island Press, 2004. A distinguished professor of environmental studies and politics at Oberlin College, Orr integrates understandings from the fields of economics, ecology, and education in ways that are readily understandable to those without special knowledge of these fields. His short, well-crafted essays offer a vision for the long-term survival of our species through revolutionary change in the assumptions and goals of our educational and economic way of life.

**Trina Paulus: Hope for the Flowers**, Paulist Press, 1972. Read to my children during the final years of the Viet Nam War, this fetchingly illustrated tale still inspires as only the best and timeless stories can. Need to be surprised by the real possibilities of change and revolution? Risk for unconventional values and be "inebriated with joy."

**John Perkins: Confessions of an Economic Hit Man**, Berrett/Koehler Publishers, 2004. Perkins, the "economic hit man," used to convince strategically important countries, from Indonesia to Panama, to accept enormous loans for infrastructure development and then make sure that the lucrative projects were contracted to U.S. corporations. Saddled with huge debts, these countries came under the control of U.S.-dominated aid agencies acting like loan sharks, dictating repayment terms, and bullying foreign governments into submission. Think John Le Carré. But it's a true exposé about highly paid professionals who cheat countries out of trillions of dollars, with dire implications for America and the democratic aspirations of people around the globe.

**Rebecca Solnit: Hope in the Dark, Untold Histories, Wild Possibilities**, Nation Books, 2004. The winner of the 2003 National Book Critics Circle Award, Solnit draws on her life as an activist and writer and provides imaginative and fresh

insights into the way change happens and history moves. An inspirational counterweight to the “tonnage” of defeats and disasters promoted and documented regularly in the mainstream media.

**Claude Anshin Thomas: At Hell’s Gate, A Soldier’s Journey from War to Peace**, Shambhala, 2004. A raw and powerful memoir by a highly decorated war veteran who courageously broke through the cycle of fear and violence in himself, found healing through the teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh, and then, as an ordained Zen monk and teacher, began making pilgrimages throughout the world to promote peace and non-violence.

**Cornel West: Democracy Matters: Winning the Fight against Imperialism**, The Penguin Press, 2004. West’s impassioned, prophetic voice describes the way three “dominant dogmas” are weakening American democracy with relentless power: free-market fundamentalism, aggressive militarism, and escalating authoritarianism. A bold diagnosis of the imperialist corruptions that plague our history and a call for the revitalization of our better nature.

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*“...poetry becomes more necessary than ever: it keeps the underground aquifers flowing; it is the liquid voice that can wear through stone.”--Adrienne Rich*

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## Poetry

### “It Is I Who Must Begin”

by Vaclav Havel

It is I who must begin.  
Once I begin, once I try—  
here and now,  
right where I am,  
not excusing myself  
by saying that things  
would be easier elsewhere,  
without grand speeches and  
ostentatious gestures,  
but all the more persistently  
--to live in harmony  
with the “voice of Being,” as I  
understand it within myself  
--as soon as I begin that,  
I suddenly discover,  
to my surprise, that  
I am neither the only one,  
nor the first,  
nor the most important one  
to have set out  
upon that road.

Whether all is really lost  
or not depends entirely on  
whether or not I am lost.

### Pièces de Résistance--Don Abbott, poetaster

For Bush there’s no whiff of illusion.  
Good ’n Bad will permit no confusion.  
It makes warring quite hard  
when,  
hoist with his petard,  
he’s snared by his own delusion.

Gonzales has memored a lie.  
And our leaders just let it slide by.  
But when torture’s supported,  
our humanity’s aborted.  
It’s not just the truth that will die.

### “Sabbath Poem V” (1995)

by Wendell Berry

*To my granddaughters who visited the Holocaust Museum on the day of the burial of Yitzhak Rabin*

Now you know the worst  
we humans have to know  
about ourselves, and I am sorry,

for I know that you will be afraid.  
To those of our bodies given  
without pity to be burned, I know

there is no answer  
but loving one another,  
even our enemies, and this is hard.

But remember:  
when a man of war becomes a man of peace,  
he gives a light, divine

though it is also human.  
When a man of peace is killed  
by a man of war, he gives a light.

You do not have to walk in darkness.  
If you will have the courage for love,  
you may walk in light. It will be

the light of those who have suffered  
for peace. It will be  
your light.

## SING, SWING, SWAY and SPEAK FOR PEACE

March 12, 2005  
First United Methodist Church  
North Andover

Intersection of Rts 114 & 133, by Burger King  
7 - 10 PM

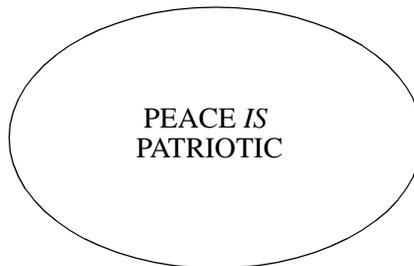
Bring yourself . . . Bring \$10 to benefit the work  
of peace . . . Bring your words of peace for a  
troubled world . . . Bring your songs of peace . . .  
Bring your instruments and voices . . . Bring your  
boogie shoes . . .

Djs: Jim Todd and Patti Coffill

Call Jim Todd 978-687-7864 or e-mail [jjmtodd@mdc.net](mailto:jjmtodd@mdc.net).

Merrimack Valley People For Peace  
P.O. Box 573  
North Andover, MA 01845-0573

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



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 up to May 31, 2004)  
MVPP President: Bobbie Goldman Vice President: Katherine Robinson Newsletter Editor: Don Abbott. Newsletter contributors: Becci Backman, Arthur & Marguerite Brien, Bobbie Goldman, Sue Imhoff, Brian Quirk, Mary Kate Small, Boryana Tacconi, and Jim Todd.

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

*Every legislator knows one letter is worth a thousand votes.*

### **President George W. Bush**

The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, DC 20500  
White House Comment Desk: 202 456-1111  
E-mail: [president@whitehouse.gov](mailto:president@whitehouse.gov)

### **Senator Edward M. Kennedy**

304 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
202 224-4543 fax: 202 224-2417  
2400 JFK Building, Boston MA 02203  
617 565-3170 fax: 617 565-3183  
Form: <http://kennedy.senate.gov/contact.html>

### **Senator John F. Kerry**

304 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
202 224-2742 fax: 202 224-8525  
One Bowdoin Sq., Boston, MA 02114  
617 565-8519 fax: 617 248-3870  
Form: <http://kerry.senate.gov/text/contact/email.html>

### **Representative Martin Meehan (District 5)**

2447 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
202 225-3411 fax: 202 226-0771  
305 Essex Street, Lawrence, MA 01840  
978 681-6200 fax: 978 682-6870  
E-mail: [martin.meehan@mail.house.gov](mailto:martin.meehan@mail.house.gov)

### **Representative John Tierney (District 6)**

120 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
202 225-8020 fax: 202 225-5915  
17 Peabody Sq, Peabody, MA 01960  
978 531-1669 fax: 978 531-1996  
E-mail: <http://www.house.gov/tierney/email.htm>

### **A link to all in US legislature:**

<http://thomas.loc.gov/home/legbranch/legbranch.html>

### **How Senators and Representatives voted:**

Senate: [http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/legislative/a\\_three\\_sections\\_with\\_teasers/votes.htm](http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/legislative/a_three_sections_with_teasers/votes.htm)  
House: <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2004/index.asp>

**State Voting Information:** Look up who you vote for at  
<http://www.wheredoivotema.com/bal/myelectioninfo.php>