



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.

January 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 by Boryana Tacconi

Great news from Lowell! The “Greater Lowell for Peace and Justice” group’s move to get a city resolution passed against the USA PATRIOT Act and in support of the Bill of Rights was successful! After an 8 month-long effort of the group, a week of intense debate and two council meetings, the resolution passed 6 to 3. Lowell now joins over 350 communities throughout the country having passed such resolutions.

New Haven to U. S. Government: “Out of Iraq Now!” The New Haven (CT) Board of Aldermen recently voted to ask the U. S. to end its occupation of Iraq and bring our troops home. The culmination of a lot of hard work by hundreds of peace activists, spearheaded by Green Party Alderwoman, Joyce Chen, this makes New Haven one of the few cities in our country to pass such a resolution. Now, other towns and municipalities have the opportunity to follow suit.

On November 20, Congress said ‘NO’ to new nuclear weapons! The Bush administration had sought \$27.6 million to continue work on the bunker buster or Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator, a nuclear weapon that would be aimed at an enemy’s underground sanctuary. Congress cut funding to --0-- for 2005. It also zero-ed funding for the Department of Energy’s program to develop mini-nukes and other “advanced concept” nuclear weapons at Livermore and Los Alamos. Arms control advocates in Congress regard this as their biggest victory since 1992, when they were able to place limits on nuclear testing.

SOA Watch During the weekend of November 19-21, a record 16,000+ people demonstrated outside the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation at Fort Benning, GA (The School of the Americas). This was the fourteenth annual gathering, organized by the SOA Watch to protest and draw attention to the training of military personnel from around the world, many of whom have then gone home to kill, rape, maim, and abuse human rights. This year’s protesters, including actors Martin Sheen, Susan Sarandon and George Wendt, came together in the largest and most diverse demonstration since the protests began in 1990. 15 people were arrested in acts of non-violent civil disobedience and 13 of them will face trials in federal court on January 24, 2005. The gathering culminated on Sunday with a solemn funeral procession to the

gates of Ft. Benning. Among the protesters were MVPP members Arthur Brien and Mary Kate Small. (See Mary Kate’s article on page 6-7.)

Israelis and Palestinians gathered olives together during the olive harvest season from mid-October to the end of November. For days, busloads of Israelis joined other activists from around the world in protecting Palestinian families from the Israeli soldiers and settlers and helping them pick olives. The olive tree and its products have a central economic and symbolic place in the life of Palestinians. Since the Israeli occupation began in 1967, hundreds of thousands of trees have been destroyed. Moreover, to reach their still existing groves, Palestinians now face a number of obstacles, including roadblocks and the wall, which is being built in the West Bank. The gestures of sol-

MVPP Monthly Meeting – North Parish Church – Tuesday, January 25, 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.

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

Andover: Tuesday, 5:45-6:45 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.

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.

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.

arity, coordinated by the Israeli peace organization Gush Shalom, reminded the Palestinians that not all Israelis are part of the occupation. To quote the Palestinian pastor, Mitri Raheb: “*At times, when we feel as if the word must be coming to an end... our only hopeful vision is to go out... and plant olive trees. If we plant a tree today, there will be shade for our children to play in. There will be oil to heal the wounds, and there will be olive branches to wave when peace arrives.*”

Students and Youth say NO to four more years of war. On December 4, about 400 students from Boston College, Brandeis, Boston University, Harvard, MIT, Mount Holyoke, Northeastern, Suffolk, Tufts, UMass-Boston and others gathered at the Boston Common Bandstand for a rally initiated by the Boston Student Mobilization to End the War. Several student speakers addressed the rally and at its end were joined by historian, writer, and life-long activist Howard Zinn. He shared his vision about the U.S. being respected, not feared around the world, and encouraged young people in their work for peace. He remembered the first very small demonstrations during the Vietnam War, which later on swelled to hundreds of thousands of people. Shouting “*End the War and Occupation*” and singing “*We Shall Not Be Moved*”, the rally was followed by a spirited march to Copley Square.

Kenyan environmental activist, Wangari Muta Maathai, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize on December 10, 2004. She is the first African woman and the first environmentalist to receive this prestigious honor. By broadening its definition of what promotes peace to include environmental activism, the Nobel Peace Prize Committee, which traditionally has honored those who have been pivotal in resolving violence and armed conflicts around the world, has taken an important, yet by no means a popular stand. However, there are inseparable connections between peace, democracy, and the environment. Our February newsletter will cover this news in greater detail.

Parents of three American soldiers killed in Iraq recently led a humanitarian mission to Jordan to deliver \$600,000 of needed supplies to refugees of the U.S. attack on Fallujah. \$500,000 in medical and humanitarian supplies was donated by the Middle East Children’s Alliance and Operation USA. The other \$100,000 was raised in an Internet appeal by the military family members, September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows, and other peace groups. Accompanied by representatives of Global Exchange, Code Pink, and Physicians for Social Responsibility, the military families planned to travel to the Iraq-Jordan border for a peaceful vigil on New Year’s Day and to visit camps of Fallujah refugees.

Commentary

Editor's Note: Periodically, we hope to publish commentary offered by an MVPP member on an issue of importance to the mission of our organization. The first submission follows. Individuals are encouraged to submit their commentary to Don Abbott, editor, at bdabbott@comcast.net.

What Can Americans Do to Further Peace in Israel/Palestine? by Becci Backman

A topic which MVPP has recently decided to address directly is the role of the US in the continuing occupation of the Palestinian territories by Israel. Even the premise is not fully agreed upon by our members. Some believe that the Palestinians are the occupiers; the territory formerly known as Palestine was given to the Jews by God. That logic leads me to conclude that all European Americans must depart the United States, because this nation is the exclusive domain of Native Americans. Instead, most members recognize the Palestinians as a unique cultural group who have lived in the territory now shared with Israel for thousands of years. Both the Israelis and the Palestinians have a right to exist and hold land. Whether Israel/Palestine will ultimately be one secular nation or two distinct countries remains to be determined. The reality, however, is that the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and portions of East Jerusalem, the regions ostensibly carved out to be Palestinian, are now occupied by Israel.

The occupation by Israel takes two primary forms. First, there are numerous settlements of largely fundamentalist Israelis dotted throughout Gaza, the West Bank and in East Jerusalem. Second, Israel guards those settlers and the settlements with soldiers, the Israeli Defense Force (IDF). Separate roads have been constructed for the exclusive use of the Israelis. Check points and gates are found throughout the West Bank and Gaza and in East Jerusalem, through which Palestinians must pass, sometimes just to get to their school, hospital or job. The Palestinians are subject to the whim of the IDF guards on duty that day. And there is a "security fence" being erected by Israel, the line of which projects deeply into the West Bank. The "fence" is being erected ostensibly to protect Israelis from the terrorist attacks of the minority of Palestinians who are fighting force with force. Are there too many abuses by both Israelis and Palestinians to enumerate? Absolutely!

The question for Americans is what do we do about this situation? For starters, we must acknowledge that the US makes the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories

possible. Our \$3 billion annual foreign aid and \$9 billion in annual loan guarantees (which do not have to be repaid) enable Israel to mount the occupation. Israel receives more foreign aid from the US than any other nation. We militarily equip Israel, and our tax dollars fund the construction of the "security fence." Without all of our tax dollars funding its military power, Israel would have to cease construction of its settlements (deemed illegal under international law), cease the demolition of Palestinian homes and olive groves and orchards (by armored Caterpillar bulldozers, sold to Israel by the US corporation, Caterpillar), and seek nonmilitary means to coexist with the Palestinians.

Is this analysis too simplistic? Perhaps. But the horrible abuse of apartheid in South Africa finally ceased when the US and other countries pulled the plug on the financial resources needed to prop it up. It has long been argued by American Jewish peace groups, along with other peace organizations, that the only way Israel will be stopped from pursuing an end not recognized under international law, using means in direct violation of international law, is to suspend military aid to Israel. Many Jewish peace groups and others in the US are slowly coming to the conclusion that more than suspension of aid is needed. Active discussions regarding selective divestment from companies that profit from the Israeli occupation are ongoing among Jewish and Christian peace seekers. A recent release by Jewish Voice for Peace, one of the largest and oldest grassroots Jewish peace organizations in the United States, stated the following position, with which I agree:

"[W]e fully support selective divestment from companies that profit from Israel's occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem. This includes American companies like Caterpillar who profit from the wholesale destruction of Palestinian homes and orchards. It also includes Israeli companies who depend on settlements for materials or labor or who produce military equipment used to violate Palestinian human rights. We believe that general divestment from Israel is an unwise strategy at this time. We believe that economic measures targeted specifically at the occupation and the Israeli military complex that sustains it are much more likely to produce results. However, we absolutely reject the accusation that general divestment or boycott campaigns are inherently anti-Semitic. The Israeli government is a government like any other, and condemning its abuse of state power, as many of its own citizens do quite vigorously, is in no way the same as attacking the Jewish people. . . . Neither the US nor Israel will change their policies in favor of peace through their own goodwill. This is not the way of governments. Tangible pressure must be brought to bear if policies promoting a better future are

to take root. The time has come for groups to bring that pressure to bear.”

To read the entire press release, go to
<http://www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org>.

This is a complex topic, but one which has far reaching ramifications. I urge the members of MVPP to become knowledgeable about the US role in the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories. Our web site has links:
<http://www.merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org/pwall.htm>
As we become better informed, I encourage us to write letters, make calls, and demand change.

If you want to make peace, you don't talk to your friends. You talk to your enemies.

Moshe Dayan

Reflection

From a recent Andover vigil: another reason to keep on after nearly 22 months, by Don Abbott

For at least the first 12 months of our regular vigils, a frequent passerby was among our most outspoken and contentious critics. Over time, however, his berating yielded to a readiness to debate or cajole, often in pleasant and even respectful banter. Nonetheless, throughout the summer and well into the fall, the political divide between us remained deep, wide, and painful. Mid-December, he greeted me with a hearty, “So, what shall we argue about today?” After challenging him to tell me whether the Sox should sign David Wells or not, which he declined, I turned to the recent exchange between an American soldier and Defense Secretary Rumsfeld at a public conference in Kuwait:

I asked him, “*What did you think about the soldier's question the other day about lack of armor for Humvees and other vehicles over there?*”

“*I thought he was right. He had a good point.*”

“*How about Rumsfeld's reply?*” I asked.

(A pained grimace from my friendly adversary.)

I continued, “*I think he said something about how ‘you go to war with the army you have, not the one you might want later,’ didn't he?*”

Another grimace. “*He shouldn't have said that. We have to support the soldiers.*”

“*We sure do.*”

After a long pause, he looked me squarely in my eyes and said, “*You know, it's scary when you realize we're on the same page.*”

But before I could say anything, he was on his way down the street.

Peace Vision Project:

On Air and Underway

Reported by Don Abbott and Jane Cadarette

Peace Vision Project, a new international medical assistance program for civilian victims of the war in Iraq, is rapidly gaining publicity and momentum. Created barely two months ago by MVPP member, Jane Cadarette, and Stuart Leiderman, Center Barnstead, NH, its mission recently was the topic December 15th from noon to 1 pm on WCCM-AM radio station's popular "Hotline" program from Methuen. Co-hosts Ronnie Ford and Dan Leahy interviewed Jane and Stuart about the humanitarian strategies needed to respond to the worsening plight of more and more civilian refugees as they flee Iraq to other Middle Eastern countries seeking urgent medical help. (The BBC has reported that there are likely a million Iraqi exiles living in Jordan alone.)

Funds first received by Peace Vision Project have been designated to assist Ahlam Nijim, a young Iraqi woman teacher who had been shot in the head and blinded by attackers while she was working for the reconstruction contractor, Kellogg-Brown-Root, near Najaf in southern Iraq. As reported earlier, in late October MVPP contributed \$1,000 to help this project get underway. A second case involves a Kurdish boy in critical need of a bone marrow transplant, a 5-year-old whose father had survived the 1988 gassing in Halabja.

Peace Vision Project's initial goal for winter '05 is \$10,000, with significant funding needed beyond that. The cost alone for the boy with leukemia is \$127,000. For more information: Peace Vision Project, P.O. Box 584, North Andover, MA 01845; e-mail at peacevisionproject@att.net; or call Jane at 978-686-5777 or Stuart at 603-776-0055. Also see more detailed postings on the MVPP web site: www.merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org/PeaceVision.htm

Letters to the Editor

New York Times

published October 27, 2004:

To the editor:

Who will ask President Bush why it is "war, war, war" on the campaign trail, but it is not war when it comes to the torture and death of captives?

Michael Frishman, Andover, MA

Lawrence Eagle-Tribune

submitted December 9, 2004:

To the editor:

When reading a headline like "Bush urges sacrifice on behalf of troops" which appeared in the Eagle-Tribune Wed. Dec. 8, it is very important to read between the lines. What President Bush was really saying is that the troops and their families are sacrificing a lot. They are being sent two weeks before Christmas to Iraq to participate in a misbegotten war that a cheap Secretary of Defense has not properly prepared for (see adjacent article about Secretary Rumsfeld in Kuwait - he decided at the last minute that his scheduled visit to Iraq 40 miles away was not safe). And because they will have to pay for the war for years after they (who survive) return home because the richest people in this country have been asked for no sacrifice at all - in fact they were all awarded substantial tax cuts by their friend in the White House, while the military contractors with no-bid contracts and regular charges of (at the most generous) mismanagement are paid with borrowed money.

Michael Frishman, Andover, MA

Newburyport Daily News

published December 12, 2004

Let's all seek 'peace on earth' right now

To the editor:

This time of year the words "Peace on earth, good will toward men" appear everywhere, are sung by choirs and carolers, repeated in prayers, in personal messages, on TV and radio, are written on cards and notes and wrapping paper, appear in ads and at the mall and in street decorations. Are we listening? With death counts mounting daily, are we making the connection between traditional words

and the world we now live in? In a world wracked by warfare, immersed in weaponry, in a country dominated by a military/industrial/political complex that depends on war for power and profit, do the words "Peace on earth" mean anything? They mean everything, for unless we learn the lessons of peace, we lose everything.

All around this area peace vigils are held regularly, in communities such as Andover, Gloucester, Ipswich, Lawrence, Marblehead, Reading, Rockport, both in Salem, Mass., and Salem, N.H., as well as in Newburyport. In Andover, vigils are held as many as six times a week. In Newburyport, a vigil is held every Sunday from noon to 1 p.m. in Market Square. In Ipswich, the vigil is held from 11 a.m. to noon on Saturdays. The people who attend may or may not belong to one of the area groups dedicated to working for peace, such as the Merrimack Valley People for Peace, the Veterans for Peace, the Coalition for Peace and Justice, or WAND. To vigil is both witness for peace and to call for people to work in whatever capacity they are able to bring peace about. Peace can be realized if enough people become involved and anyone concerned with peace is welcome to join in vigils.

Respect life, seek peace on earth.

Diana Philip, Newburyport, MA

Recent Events

MVPP at Northern Essex Community College

Reported by Becci Backman:

On December 8th, MVPP spoke at the Contemporary Affairs Club at Northern Essex Community College. Arranged by Professor Stephen Russell at the suggestion of Jane Thiefels, a member of MVPP, Jane Cadarette and Becci Backman spoke with sixteen students and faculty members for an hour. It quickly became evident that one hour only permitted us to touch the tip what MVPP is all about and why we are committed to the causes of peace, justice and creating a sustainable planet for all. The Club has recently focused on the war on Iraq, so we were an appropriate group to contribute to the topic.

Jane led off with a very brief history of MVPP; why and how she came to believe in the work of the organization and became an active participant. She described the presentation used by the group Beyond War, the literally thousands of nuclear weapons of many varieties stockpiled in the US alone, and the fact that the issue persists. Not only that, the US is using nuclear weapons today, in the form of depleted uranium. We both very briefly discussed the

ongoing vigils of MVPP and urged people to look at the web site for more information. Becci followed by reading excerpts from Marine Major General Smedley Butler's classic, *War Is a Racket*. After a 33-year distinguished career as a Marine, in which he won two Medals of Honor (only one of two Marines to do so, according to the official U.S. Marine Corps web site), Butler came to realize that war is not at all what it seems. It is a business in which a few make obscene profits, and the many pay enormous costs. In the limited time available, Becci also attempted to make the connection between war and terrorism. War is terrorism. Unfortunately, the room in which we spoke was needed for a class at the end of our hour, so there was little time for questions.

We urged the group to invite us back again to continue the discussion. We donated two copies each of *The Peace Book* and the *Hiroshima Appeal for Banning DU Weapons: NO WAR NO DU*, one to Professor Russell and one to the school. A student remained to ask for suggestions of what could be done on campus; another asked for additional resources. We believe that we were well received, the audience was very attentive, and with luck, MVPP will be asked to continue the discussion. Thanks to Jane Thiefels for suggesting that we be invited to speak.

Peace and Justice Discussion Group

Reported by Jim Todd:

A total of 19 people recently participated in a six-week Peace and Justice Group at First United Methodist Church in North Andover. Three people from MVPP also attended the group. The group discussed a different topic each week, including the "just war" theory, guidelines for a theology of peace, depleted uranium, non-violence, environmental justice and economic justice. As part of one evening's session, the group sent a letter of appreciation to an Andover high school student who had written an article on the Iraq War for the local newspaper. None of us knew this student, but it turns out that her mother works with one of the people attending the group that night, so we got feedback that she had appreciated hearing from us. Some members of the group plan to continue on a regular basis in the new year. If you would like to join a working group devoted to peace and justice activities in local churches and the wider community, and which is grounded in a Biblical, prophetic voice, please contact Jim or Mary Todd, 978-687-7864.

The 2004 Vigil at the School of the Americas

by Mary Kate Small

A record-breaking number of more than 16,000 people attended the powerful November 19-21 weekend in Columbus, Georgia. We saw a lot of banners, crosses, puppets. We had a lot of hope, and we did some protesting. There was much crying and much joy amidst the tears.

15 people non-violently crossed onto the grounds of Fort Benning to challenge the injustices committed by the U.S. and graduates of the School of the Americas, which has been renamed the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC). Among them was Western Massachusetts's own Tom MacLean, a 79-year-old who traveled in the four-van caravan that transported MVPP members Arthur Brien and Mary Kate Small. Tom spent a week in jail, not letting his heart condition stand in the way of his heart's desire. Because of poor health, he was released after that time, but will return for trial January 24th. He and his co-defendants could face several months in jail. Sentenced to 6 months several years ago was an 86-year-old religious sister. Two years back, Scott Schaeffer-Duffy, a friend of MVPP, spent three months in jail.

Known to protesters as the School of the Assassins, this combat-training center for Latin Americans has trained some of the worst human rights abusers in our hemisphere. This annual vigil is held in November, the month in which six El Salvadoran Jesuits, their housekeeper, and her teenage daughter were massacred in their home in 1989. 19 of the 26 men found guilty of the crime were graduates of the school. Millions of American tax dollars go to fund this institution. Father Roy Bourgeois, M.M., founder of the School of the Americas Watch (S.O.A.W.) has recommended that we follow George W. Bush's advice to dismantle terrorist training camps by starting right in Fort Benning with the S.O.A.

The weekend in Columbus was filled with opportunities to connect with others. Arthur attended two of the many workshops offered during the weekend. Witness for Peace spoke of the Central American Free Trade Agreement (C.A.F.T.A.), problems in Colombia, and the group's long-standing opposition to the S.O.A. The speakers told of their jail experiences as well. At the Pax Christi workshop, there was a beautiful panel with John Dear, S.J., Kathy Kelly and Pax Christi USA Bishop President Gabino Zavala. Also speaking was a man who was tortured in El Salvador, but found comfort and help in the U.S.A. He is

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

\$20.00 Individual
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Return to
MVPP
P.O. Box 573
North Andover, MA 01845-0573

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 only through May 31, 2004.** **2005 means you are paid till next year.** 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.

working to bring many abusers to justice. All spoke about how important it is for us to stop the injustices of the American empire and the crazy military budget.

Arthur was impressed with the many information tables telling us to buy fair-trade coffee, boycott Taco Bell and Coca-Cola, etc. During the day on Saturday and Sunday, these people lined the sides of the road leading to a stage featuring musicians and speakers. Pete Seeger has called it "the singingest" vigil he knows. Many songwriters familiar to MVPP were present, including Charlie King and the Prince Myshkins. Jon Fromer, who appeared in Andover last January, was busy all weekend with the Musicians Collective. He accompanied Mary Kate on the guitar on Sunday afternoon as she sang before the multitudes her own "Whisk W.H.I.S.C. Away!"

The most important time for many during the weekend is the solemn procession that takes place on Sunday morning. As the names of thousands killed by S.O.A. graduates are sung out, the word "Presente" is sung back, meaning "You are here with us still." Another highlight of the weekend is the Saturday evening Mass. This year, every Jesuit College in the country was represented. 4,000 people attended. Actor Martin Sheen read the prayers of the faithful. Francisco Herrera gave a rousing rendition of "Wade in the Water".

We will continue to meet at least until the "School of Torture" is closed. If you like 23-hour road trips (We traveled without maps! Who needs them with cell phones?) and the idea of getting to know college kids and all their piercings and wild hairdos up close, please join us next year. The

S.O.A.W. would be glad of your financial support at any time as well. Close the School of the Americas!

Upcoming Events

compiled by Sue Imhoff

Martin Luther King Day Celebration, Monday, Jan. 17, 2005, hosted by City Year New Hampshire. Celebrate Dr. King's life and legacy with activities for people of all ages! 8:00 am--MLK Breakfast at the Jarvis Center in Portsmouth, sponsored by the Seacoast Martin Luther King, Jr. Coalition, for reservations call (603) 427-0443; followed by Rally at 11:00, a March for Justice, and afternoon service projects. For more information or to register contact (603) 773-1618.

A Night with Noam Chomsky, Tuesday, Jan. 18, 2005, at First Parish Church, 3 Church Street, Harvard Square, Cambridge, MA. Doors open at 6 pm, presentation begins at 7 pm. Tickets available through (617) 338-9966. Sliding Scale: \$7-\$15/person.

Regis College Diversity Lecture, Tuesday, Jan. 18, 2005, at the Fine Arts Center, Regis College, 235 Wellesley Street, Weston, MA; 7:30 pm. Father Michael Battle will give a lecture on diversity, "Community—I AM BECAUSE WE ARE." Michael Battle is a university seminary professor, parish priest, writer, speaker, and retreat leader. His ministry covers the globe and focuses on Christian non-violence, human spirituality, and Black Church studies.

NATIONAL ANTI-WAR PROTEST in Washington, DC, Thursday, Jan. 20, 2005. NH Peace Action is sponsoring buses from Portsmouth and Concord, NH to the COUNTER-INAUGURAL anti-war protest and rally in

Washington, DC. For more information on the bus from Portsmouth, e-mail Jamilla at jamilla@wellinformed.org or call during the day at 207-439-5800.

Nuclear Issues briefing, Saturday, Jan. 22, 2005. Mass Peace Action's Annual Meeting/Briefing by Prof. Goldstein on Nuclear Issues at the First Unitarian Society, 1326 Washington St., Newton, MA; 10 am to 4 pm. Mass Peace Action and the Coalition for a Strong United Nations (CSUN) are co-sponsoring a strategy session. Following the business meeting, Professor Gary Goldstein of Tufts University will give a briefing on nuclear weapons and the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). For more information, 617-354-2169 or email members@masspeaceaction.org.

People's Music Network, Friday, January 29 through Sunday, January 30, 2005. The Winter Gathering 2005 of the People's Music Network for Songs of Freedom and Struggle in Brooklyn and Queens, NY. This year's gathering-- featuring a concert, workshops, song swaps, etc.-- promises to surpass last year's spirited Merrimack Valley affair held in Lawrence and Andover. For information: http://www.peoplesmusic.org/Winter_2005/Winter_2005.htm

Iraq Veterans Tour, Sunday, Jan. 30, 2005. Forum at Fanueil Hall in Boston; 2 pm to 6 pm.

Iraq Veterans Tour, Wednesday, Feb. 2, 2005.
UMass/Lowell.

UJP Strategy Conference Saturday, Feb. 5, 2005. at Northeastern University; 10 am to 4 pm. For more information, call Bobbie Goldman at 978-661-9009.

Books of Note

Recommended Reads, compiled by Don Abbott

Nazeer H. Aruri: Dishonest Broker, The U. S. Role in Israel and Palestine, South End Press 2003. Fully revised and updated version of the acclaimed earlier work by Chancellor Professor (emeritus) of Political Science at University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth, this book exposes the false claims of U. S. impartiality in one of the major conflicts of our time, providing information seldom presented in mainstream American media.

Paul Rogat Loeb: The Impossible Will Take a Little While, A Citizen's Guide to Hope in a Time of Fear, Basic Books 2004. Question: What might sustain us when the going gets tough? Answer: This inspired collection of essays and stories ranging from the likes of Nelson Mandela to Arundhati Roy to Amos Oz to Jim Wallis to Alice Walker.

Colman McCarthy: I'd Rather Teach Peace, Orbis Books, 2002. A noted columnist and writer, McCarthy (now director of the Center for Teaching Peace) shares the story of his passion for peace education: "...if individuals and nations can organize themselves properly, nonviolent force is always stronger, more enduring, and assuredly more moral than violent force."

Terry Tempest Williams: The Open Space of Democracy, Orion Books, 2004. In three essays published earlier this year in Orion Magazine, Williams offers a unique perspective on the responsibilities of citizen engagement, while integrating ecological, social, and spiritual values. This small volume is the fourth in Orion's "New Patriotism Series. The first three are In the Presence of Fear by Wendell Berry; Patriotism and the American Land by Richard Nelson, Barry Lopez, and T. T. Williams; and Citizen's Dissent by Wendell Berry and David James Duncan.

Douglas Wood: Old Turtle and the Broken Truth, Scholastic Press, 2003. A beautifully illustrated fable for children and seekers anywhere, of all ages. Filled with soul and eloquence, inspiration and healing vision, this book conveys timeless wisdom.

Howard Zinn and Anthony Arnove: Voices of a People's History of the United States, Seven Stories Press, 2004. A companion to Zinn's influential book, A People's History of the United States, this new anthology contains voices of resistance that over time have been mostly shut out of our main records. Although from people who in their day seemed to have no power, these voices are the kind that no government can suppress.

Summaries of Recent MVVP Meetings

(See our web site for the postings of full minutes:
www.merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org/Mins_1_2005.htm)

November 23. Our annual Stone Soup supper again drew us together at the season of Thanksgiving to acknowledge and support the critical global work of Oxfam. By the end of the meal, voluntary donations reached the even sum of \$350, thanks to a final gift offered generously by Masood Sheikh. With gratitude for everyone's participation, we then voted to send a total contribution of \$400 to Oxfam.

During dinner, we discussed the grave situation of the Israel/Palestine conflict. Becci, who serves as a member of the Israel/Palestine Task Force of United for Justice with Peace, stressed the need to educate Americans about the "situation on the ground" in Israel and Palestine, especially

the significant degree to which American tax dollars support the Israeli military and its ongoing occupation of Palestine. While continuing to oppose all terrorist actions around the world, peace groups and activists are being asked to consider ways a.) to educate about how U.S. aid underwrites the overwhelming force of Israel and b.) to take direct action to address the continuing violence and injustice in this region of the world. Given the urgency of these issues, this discussion will continue to be a priority for MVPP.

We concluded our meeting with a viewing of the film "Hijacking Catastrophe," which documents the "neo-con" use of the events of 9/11 for the take-over of U. S foreign policy by the agenda they had been preparing during the '90s. MVPP owns a copy of this film, which remains a critical educational resource as we move into the second four years of the current administration.

December 7. A dozen members attended a special meeting, hosted by Jim and Mary Todd and chaired by Bobbie Goldman, called to discuss guidelines for the use of funds raised by the organization. This subject led to a broader discussion about how our annual operating budget is set up and how funds have been spent in recent years. A working committee consisting of Sue Imhoff, Arthur Brien, Peter Cameron, Jim Todd, and Brian Quirk will report with some recommendations at our January monthly meeting.



Even in cold December, Becci's table provided information, income, and public contact.

Poems

Don't stop after beating the swords
into plowshares, don't stop! Go on beating
and make musical instruments out of them.
Whoever wants to make war again
will have to turn them into plowshares first.

--Yehuda Amichai

"A Christmas Poem for Our Times"

Where are the tens of thousands who stayed
to fall midst the ruins
of Falluja,
O callous times?

Are the civilians dismayed
or but bararously laid
blood-spattered and splayed
beneath the rubble?

Fear not the trouble
O callous times!
Fear not to rat,
to tell us that
under the flat-
tened town of Falluja
thousands of innocents lie.

Resist the urge to dismiss this
for fear of spoiling our Christmas.
Or are the dead not a glint
or even a hint
of all the news that's fit to print,
O callous times?

--Gerald Shea; Paris, France; submitted to the New York Times, December 13, 2004

**ANNUAL JANUARY POTLUCK SUPPER
FRIDAY, JANUARY 7 AT 6:30 PM**

**FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Routes 133 x 114, NORTH ANDOVER**

DO JOIN US!

**(In case of bad roads, we have reserved one week
later, Friday, January 14, as our "snow date.")**

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

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



PEACE IS
PATRIOTIC



The MVPP Newsletter is printed monthly and has a current mailing of 120. We are grateful for suggestions, comments, and help with publication. (2004 on your mailing label indicates that your 2003-2004 dues have been paid up to May 31, 2004)
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CALL AND WRITE YOUR REPRESENTATIVES & SENATORS TO MAKE YOUR VIEWS KNOWN

Every legislator knows one letter is worth a thousand votes.

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2400 JFK Building, Boston MA 02203
617 565-3170 fax: 617 565-3183
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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): <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2004/index.asp>

State Voting Information: Look up who you vote for at
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