



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.

June -- December 2012

In Solidarity with the Celebrating Egyptians, Wisconsin resisters, and the Occupy movement!

GOOD NEWS

Gift cards

MVPP requested gift cards from members and friends for the Iraqi families who arrived in 2012. We were delighted with the response. Over \$2000 worth of cash and cards were donated and we were able to 'surprise' these families with a gift of cards to several businesses -- mostly Market Basket and CVS.

As food stamps do not qualify for many necessities, including feminine products, toilet paper, cleaning supplies, toothpaste, etc., the families really appreciated the generosity of MVPP's members and friends. Here is one donor's response . . . "I am sending you a gift card for Market Basket and CVS pharmacy to help the new families who escaped the turmoil and war in their own countries. Bless you."

And "bless you!" . . . all who responded so generously. Your thoughtfulness means a lot.
--Mary Todd

Court approves case against spying on peace activists

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled Monday [December 17] that a National Lawyers Guild attorney's challenge to military spying on peace activists can proceed. The ruling marks the first time a court has affirmed people's ability to sue the military for violating their First and Fourth Amendment rights.

The ruling is the latest development in the lawsuit, *Panagacos v. Towery*, first brought by Hildes in 2009 on behalf of a group of Washington state antiwar activists who found themselves infiltrated by John Towery, an employee at a fusion center inside a local Army base. Fusion centers are multi-jurisdictional intelligence facilities which house federal and local law enforcement agencies alongside military units and private security companies. Their operations are largely secret and unregulated. There are currently 77 fusion centers in the United States.

The lawsuit names Towery as well as the Army, Navy, Air Force, FBI, CIA, Department of Homeland Security, and other law enforcement agencies.

For at least two years, Towery posed as an activist with the antiwar group Port Militarization Resistance (PMR), a group that sought to oppose the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan through civil disobedience.

--National Lawyers Guild --Thanks to John Schuchardt

The Budget for All Referendum Passes 3 to 1 The Massachusetts referendum to stop the cuts, invest in jobs, tax the 1% and end the wars (The Budget for All resolution) passed in all Massachusetts cities and towns where it was on the ballot November 6, 2012. The statewide vote was 623,128 yes to 209,725 no. The average margin was from 3 to 1.

The referendum was put on the ballot in 91 cities and towns across Massachusetts by a coalition of community, labor and peace groups. MVPP was one of the sponsors and member Barbara Haack, put in a lot of time and energy collecting the necessary signatures.

Presently, in view of the budget battle in Congress and the approaching budget deadlines, the Budget for All Coalition is intensively working on its part in a national strategy to save social programs, create jobs and make Pentagon cuts.

Indigenous Chief Ends 6-week Hunger Strike in Canada

First Nations Chief Theresa Spence ended her six-weeks hunger strike after political leaders pledged to sign on to her demands. She had fasted in protest of a budget bill weakening environmental protections and indigenous rights. Spence decided to end her fast after leaders of the Assembly of First Nations and two Canadian opposition parties agreed to a series of principles safeguarding indigenous rights.

Hundreds Rally Against Tar Sands Pipeline On January 26, in the largest protest in the Northeast against tar sands, hundreds of people from New England and Canada marched across Portland, ME to rally at the Maine State Pier. The rally and march

Potluck meeting January 11, 2013 6:30 PM, North Parish Church, Unitarian, North Andover

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

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were held to oppose an emerging proposal to send dirty tar sands oil through the 236-mile long, 62-year old Exxon/Enbridge pipeline across Canada, Maine and other New England states. Participants called on elected officials and the U.S. State Department to require a new presidential permit application and full environmental review before the company could reverse the pipeline to carry tar sands oil.

Comments from the Lowell Folk Festival

-collected by Mary Todd

Man from Germany. "I've been here for several years but just recently got my citizenship. I didn't want it signed by Bush!"

Ten year old red head . . . "Hi! Remember me?" Were you here last year? "Yes!" as he strolled away to catch up with his family.

"Oh, here you are! I look for this table every year!"

Young man from a middle school in a nearby town. "I'll tell my 'peace' teacher about you. We have a peace club in our school with about 14-15 students." Their group is in the Guinness Book of Records for the largest book. We gave him enough 'Another Student for Peace' buttons for everyone. (see www.pagesforpeace.org/home.html)

"The bumper sticker I got from you last year has paint on it, so I needed to come back and get another one!"

Mom with two young girls. "When we decided to come this year, my daughter said, 'I want to go back to the place where the woman (Boryana) taught me to make a peace crane!'"

Woman in her early 20s told this story . . . "last year I was severely sick and I remembered the story of Sadako, so I made 1000 origami cranes. I'm feeling fine and I have the peace cranes on exhibit in Lowell and I am looking for more exhibit space when this exhibit ends to encourage more people to make another 1000 cranes. I eventually want 100,000 cranes." (Unfortunately, we didn't get the name of the museum in Lowell.)

Young woman in her 20s clapping her hands, "Oh . . . I love you guys! I'm so glad you are here! I'm buying a new car and I need bumper stickers!" (Actually, she is buying a truck and she took 15-20 bumper stickers! Her boyfriend says she puts them all over her truck -- top included!)

And lastly . . . at closing time, we wanted to move the 'tent cover' closer to the truck to take it home, but it was raining and we didn't want all our stuff to get wet. So, necessity being the mother of invention, we recruited a man from the crowd to help us carry -- one person to each of the four poles -- down the street. Of course, with the rain, there was lots of water collected on top, so they had to stop on the way and dump it out! Very funny! Bottom line . . . all was well. The bumper stickers, buttons and printed information stayed pretty dry. Boryana took a hair dryer to it when she got home! The donations for the day were put into the Iraqi fund of MVPP to support the Iraqi refugees living in Lowell. All's well that ends well!



Recent Events

Many of these are described in more detail in the Meeting Notes, pp. 5-9

June

MVPP Annual Meeting potluck and election of officers. (End of MVPP fiscal year).

Some of us attended the presentation at Rolling Ridge by **Dr. M. Thomas Thangaraj**, June 26. He spoke about people from many religions working together to make peace between religions.

July

Petitions We successfully collected enough signatures to get state non-binding referenda added in some of our districts. Petitions concerned Budget for All (reduce defense spending) and Corporate Free Speech (Financial contributions to candidates should not be protected as free speech). (In November these passed overwhelmingly.)

August

We commemorated the Hiroshima bombing in 1945 with an August 6 vigil. Sixteen quietly held signs.

Cecile Pineda (author of *Devil's Tango*) spoke in Newburyport at the Jabberwocky Bookshop on August 8th. She updated us on the aftermath of Fukushima. She invited us to tell each other about local activities against nuclear power.

September

Bread and Roses Festival 100 years after the strike. The anniversary brought a bigger crowd, so we had more traffic. We enjoyed ringside seats watching "Bread and Puppets."

The Cats of Mirikitani. International Day of Peace movie at the Andover Unitarian Congregation. Many of us enjoyed being motivated by a film about a Japanese American who had been in the internment camps and painted about it until he was discovered after 9/11.

We watched a DVD at Jane's house of peace activists discussing nonviolence. Father Charles McCarthy, Mairead Maguire, and the late Father George Zabelka described how they came to find nonviolent resistance necessary.

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, 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.

Marblehead: Tuesday, 6:30-7:19pm in front of the high school and Community Center at the lights at the intersection of Humphrey-Pleasant and Lafayette Sts.; Tom Gale, 781-631-1218.

Nashua, NH in front of Nashua City Hall from 11 to Noon every Sat. www.nashuapeace.org

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).

Andover Day Boryana shared a table with the UU Church of Andover, at their invitation.

October

Keep Space for Peace vigil at Raytheon Oct. 11

Nonviolence Training led by Joanne Sheehan. Oct. 20. A presentation interesting enough to keep us indoors on a beautiful day. It was good to examine the roots of the anti-war effort we profess. Pictures of easel pages outlining the discussion are on the web at: www.merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org/2012nonviolencetraining.htm

November

Following the Boston Veterans Day parade, Veterans for Peace marched. The Leftist Marching Band and new speakers from Iraq War Veterans for Peace added to optimism that new leaders are rising to the challenges of the future.

Pat Scanlon on TV Member, and Veteran for Peace, Pat Scanlon was interviewed about police surveillance on peace groups. www.wgbh.org/programs/Greater-Boston-11/episodes/Oct-18-2012-Boston-Police-Surveillance-41885

Stone Soup Supper. We watched a video recommended by Joanne Sheehan about the origins of Gandhi's movement in India.

The video, A Force More Powerful, is a series about many non violence achievements.

December

Many of you gave generously to help the Iraqi refugees. Thank you!

Coming Events

Check on the MVPP web site for updates:

www.merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org/events.htm

12th Annual Walk for a New Spring. Feb. 16 to April 5, ending in Washington, D.C. www.merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org/walk13.pdf

Details are still being worked out. Check our website.

St. Patrick's Day parade, Sunday, March 17, 2 PM Broadway T Stop, South Boston. March with the Veterans for Peace behind the "official" St. Patrick's Day parade (who refuse to let Vets for Peace, and Gay Pride to march in the parade) Look for more details in March. on the MVPP web site.

Third Sunday of every month. Quaker vigil at Textron, on Rt. 129 in Wilmington. 11am - 12.

Second annual "How To Eat A Poem" conference for 2nd-4th graders at the Boys and Girls Club of Lawrence (Water Street). March 2, 9-12. We need all you Writing Leaders we can get to help with the kids. Last time there were 110 kids...we expect more this time. Let me know if you can make it. --Lou Bernieri lbernieri@andover.edu

We are planning a fund raising dinner with the North Parish church for the Iraqi refugee fund, probably in late March or April.

Letters

Lack of reverence leading to tragedy

Newburyport Daily News September 6, 2012

To the editor:

While sham displays go on in Tampa and Charlotte, presenting the biggest shows big money can devise to snare — or disenfranchise — gullible voters, according to election strategies, something far more devastating is happening to us.

While surveillance ratchets up its omnipresence and snoops of all stripes investigate sundry targets using "mobile intrusion software" (the kind that takes control of iPhones, Blackberrys, computers; tracking, intercepting, recording) like insects on a sugar trail, something far more devastating than trumped-up

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Name _____

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Telephone _____ E-Mail _____ Date _____

Return to MVPP is registered with the IRS as a 501(c)(3) organization. Contributions to MVPP are tax P.O. Box 573 deductible. Last year, approximately one-third of our members joined/renewed at higher than North Andover, MA 01845 the basic rate. **Check here if you prefer to receive your newsletter via e-mail.**

excuses for mayhem is happening to us. (See Bloomberg, Aug. 29, "Spyware Matching FinFisher Can Take Over iPhones" by Vernon Silver.)

While military and intelligence operatives spread out over the globe seeking new targets for weapons manufacturers (the one category of products still made in the U.S.A.), big banks and other corporations that profit from slaughter and pillage, something yet far more devastating is happening to us.

Our world is dying. The planet that nurtured us and all life on earth into being is burning up. There are many contributory causes, but the major cause is lack of reverence for our natural world, for life and the ecological balance that sustains life, ours no more or less than any other living beings. Reverence includes respect and good will toward those with whom we share the earth. Tragically, ignorance, arrogance and greed seem to have triumphed in this age of catastrophic demise.

There are two recent articles I'd like to recommend that can present our current state far better than I. The first is "Life is Sacred" by Chris Hedges, posted on Truthdig, Sept. 3 at truthdig.com. (http://www.truthdig.com/report/item/life_is_sacred_20120903). Chris Hedges is a well-known author who has great reverence and does not flinch from reality.

The second article is "We Are Writing the Epilogue to the World We Knew" by John Atcheson, published Friday, Aug. 31 by Common Dreams at www.commondreams.org.

We can continue to deny or ignore what has been staring us in the face for decades, but that will not change the course of events. Or, if people pause in their frantic pursuits and remain still long enough to focus and realize what is before them, there may be a chance to alter what lies ahead.

D. Philip
Newburyport

Corporate rights

To *Lawrence Eagle Tribune*. Submitted October 29, 2012 by Michael Bleiweiss, but not published

"Settled Law" asserts that constitutional rights for corporations is the law of the land because of two centuries of Supreme Court rulings. What he fails to grasp is that these decisions were massive overreaching by pro-corporate activist justices with an agenda. The court's proper role is to rule on existing laws, not to usurp the legislature's power to make new ones.

Also, just because the Court makes reinforcing decisions does not make them correct. They also made decisions supporting slavery and segregation. These have since been overturned and/or cancelled by constitutional amendments.

It is the power of the people to overturn bad rulings by the Court by amending the Constitution to reject them. This has been done several times before (as in slavery and voting rights). That is why you should vote in favor of Question 4 on the Methuen and Haverhill ballots -- to assert the fact that corporations are not really people just because the Supreme Court says so.

Cliff

To *Lawrence Eagle Tribune*. Submitted November 2, 2012 by Michael Bleiweiss, but not published.

The big Republican myth this election season is that allowing the Bush tax cuts to expire for those making more than \$250,000 a year would kill job creation at small businesses. This is yet another lie. The truth they obscure is that taxes only apply to a business' profits -- the money left over after all expenses are met. These expenses include payroll, benefits, inventory, facilities, materials, and sales. Hiring more people will, therefore, raise expenses and lower the owners' tax liability.

We must buy back semi-automatics, not just ban them

Lawrence Eagle Tribune December 23, 2012

To the editor:

In the wake of the massacre in Newtown, Conn., everyone is talking about new gun laws. President Obama questions the adequacy of current gun laws to keep our children safe. Most people agree that something must be done. Some believe, in light of the frequency of such massacres and the horror of the latest, that a tipping point has been reached and they hope for a law that will actually save lives.

In the meantime, whether out of fear for their safety or concern that a ban on semi-automatic assault rifles such as the AR-15 is inevitable, people in droves are buying up such guns. Dealers are running out of inventory.

In 1996, in a place called New Town, Australia there was a massacre. The Prime Minister acted quickly in proposing and getting a ban on assault rifles passed. Within 12 days it was in place. Since then, it's been almost 16 years without a massacre.

But it wasn't just the ban that did it.

Australia bought back 650,000 semi-automatic rifles. I repeat: 650,000 weapons were bought back.

Unless a new gun law calling for the ban of semi-automatic rifles contains a plan to buy back these weapons, with no grandfather clauses allowed, the passing of such a law will be a feel-good exercise. The law will be merely a sham.

Jane Cadarette
North Andover

Constitutional 'militia' and school shootings

Gloucester Daily Times December 27, 2012
To the editor:

I was on the verge of writing a letter to my paper about the availability of guns to deplore news out of Jacksonville, Fla., where it seems a young man was shot and killed for playing music too loudly.

That follows when it's reported that 35 gun deaths occur daily and that there are 90 guns for every 100 people in our country. Since 9/11/01, there have been over 150,000 American deaths right here in our land at the hands of non-terrorists. Collectively, we own 300 million guns.

It's even more cautionary that 58 million of us have some form of mental illness. Emotional instability can lead to violent reactions to what is usually considered ordinary, measured behavior.

Road rage, combined with a gun, can lead to a man being shot in the arm while driving on I-93 on 11/19 outside of Braintree. In Georgia, a 65-year-old woman was shot and killed by a 73-year-old man when her car bumped against his motorized wheelchair in a gas pump bay.

Nothing, however, could compare with the school massacre that occurred Dec. 14. The gunman first killed his mother at their home in Newtown, Conn., then 20 schoolchildren and six adult staffers at Sandy Hook Elementary School before his taking his own life. He was described by classmates as a quiet loner who "didn't fit in."

What exactly does The Second Amendment say? "A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed."

Back in the days when that was written, there were no organized police or armed forces, coast guard, FBI, or CIA. Reliance on citizens being members of militias which were well regulated so they wouldn't get out of hand, conferred the right to bear Arms.

A journey to the present day, so-called "gun rights" require regulation just as organizations intended to keep us secure require vigorous oversight.

Cynthia Fisk
Chapel Street, Gloucester

Markey Endorsement

Gloucester Daily Times January 15, 2013
To the Editor:

No More Fukushimas! proudly endorses Congressman Edward Markey for the US Senate from Massachusetts. For decades, Congressman Markey has "had the back" of area families in regard to safety at the Seabrook nuclear power plant. He has

fought for nuclear safety, although the people who would be most affected by a radiological emergency at the plant do not live in his district. As he runs for the Senate, it is our turn to have his back.

Ed Markey has not rested on his laurels. During the Seabrook plant relicensing struggle, Markey has continued to fight by (1) constantly questioning the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) about concrete degradation at the Seabrook plant, degradation that could weaken critical plant safety structures and result in a catastrophe, (2) insisting that the NRC convene public meetings in this area about the ongoing concrete degradation problem, and (3) co-sponsoring with Congressman Tierney the "Nuclear Reactor Safety First Act" (HR 6554), which would prevent the NRC from relicensing plants -- including Seabrook -- prior to 10 years before their license expires.

In contrast, Scott Brown—a likely senatorial opponent—has done absolutely nothing on behalf of public safety at the Seabrook or Pilgrim nuclear plants during the relicensing struggle. Brown is so committed to nuclear plant owners that he refuses to do anything that may upset them— even if it jeopardizes the safety of his own constituents.

Ed Markey has fought the NRC numerous times on behalf of people in Massachusetts and across the nation who face risks from nuclear power plants, and he has urged the NRC to consider the lessons learned from the Fukushima disaster in nuclear power plant oversight. Please join us in supporting Ed Markey for the US Senate because of his unrivaled leadership in supporting the safety of families, rather than the financial security of nuclear plant investors.

Bruce Skud and Joanna Hammond
Co-founders, No More Fukushimas!

Meeting Notes

June 22, 2012 Annual meeting

After a pleasant time together at a delicious potluck we gathered for the annual meeting.

Members approved the nomination slate of MVPP officers for year 2012-2013 and its directors.

We discussed the two **referendum questions**: Budget For All and Citizens United. Many cities and towns will see these questions on the November ballot because of the diligence of volunteers collecting signatures.

Planning for future events

August 6, 7pm. Hiroshima Day, in front of the Andover Town Hall. We decided to make it simple, with a few large signs, and all of us facing toward the passersby (not in a circle).

August 8, 7 pm. Cecile Pineda, author of *DEVIL'S TANGO - How I Learned the Fukushima Step by Step* will discuss her book at the Jabberwocky Book Store, Newburyport. Following is Jane's review of the book:

Devil's Tango by Cecile Pineda is a well researched, fear-some, enlightening and shocking book. Ms. Pineda connects the dots of the past while counting down the days since the horrifying Fukushima disaster that she refers to as our planetary catastrophe of March 11, 2011. It is with great skill that Ms. Pineda presents what we need to know in order to face the tragic truth of our nuclear polluted world. This book will be a great resource for the reader who decides to act on what is learned from it.

-Jane Cadarette, North Andover, Massachusetts

October 20. Non violent training for MVPP members and friends, lead by Joanne Sheehan, author of *Handbook for Nonviolent Campaigns*. We agreed with her suggestion that we allow for a 5 hour session starting at 10am, with at least 10 people. Brian will find out if the church is available.

Before we adjourned Brian thanked us all for a productive year.

July 24, 2012

Bobbie made an addition to the agenda: Brian should be authorized to approve the messages that appear on the MVPP rise-up list. (The approval is given presently by Bobbie and Richard Hudak.) She clarified that this would be a shortcut in case a message needs to be urgently posted. Brian accepted.

Arthur gave the Treasurer's report for fiscal year 7/1/2011 -- 6/30/2012 and it was accepted. Arthur noted an outstanding rental bill for our meetings and requested a vote. Payment was approved. We decided to pay the rent for the coming year in two installments; the first in November.

The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

Brian read correspondence from Dr. Rathore and Anne Wiehe. Arthur added that Anne made a donation.

Reports

Dr. M. Thomas Thangaraj

Some of us attended the presentation at Rolling Ridge by Dr. M. Thomas Thangaraj, June 26. He spoke about people from many religions working together to make peace between religions. He sold books that showed how statements in religious literature were discussed.

Petition Drives and lobbying

The needed signatures in the districts were obtained. Barbara was active in Newburyport and Jose and Martina covered most of Lawrence for the Budget for All Petition. Michael led efforts in Methuen for the Citizens United Petition.

Planning for Events

We will have our table at the **Lowell Folk Festival** July 28, manned by Boryana, Brian, Dee, Jim and Mary.

Hiroshima day will be August 6 in Andover Center at 7 PM. in front of the Andover Town Hall. Bring posters.

Nonviolence Training will be held October 20 from 10-3, led by Joanne Sheehan, author of the *Handbook for Nonviolent Campaigns*. Brian secured the space in the North Parish Church. The fee is \$75, a discount. There should be a minimum of 10 participants and a maximum of 30. Brian invited anyone from North Parish to attend. We will invite Amesbury Friends, North Shore Coalition, Reading People for Peace, St. Michael Parish, and Merrimack College Peace Studies. We have a sponsor for \$200.

We decided:

- MVPP should supply another \$200.
- people should pay ahead, \$20 checks written to MVPP
- We'll order pizza, and maybe salad, for part of that \$20.
- Limited to 30 people, i.e. first come first served
- Dee will prepare a Save the Date email soon
- We will run it as a calendar event in the paper (didn't say which papers) a week before the event.
- We'll discuss a final flier/email in August

Iraqis

Syria cut phone and web communication to the US, but some families get info. from other countries. Many have friends and relatives in Syria. There are two new families and a new baby. The Iraqi fund is low and we discussed a fund raiser. We decided to use proceeds from the donations at the Lowell Folk Festival for now. Another method discussed was sending requests and literature to churches.

Keep Space for Peace

We scheduled a vigil for Thursday October 11, 7 to 8 am at Raytheon.

August 28, 2012

Arthur read the Treasurer's report. It was accepted by voice vote.

- Last year's rent has been paid.
- We filed two annual reports with the state.
- We paid our post office box rental fee.
- Although we have used up the bed bug fund, the Iraqi relief fund has had quite an influx of donations, and not just from what we collected at the Lowell Folk Festival.
- The Peace Abbey loan will be repaid after the property is sold.

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted by voice vote.

Recent events:

Lowell Folk Festival

productive for us as usual. Mary submitted some anecdotes for the newsletter.

Hiroshima Vigil

Well attended: 16 people.

Jabberwocky Bookshop

very energizing presentation
a video will be available for \$15

Decisions:

Bread and Roses Festival, Monday, September 3, Lawrence

There will be a parade before the festival. It will start at Polartec at 11 AM. This means we need to set up earlier. We agreed to set up at 10:15 am. We need at least 4 people to help with set up and take down. Brian, Boryana, and Dee will be there. Arthur will be wearing two hats but will help with set up. Kathy will also help with setup. We agreed that we need a plan in case of bad weather (unlikely as that is from what we know): Brian will call people and suggest someone they will call.

Non-violence training

Dee brought a draft of the Save the Date email. We reviewed it and made suggestions, which Dee is to finalize this weekend. We brainstormed on publicity for the event, including some contacts we hadn't previously mentioned. We delegated who would contact whom. The email should go out after Labor Day.

We decided a Press Release should go out by September 10, to local papers.

We also decided on two fliers:

- suitable for posting on a bulletin board
- suitable for people to return registration

We will discuss setup for the event at the September meeting.

Fund-raiser for the Iraqi relief fund

We did some brainstorming. We thought maybe a dinner and silent auction, possibly in partnership with the Bedford church that has been so involved with the Iraqis in Lowell or with the Andover church would be a good idea. To be discussed in more detail in future. The fund had a recent influx of donations so this is not an urgent matter, which gives us time to plan well.

International Day of Peace, Friday, September 21

Rev. Lara Hoke of the Andover UU church had written to ask us if we were doing anything to mark the Day.

Brian presented us with two options:

- support the demonstration in Boston
- support the Andover UU church's planned movie (still to be determined)

We voted to support the church's movie.

Keep Space for Peace Week (Oct. 6-13)

We will hold a vigil 7-8 am at Raytheon/Andover. Boryana has contacted Bruce to make sure our vigil is included in the schedule of the week's events

Themes

Israel/Palestine

Everyone expressed regret at the verdict in the Rachel Corrie case.

25 September 2012

We discussed publicity for the Non-violence training. An email still needs to be sent to the Rise-up list. We discussed the technicalities and decided that it is better to post messages with links to files rather than attaching the files themselves to messages posted to the list. The issue with the Rise-up list is that some-

times flyers are too large, and the Rise-up list can only accommodate them if pictures are adapted, so it's sometimes necessary to put a link to the MVPP website or other URL rather than post a flyer.

Reports:

Bread & Roses

We had great weather, more publicity for the 100th anniversary of the strike, and a huge crowd so did better than usual.

Movie: *The Cats of Mirikitani*

Several of us attended the screening of this movie at the Andover UU church, held in recognition of the International Day of Peace. (We had voted to support their initiative rather than hold an event of our own.)

It was a powerful movie, moving, sensitive and a good way to celebrate the International Day of Peace.

Andover Day

Boryana shared a table with the UU Church of Andover at their invitation. (Rev. Hoke is actually a member of MVPP.) Boryana ran out of the handout on why we vigil.

Bradley Manning vigil

Boryana and Brian demonstrated in support of Bradley Manning in downtown Boston. They reported that there was some harassment, but that most passersby and observers were polite.

Father Charles McCarthy DVD

Some of us crowded into Jane's den on September 14 to watch a DVD of Father Charles McCarthy, Mairead Maguire, and the late Father George Zabelka discussing nonviolence. Father McCarthy, after having served in the armed forces, devoted his career to teaching about Christian Nonviolence, the Gospel of Nonviolence. He teaches that Jesus taught about nonviolence, yet the seminaries don't teach future priests and ministers about that. Mairead Maguire won the Nobel Peace Prize for her work in Northern Ireland. She spoke of having almost turned to violence in the quest for justice in Northern Ireland and having found her since unwavering commitment to peace by praying over her conflict over it. And Father Zabelka had come to peace work after having served as a military chaplain, including serving as chaplain to the crew that dropped The Bomb on Japan. All agreed that it was a powerful, moving discussion.

Decisions

Non Violence workshop

ACTION:

Publicity: Kathie will do the press releases.

Dee will send all the info she collected and the flier done to Kathie along with the contacts file (done).

We then discussed the menu. Boryana volunteered to bring soup (we agreed it should be vegan). We wrote out a list of items that would be needed and everyone signed up to bring something.

Iraqi fund-raiser

We discussed whether to give money from Labor Day to the Iraqi fund. There was concern that we'd already given all the money collected from the Folk Festival and that we needed to keep our overhead in mind.

Jane suggested that if we give money that we have plans in place for a fund-raiser.

By majority vote we agreed to give money from Labor Day to the Iraqi fund. We then discussed how much to give. Brian proposed that we give \$200 from Labor Day to the Iraqi fund. We don't have a record of a vote(, but at the next meeting approved the \$200).

We sold or gave away items at the Folk Festival and gave the proceeds to the fund, which was our choice, and we could do it again, but it's a short-term solution. A grant would be a solution, but would be a lot of work and Mary needs to cut back, not take on more.

The need is great (Two families are in low-paying jobs and struggling to make ends meet. With so many unable to find work and having little money, they are in survival mode and not able to help each other). Complicating matters, the International Institute is currently without a director.

There was general agreement that an Iraqi dinner would be a winner.

Kathie suggested we set up a subcommittee to bring back fund raising ideas to the next meeting. This was formed, by Kathie Robinson, Brian Quirk and Boryana Tacconi, (and Bobbie Goldman part time if a time that fit her schedule was found [it was]). There is a need to brainstorm and figure out what groups we can tap to bring resources. The subcommittee will report back at the next meeting so that we do not have to spend a lot of time discussing what we will do.

Jane suggested a Youtube video, but there is concern about what is done on the Web because the Iraqis are on the Web too and we don't want to inadvertently offend or endanger.

Kathie urged that we use the Rise-up list to pull together an immediate plea for money as an interim measure.

New Business

AIPAC

Barbara talked about AIPAC's joy at having gotten a measure passed in Congress that would force us to go to war if Israel's "red line" is crossed. There will be a demonstration at the AIPAC meeting on October 13-14.

2 Million Friends

Jane reported that Kathy Kelly is calling for a 2 Million Friends campaign on behalf of the Afghan Youth Volunteers. Since at least 2 million Afghans have died in the war in Afghanistan, instead of revenge they want to make 2 million friends on line.

There is also a petition to the UN for a cease-fire and events tied to December 10, International Human Rights Day, celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. see: <http://www.2millionfriends.org/>.

23 October 2012

Reports

Arthur read the Treasurer's report, which included a few donations. Income exceeded expenses. The report was accepted.

Nonviolence training

Barbara Haack reiterated her gratitude for Boryana's hospitality and all the work she put into our workshop on nonviolent resistance.

Brian read the quote from Martin Luther King from A Letter from Birmingham Jail that was cited at the workshop that had impressed all of us.

"Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks so to dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored."

All agreed that the workshop was worthwhile. Boryana ended the talk about the workshop with a favorite quote from Howard Zinn:

"Nonviolent action is not utopian - it is practical as well as moral. It builds on what already exists." [The source for the Howard Zinn quotation is: "Hell on earth: In The Unconquerable World, Jonathan Shell decries war as a political tool." The Boston Globe, July 13, 2003.]

Keep Space for Peace

Arthur reported on the vigil at Raytheon, Andover, on October 11. There was a little excitement. One visitor was taking pictures and one of the security guards tried to make him stop. Mary Kate stood up for the right to be on public property. After a brief show of "authority" the guard faded away.

TV spot

Those who had seen the video of Pat Scanlon's interview on TV were very impressed. Pat did a great job talking about the surveillance that is done of people who present no threat of violence.

Textron

Brian reported that there were 60 people at the October Textron Vigil in Wilmington.

Decisions

Fund-raising for the Iraq Refugees fund

The Iraqi Fund committee reported back that a dinner was thought to be a possibility but that we should rethink the date. We need to avoid the possibility of a snow cancellation, which means it probably should not be scheduled before April.

The Committee also reported on their discussion of logistics for the dinner.

ACTION: Michael to ask Pat about recruiting North Parish church to help in putting on a fund-raising dinner for the Iraqi Refugees Fund, and about Veterans for Peace helping with the dinner as well. He could also, while doing that, extend the invitation to VFP to attend the January Pot Luck. (see below).

The Committee also presented some other ideas they had discussed for helping the Iraqis and for helping Mary help them, though nothing had been decided. (A summary report is available separately.) Their presentation triggered some brainstorming.

Drapery Drive

Mary explained that many of the Iraqi families do not have draperies because those aren't considered essentials but that draperies ARE essential for the Muslim families because the women must wear hijab even in their own homes if they are visible from the street.

ACTION: Dee to write message re drapery drive (this has been done, with input from others, and approved by Mary and will be sent out this weekend).

Arthur suggested that the Donations Committee give gift cards for the Iraqis. Mary liked the gift card idea. The cards can be sent with non-religious holiday cards. Kathie agreed to draft a letter in consultation with Mary to campaign for donation of gift cards from our contacts.

ACTION: Kathie to draft appeal message for our Gift Card Campaign.

Donations

Arthur asked about the \$200 we approved for the Iraqi fund at the September meeting. The record was missing from the minutes so we voted again to go on record as having approved the donation.

ACTION: Arthur to transfer \$200 from general fund to Iraqi fund.

Jane proposed that people donate money to buy emergency (heat-retaining) blankets for Kathy Kelly's organization, to be incorporated into duvets that are being made as part of a project involving a business start-up in Afghanistan designed to develop self-sufficiency. The blankets would make the duvets warmer, an essential thing in a place where many people lack adequate heat and winter is dangerously cold. (There have been reports of up to a hundred children having died from the cold last winter.)

Jane offered to collect the money and pass it on to Kathy, but we decided that people should donate directly to MVPP due to our tax status. We would send a check to Kathy Kelly's organization to purchase the emergency blankets. This is to be added to the agenda for the Donations committee.

ACTION: Donations Committee to report back on recommended donations at November meeting.

Event Planning

Stone Soup will be the Tuesday AFTER Thanksgiving this year (November 27). It will start at 6:30 pm.

Everyone should bring something vegetarian to throw in the pot (or bread). We decided we will invite the minister of North Parish church. And we will use the occasion to address envelopes for the gift cards. Mary asked if we have MVPP address labels; we don't but we do have a stamp.

ACTION: Brian to contact North Parish Minister to invite the minister and the high school class and their parents.

January Pot Luck will be January 4, at 6:30 PM. If it snows we will cancel. [later changed to Jan 11].

We talked about inviting Reading people for Peace, Veterans for Peace, and North Shore Coalition, as well as putting it out on the listserve. Bobbie mentioned contacting certain people at the Reading group, Pat Scanlon is a contact for Veterans For Peace and Michael needs to contact him already about other issues, and Barbara talked about contacting North Shore Coalition.

We could show one of the videos from the "A Force More Powerful" series. Boryana can get a recommendation from Joann. We will need to make a reservation for church video equipment for that meeting.

ACTION:

- Brian to check on reserving video equipment for the event.
- Send invitations to Reading People for Peace, Veterans For Peace, and North Shore Coalition.
- Put invitation up on listserve.

Other Business

November 4, Amesbury "Moral Implications of the Federal Budget" Barbara will email everyone with information. (done)

Michael is looking for lawns for signs and leafleters for Move To Amend efforts in support of a ballot initiative asking to amend the State Constitution to say that corporations are not people and money is not speech.

November 27, 2012

Before the meeting, Jim gathered us together to give thanks for our annual Stone Soup meal, made more flavorful with the addition of a lovely quartz stone. Niki related the story of how the soup was first created. Thanks to Boryana for her usual kitchen organizing skills. We collected \$215 for this Oxfam annual fund-raiser.

As a follow-up to the non-violent workshop led by Joanne Sheehan, author of *Handbook for Nonviolent Campaigns*, we watched episode 1 - *A Force More Powerful, Mahatma Gandhi's Salt March*, a 241 mile walk in 23 days to the coast to protect peacefully the British salt monopoly. Thousands joined the march at each village. The march was the precursor to Indian independence.

Decisions

Iraqi refugees

Some 20-25 Iraqi refugee families have recently settled in Lowell (more are coming!), keeping Mary and Jim very busy. Arriving with almost nothing, these families are in great need of almost EVERYTHING (formal assistance has been minimal at this point), so we spent part of the evening stuffing envelopes with an explanatory letter, and with cards (peace photograph by Mary) asking for donations from MVPP members and friends. Thanks to Kathie for drafting the appeal letter.

MVPP hopes to have a fund raising event in April to help the Iraqi families. Pat Scanlon, MVPP and North Parish Church member has volunteered to lead the program and we are hoping that the church would like to assist as well.

Donations

Every year MVPP donates money to organizations. We approved the list.

Potluck Jan. 11

MVPP will have it's annual potluck dinner Friday January 11, 6:30. We agreed to see a continuation of the film series "A Force More Powerful."

Remembering Jon Fromer

(1946-2013)

In the first days of the New Year we said goodbye to a great musician, a passionate labor, social justice and peace activist, a luminous and warmhearted human being, a beloved friend of some of us in the MVPP. Jon Fromer passed away in his home in California on January 2nd at age 66, after a two year battle with cancer.

Jon Fromer was born in a family with deep roots in folk music and activism. At 18, he took part in the civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. He continued his music and activism in support of peace and human rights, and was especially well known as a labor singer, songwriter and activist. He performed for devoted fans in concert halls and clubs, but his true passion was making protest music. He lifted spirits in union halls, churches and, over the years, at thousands of picket lines, marches and rallies. No one could lead "Solidarity Forever" or "We Shall Overcome" like Jon. His wife Mary often joined him in those performances, they also sang together inside prisons. Jon was one of the pillars of the musicians collective at the School of the Americas Watch Vigil at Ft. Benning, Columbus GA, where he traditionally opened the Friday night Pax Christi gathering, and spent the next two days on the stage where his beautiful deep voice and powerful guitar playing could be heard from afar.

For years, Jon Fromer also produced a variety of programs for San Francisco based KQED-TV, including the science show "Quest." He composed the theme song for "We Do the Work," a PBS series about America's working class. During his 20-plus-year work for the station, he won several awards, including thirteen Northern California Emus and one national Emma. In 2011, he was honored with the Joe Hill Artist Lifetime Achievement Award from the Labor Heritage Foundation.

Jon founded the Freedom Song Network (a coalition of Bay Area musicians dedicated to promoting human rights) and was a longtime member of the People's Music Network for Songs of Freedom and Justice (PMN). Many of us were in the audience at the "Singing For Our Lives" PMN concert in Lawrence last January. The concert was honoring the Great Strike of 1912, and Jon Fromer, the labor singer, was in his element - he swept us all away with the uplifting power of his performance!

During the next two days of the PMN gathering we also heard some of his incredibly tender and lyrical songs about the beauty of the world and about his little grandson. Those little gems, just as the rousing "Gonna Take Us All," came from the same talent and from the same heart - a big loving heart that made any room feel warmer as soon as Jon entered it. This love, and Jon's passion for justice, and his music will be staying with us for the days to come. Jon Fromer, Presente!

Song

Extremists

Chorus

They say that we're extremists
Cause we're out here in the street
How unpatriotic to be marching for peace
They say "we better watch them, like never before"
Cause there's nothing more dangerous
Than Veterans Against War

Verse

So they stand on every corner, with their cameras in their hands
Taking film and snapping pictures of everything they can
They develop film and write reports on everything they saw
Protecting all our citizens from folks who broke no law

They've been doing this so long, they know us to our core
They know we're peaceful veterans, who know the cost of war
Because we've seen the horror, and the price we always pay
They have to document everything we do and say

They got Home Land Security, FBI and DIA
State and local police, don't forget the CIA
Why, we are so important, a clear danger to the land
Can't let this love and peace thing, get too far out of hand

Well they got their Bric, play all their tricks, wasting all our dough
All those files and pictures, with nothing much to show
So we raise our voices here today, to let them know it's time
Stop hassling the peace groups, go back to fighting crime

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You can watch a video of an early performance
(complete with blemishes and passion) at:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=hpenqAVSTyo

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PEACE IS
PATRIOTIC



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Every legislator knows one letter is worth a thousand votes.

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