



Merrimack Valley People For Peace

Serving the communities of the Merrimack Valley

Merrimack Valley People for Peace, Inc. works for a sustainable future for all life on our planet. Our members commit themselves to the interrelated activities of education for peace and justice, the prevention of war, an end to arms sales, the abolition of nuclear weapons, economic diversification, and protection of the environment.

July 2004

Merrimack Valley People for Peace joins the United Nations and peacemakers around the world in proclaiming the years 2001-2010 to be the "International Decade for the Culture of Peace"

GOOD NEWS

MVPP is celebrating its 20th year!

Supreme Court Says Those Held in War on Terror Must Get Day in Court The US Supreme court issued a historic ruling for civil liberties on behalf of detainees and "enemy combatants" in both the Guantánamo and Hamdi cases, sending a strong signal to the Bush Administration that even in times of war, the government must adhere to the Constitution and the rule of law.

Since 9/11, the Administration has amassed more and more power in the name of fighting terrorism, with very little resistance from Congress, the states or the majority of the American people. In its ruling that detainees and "enemy combatants" held by the United States are entitled to challenge their detention in court, the Court rejected the administration's arguments that its actions in the war on terror are beyond the rule of law.

Insisting that a system of checks and balances is essential to safeguarding both liberty and security, the Court ruled that foreign citizens detained at Guantánamo Bay and American citizens detained in military brigades are both entitled to their day in court.

Israeli Supreme Court orders changes to West Bank wall, June 30. The Court ordered changes to Israel's controversial West Bank wall, saying the current route was causing too much harm to the local Palestinian population, adding that such harm must be minimized, even if doing so resulted in less security for Israel. Around one-quarter of the 425-mile (680km) barrier has been completed. The ruling said: "The route disrupts the delicate balance between the obligation of the military commander to preserve security and his obligation to provide for the needs of the local inhabitants. The route that the military commander established for the security fence ... injures the local inhabitants in a severe and acute way while violating their rights under humanitarian and international law."

The International Court of Justice ruled July 9 that the barrier Israel is building is illegal and amounts to "de facto annexation" of Palestinian land. The Court asked the United Nations to oblige the Jewish state to dismantle it (Boston Globe). In addition it affirms fundamental Palestinian rights to self-determination.

"Fahrenheit 9/11" the #1 movie in the country. Even Fox News Channel gave a positive review! Theater managers report standing ovations as the credits rolled, even in North Carolina, Texas and Oklahoma. Theaters in military towns

across the country reported packed houses. As one viewer said, "I feel like we haven't seen the whole truth before."

Doris "Granny D" Haddock is a candidate for the United States Senate from New Hampshire. "I am running to win," she writes. "I am a realist, of course--but I am not a defeatist." She is running against incumbent Judd Gregg. Admitting that she now needs glasses she nevertheless said, "I can see clearly the difference between a necessary war and an unnecessary war, and the difference between a balanced budget and a deficit. Most importantly,

MVPP Monthly Meeting – North Parish Church – Tuesday, July 27, 7:30 PM

I can read the Constitution and its Bill of Rights very easily and clearly, and, when elected, I will do what so many others in today's Washington have not had the decency to do, and that is to abide by their oath to defend it."

Sale of nineteen semiautomatic, military-style assault weapons such as the AK-47, the Uzi, and shotguns with certain accessories barred in June by MA state legislators.

A federal appeals court rejects Federal Communications Commission rules that would have allowed fewer corporations to control more of the media, after an unprecedented public outcry from over 375,000 MoveOn members. The court ordered it to redo many of the controversial media ownership rules it passed a year ago. The decision gives priority to the public interest over corporate bottom-lines.

Limited use of pesticides and antibiotics dropped from new Agriculture Department organic food guidelines. Consumer groups and organic farmers, along with Vermont Senator Leahy, pressed for the rules changes.

Mike Miles running as a Green candidate for Congress in Wisconsin. MVPP recently invited Mike and others of the Wheels of Justice Tour to North Andover. Mike was the spokesperson for the group and attended history classes at North Andover HS, talking about Iraq. He was also the bus driver, and he may bring it back to MA again soon! At the moment he lives at the Catholic Worker Farm, "Anathoth", which he and his wife co-founded, where there is a center for nonviolence and sustainability.

MVPP vigils now include Salem, NH, Thursdays 7-8 at the intersection of routes 97&28. Reception there has been for the most part upbeat!

MVPP President's Annual Report

June 18, 2004.

Congratulations, MVPP for 20 wonderful years of making a difference... in North Andover, Merrimack Valley, and in the world. Look around you. Aren't we a great group of committed people? Committed to making the world a better, more peaceful place. As a group, we share our commitment, integrity, and outrage at the injustices in the world, and the needless damage our current administration has caused under the guise of fighting terrorism.

This has been an exciting year for MVPP. As the world situation grew worse and worse, we became more and more committed to doing whatever we could to change the course of events. First with daily vigils, and now with vigils 6 times a week, we are getting noticed in the community, and in the peace movement, and we continue to attract

new people. Despite frigid or hot temperatures, or any kind of precipitation, someone is always out on the curbside during our vigils. Of course on Tuesday mornings, it's mostly Mary Kate Small and Arthur Brien greeting the workers at 5:45 AM as they go to their shift. We've sold over 300 peace flags, and many more bumper stickers and buttons, with important – and sometimes funny – messages. We've had some amazing interactions with people who drive or pass by our vigils. Quite a few have changed their views after some discussions, and many have thanked us for being there consistently.

We've also caused a bit of controversy, by bringing first a replica of the Wall to our Andover vigil last November, and then the Wheels of Justice Tour, which educated people about the occupation of Iraq and of Palestine and made quite an impression on some 10th grade history students in Barry Humphreys' classes in North Andover High School. We've had a lot more publicity this year in various newspapers, partly thanks to our publicity committee, and individual members have had many letters-to-the-editor published. We even attracted 3 police cars to our March 14th vigil.

Merrimack Valley People For Peace now has a fabulous website, business cards, a beautiful new banner, and a pamphlet about why we still vigil. Our online newsletter attracted the attention of Swarthmore College Peace Coalition, which has joined MVPP in order to receive the newsletter for their peace archives. At our last count we have 123 members. We've had increasingly more people at our larger vigils, with over 70 at our "No More Victims" vigil last March, on the eve of the anniversary of the start of the war. We tabled at the Bread and Roses Festival in Lawrence, at the Peace College in Salem, at the Michelle Shocked concert in Newburyport, and at events we co-sponsored, including Noam Chomsky at Merrimack College, The Spirit of Resistance Concert with Pete Seeger and The People's Music Network at Cochran Chapel at Phillips Academy, and the Dave Lippman/George Shrub concert at this church. Also, we have permission to table on Saturday mornings in Andover through at least November.

We heard Dan Bishop from the International Depleted Uranium Study Team (IDUST) explain about DU, watched a movie called The Invisible War about the consequences of DU, and have been selling various books on DU. Members have supported and participated in the Immigrant Workers' Freedom Ride, ANSWER's march on Washington last October, and last March, over 12 MVPP members participated in the demonstration in NYC to bring the troops home... and we managed to find almost everyone there

through our cell phones. MVPP has made contributions to the Tony Van Der Meer fund, Jane Bernhardt's trip to Hiroshima, Global Peacemakers, the House of Peace, Mass Peace Action, the March to Abolish Poverty, AFSC, Toxics Action, LIFE (Life for Relief and Development), for food and medicine in Iraq; The War Resisters League of New England, and United for Justice with Peace, and individuals contributed to Oxfam and Adopt a Landmine at our potluck dinners. We supported Mary Kate Small and Hattie Nestle when they got arrested once again, this time at BAE, which is the largest defense contractor in NH. Last month John and Carrie Schuchardt also had their trial after their arrest at Westover Air Force base a few days after the US invaded Iraq. We joined the Campaign to ban DU, endorsed the petition for the resolution to Congress for our government to investigate the death of Rachel Corrie, and endorsed the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation. We again hosted a potluck supper for the Buddhist monks from the Leverett Peace Pagoda and other walkers on their Walk for a New Spring, and some of us joined part of the walk. We have increased our linkages with the Lawrence community, by supporting the Latinos United for Justice vigils and other efforts, and we have linked up with other peace groups in Lowell, Groton, Reading, Ipswich, and Newburyport. Some of our members are involved with these other groups as well. We are active members of UJP (United for Justice with Peace) in Greater Boston, attending their monthly community brunches, and we communicate with and are members of UFPJ (United for Peace with Justice), which is a national organization of peace groups. We have 2 ministers, Ralph Galen and Jim Todd, who have joined us this year, and are working to make connections with other religious leaders in the community. We have also held some events in their churches. Wow, what an impressive list of accomplishments!

Thanks to all the folks who make this possible. This is a team effort. My biggest thanks go to Becci Backman for ordering the most outrageous buttons and bumper stickers she can find and setting up her table wherever she can. Becci, your dedication is what makes our Saturday morning vigils so unique and powerful. You have also organized our membership records, and have coordinated your efforts with our treasurer, Peter Cameron, who is always ready to write a check whenever needed. Next, I'd like to thank Don Abbott for prioritizing our programs and events, and for keeping us on task at our meetings. You write wonderful minutes, have inspiring interactions with passersby at our vigils, and you keep us entertained with your poetry and song. Brian Quirk, thank you, thank you for being such a patient and creative webmaster, for playing your bagpipes at our vigils, and for coming to our rescue with

the newsletter. We have a great team who work on the newsletter, but special thanks go to our editor, Barbara Haack, and for Lou Bernieri, who steps in when Barbara goes to Mexico in winter, and for Arthur and Marge Brien, who deal with the printer and the mailing labels. A special personal thanks to Barbara Haack and Jane Cadarette, who listen and support me well when I get overwhelmed or confused, and are great sounding boards and mentors. Thanks, also, to our vice president, Kathie Robinson, who fills in for me when I'm unavailable, and is the voice of reason and experience. We miss our deceased co-founders, Gwen Smith and Alison Ceplikas, and our strong supporter, Henry Everett, who died this year. And we sorely miss Ed Meagher, who reluctantly retired 2 years ago from active peace duty for health reasons. But we now have so many new, dedicated members. What would we do without Masood's letters-to-the-editor, Dilenia's picture of her son, Javier, or Henry's signs at our vigils, Boryana's scrumptious vegetarian delights and recorder playing, Mary and Jim's hosting of numerous potlucks, Ralph's energy and outrage, and everyone else's contributions as well? It's been very personally gratifying, too, to have Eli Grober, a student at West Middle School, as an important member of our vigiling team. I'm looking forward to the day when the reins of the presidency of Merrimack Valley People For Peace will be handed over to him!

Bobbie Goldman, President
6/18/04

MVPP at 20 Years

June 18, 2004

In honor of our 20th Anniversary, I have been asked to share a few thoughts on the history of Merrimack Valley People for Peace. But before I go further, I want to offer a disclaimer; I can not say for certain that we are in fact 20 years old yet. Our records are somewhat conflicting on that point. Some show us starting in early 1985, while others show us already active in 1984. Since we celebrated our 10th Anniversary in 1994 while one of our founding members was still active with us we will carry that tradition forward tonight.

MVPP started as North Andover People for Peace around the kitchen table of Alison Ceplikas, our first President. Alison, who was an active member of the Trinitarian Congregational Church, invited a small number of others active in the Unitarian Universalist, Methodist, and Roman Catholic churches to form a group. Their purpose: to keep members of these and other congregations in the North

Andover area and the general public informed on the scientific, political, psychological and moral issues of the nuclear arms race and to generate enthusiasm for peace and justice. Although I am not sure of all the names of our founding members, I have it on good authority that they included: Alison Ceplikas, Gwendolyn Smith, Elizabeth Elliot, and Jim Keller.

It didn't take long for the word to get out on this promising group. Many of our earliest members were already working for peace in other organizations in area communities and some of these merged into NAPP. Jim Keller, a pastor and founder of the Greater Lawrence Ecumenical Area Ministry brought many of the members of the Greater Lawrence Interfaith Council for a Nuclear Weapons Freeze to NAPP. I was one of those as were Arthur Brien, Jane Cadarette, and Dick McCarthy. This broader community expanded the ship beyond North Andover, even in our first year. By the later 1980's NAPP started doing business as MVPP. This coming year we plan to legally change our name, to reflect the reality we have experienced over the last twenty years!

In early 1985 NAPP was incorporated and applied for its non-profit education status under IRS 501 c 3 with the help of two pro bono attorneys Marcia Damon-Rey and Ruth Bortzfield. It was an unusual thing for a grass-roots organization to go through this effort but our founders had their eyes on bigger programs and the access to grants that non-profit status brings.

One of the first events of the new organization was a presentation by Dr. Robert Nelkin, a resident of Andover, and member of the Physicians for Social Responsibility. Other events mentioned in our nonprofit application included sponsored films, discussions with teachers, peace and justice evenings with local church youth groups, debates and discussions on cable television, a walk for peace fundraiser, and a Hiroshima and Nagasaki commemoration. The group raised money and donated books to local libraries. They organized a booth at North Andover's 4th of July Celebration.

These smaller events were soon followed by larger ones including a speech by Dr. Benjamin Spock titled "Educating for Peace in a Nuclear Age" given at Phillip's Cochran Chapel in 1985. In order for us to guarantee Dr. Spock's airfare several members of the group had to loan us \$150 each, which we paid back with the proceeds after we filled the place! We followed that with a musical satirical play "Alice in Blunderland" with members of the North Parish Unitarian Church. With the help of a grant from the Kendall Foundation, we were able to hire a director and perform at North Andover Middle School. We also organized

a Star Wars debate and sent a container of school and medical supplies to Nicaragua. We marched for many years in North Andover's 4th of July parade. In 1991 we even had our own float! We gave out scholarships for local public school teachers to learn conflict resolution and local youths to attend peace camps.

After a few years as President, Alison passed the mantle to Ed Meagher who served as President for approximately 10 years. Under Ed's Presidency the organization flourished. As Ed's Vice President, I served as acting- President for a year during the Gulf War and succeeded Ed in the Presidency when Ed's health caused him to step back from community involvement. This gave me the dubious distinction of serving as President during both Iraq wars. I remain grateful for Bobbie's offer to assume Presidency, which she handles admirably.

Although we have enjoyed much success, we have also encountered resistance. During the Gulf War the town of Andover tried to require us to post high bonds, request vigil dates 3-4 weeks in advance, and pay for police protection. We remain indebted to the ACLU for talking reason to the Andover Town Manager. We have published many controversial letters to the editor. After one of these, we were surprised to find a response letter labeling us as the "Radical Chic" and stating that we were elitists motivated simply by the limelight and cared nothing for the neediest members of our communities. (The author, a former North Andover resident, had clearly never met Arthur Brien or Mary Kate Small.) Most recently, our outspoken position on Iraq, the Wall and the Wheels of Justice Tour have again stirred the pot of public opinion. Despite this controversy and perhaps because of it we have grown stronger.

No enumeration of our history would be complete without a word about the newsletter. Our newsletter has been recognized throughout the peace community for inspiration, insight, and "groundedness" in the local community.

Among the numerous flyers and memorabilia I have laid out, you can see an early newsletter from 1991.

In closing, I would like to recognize and thank you all for your leadership, inspiration, endurance, and hard work. It is no small thing to be working for peace for 20 years. Congratulations to us!

Kathie Robinson, Vice President
6/18/04

Weekly Vigils

Amesbury, First Sunday each month, 11:30-12:30 corner of Main & School St. Barbara Hildt, 978 388-3647

Amesbury Saturdays 9:30-11 a.m. in Market Sq. downtown Chris Hyde, 978 834-0862

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

Andover, Mon, Wed, Fri 7-8pm, Saturday 10:45-Noon (In good weather, 10-Noon),

Old Town Hall, Main St. - Lou Bernieri 978 475-6847, lbernieri@andover.edu

Merrimack Valley People For Peace, Bobbie Goldman, bg@comcast.net

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

Lawrence, Saturdays 12 - 1, Broadway and Essex Streets, Lawrence Peace Coalition, Martina Cruz, martina_m_cruz@yahoo.com.

Newburyport, Sunday, 12 noon - 1 p.m in Market Square, Niki Rosen, 978 463-3208

Reading, 2nd. Saturday each month, 11-12, Reading Square, Reading People For Peace, Bob Connor, bobconnor1@yahoo.com.

Salem NH, Thursdays at 7pm, corner of rts. 28 and 97. Henry Misserville, 918 470-0663.

You can buy a Rainbow Peace Flag, or a button or a bumper sticker at a Saturday Andover vigil.

North Shore groups' vigils

Gloucester, Saturday, Noon-1, Grant Circle

Gloucester, Tuesday, 7-8pm, Fisherman's Wives Memorial

Ipswich, Saturday, 11-noon, at the bottom of Town Hill (junction of 133)

Rockport, Wednesday, noon-1, First Congregational Church (silent for peace)

Salem, MA, Saturday, 11-noon, Riley Plaza (by the Post Office)

North Andover Citizen: Activists Say Their 'Peace'

By Esther Friedman/ Efriedma@Cnc.Com

Thursday, June 24, 2004

The North Parish Unitarian Church in North Andover is distinguished by an elegant lily white clock tower that looms large over the green in North Andover's old town square and a ground floor meeting room that houses the Merrimack Valley People for Peace. On Friday, June 18, between 40 and 50 members gathered there over a potluck dinner to celebrate 20 years of peace, justice, social equality and environmental activism.

Bumper stickers and buttons covered three large folding tables, conveying messages like "These Colors Don't Run the World" next to Old Glory, and the lyrics "Imagine all the People Living Life in Peace" beside John Lennon's face.

In 1984 four North Andover residents - Gwendolyn Smith, Elizabeth Elliot, Jim Keller and Allison Ceplikas - started MVPP in an effort to protest the development of nuclear arms. Today, the group's 123 members hail from Andover,

North Andover, Wilmington, Amesbury and Boxford and range in age from 13 to 75.

MVPP's youngest active member, Eli Grober, has been attending vigils of his own volition for more than a year. The 13-year-old red-haired, clear-eyed West Middle School student sported a large rainbow colored peace sign around his neck.

"I feel no human deserves to die whether or not they've committed a horrible crime," Grober explained. "People should know what they believe in and research their ideas. I have pins on my backpack, all anti-Bush - some kids argue with me. In Latin class we'll just start debating about the war. Some kids are really opinionated about it; they think Bush is doing the right thing, that there are actually weapons of mass destruction [in Iraq] and that the Iraqis are responsible for the Twin Towers. It is also many of the kids who watch Fox News [who believe this]."

On the other side of the age spectrum, the "Raging Grannies" entertained Friday night with their versions of patriotic tunes turned protest songs. Boston's group of Raging Grannies consists of eight gray-haired women who all wore black, except for floppy straw hats adorned with big

silk flowers. Singing to the tune of "Yankee Doodle," the Grannies proclaimed, "Georgy Porgy you're all wrong, bombs are not the answer. You can take your stupid war and stick it in your pants, sir."

The "Raging Grannies" started in Victoria, British Columbia in 1986 when peace activist street performers decided to don ridiculous hats and sing satirical protest songs. Granny member Elisabeth Leanord's large purple peace earrings swung back and forth as she explained that today there are 56 granny gaggles performing throughout the United States and Canada.

"You don't have to be raging, you don't have to be a granny. You don't even have to sing very well," Leanord said.

While the Grannies interjected humor into the evening, MVPP's sole Muslim member explained in an interview the serious effects the war has had on his family. Masood Sheikh, who hails from Pakistan, has lived in the United States for 30 years and his three children were born here.

"Today they beheaded Paul Johnson," he said, "and there are people saying let's flatten the Middle East."

He worries about his children, particularly his 14-year-old daughter.

"I can tell she's under a lot of stress." Sheikh said, "My wife used to cover her head. She was actually advised not to go out with the [head cover] because she might be attacked. This is the country of the free and the home of the brave!"

On the front lines

Every Tuesday at 5:45 a.m., group members meet at one of the sites of weapons manufacturer Raytheon to protest nuclear weapons proliferation and, in the spirit of civil disobedience, some members have been arrested repeatedly on charges of trespassing. And since April 2003, the group has kept itself busy with plenty of protests. When President George W. Bush gave the green light to the war in Iraq, MVPP started holding public vigils.

Rebecca Backman, MVPP's member recruiter, explained that the vigils started when online activist group moveon.org requested candlelight vigils on the Sunday before the Iraq war started. According to Backman, 225 people showed up holding candles in front of Old Town Hall.

"They decided, 'We can't stop doing this,'" she said.

To this day when Merrimack Valley commuters pass North Andover's Old Town Hall between 7 p.m. and 8 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, they see MVPP members displaying peace flags and war protest signs. On Saturday mornings and Sunday afternoons, they move the vigil to Shawsheen Square.

Despite such jeers as "Get a job, and when you get some money you can become a Republican," or "We could have had a woman president with PMS, and she'd have pushed the button by now. Yeah!" (reportedly from a woman driving a sport utility vehicle), and despite wind chills below zero last winter and 90-degree days last summer, MVPP members brave all elements to protest American military action in Iraq.

"In the beginning we had a lot of negative responses," Backman said. "It was very ugly. We've had people call us idiots and morons. Recently we've had people come up to us and say, 'One year ago I disagreed with you, but now I know why you're here.'"

Backman reports that even though the group is not "universally liked," they are beginning to see some unexpected support.

"What's heartening is seeing the World War II vets who go out of their way to wave and honk and say thank you," she said.

Despite challenges, or maybe because of them, the MVPP will continue to hold peace vigils, host a peace training, attend upcoming rallies during the Democratic National Convention in Boston and the Republican National Convention in New York, and participate in various peace-related forums and events. On Friday, June 25 the First Church in Ipswich will host Irish singer-songwriter Tommy Sands, who will headline a benefit concert for the group.

Backman said the group keeps going because the camaraderie enables members to get through this war.

"I no longer feel so alone," she said.

Minutes of the MVPP Annual Meeting

June 18, 2004

The following members and friends (43) were in attendance: Don Abbott, Betsy Abbott, Becci Backman, Michael Bleiweiss, Arthur Brien, Marguerite Brien, Jane Cadarette, Peter Cameron, Robert Connor, Rose Connor, Steve Cotton, Maria Cusumano, Marco Cusumano-Towner, Beverly Everett, Lois Fisher, Marcia Gagliardi, Ralph Galen, Connie Glore, Fred Glore, Bobbie Goldman, Caelin Graber, David Grober, Eli Grober, Katya Grober, Barbara Haack, Will Harvey, Alicia Heywood, Sue Imhoff, Mark Kane, Marcia Misiorski, Dorothy Misserville, Henry Misserville, Hattie Nestel, Brian Quirk, Kathie Robinson, Niki Rosen, John Schuchardt, Thea Shapiro, Masood Sheikh, Mary Kate Small, Boryana Tacconi, Alex Thornhill, and Mark Towner. We also were joined by several members of "The Raging Grannies" and Esther Friedman, reporter for the North Andover Citizen.

Introductions: After we had enjoyed a delicious pot luck supper, Bobbie welcomed everyone and invited each of us to introduce ourselves and say a few words about our work and association with MVPP. The individual and collective commitments and strengths in the gathering were inspiring.

Nominating Committee: The Board of Directors for the following terms were announced:

- 2002-2005: Lee Blumel, Arthur Brien, Jane Cadarette, Susan Manning, Jacob Zar.
- 2003-2006: Becci Backman, Brian Quirk, Tom Gale, Henry Misserville, Mary Kate Small.
- 2004-2007: Lou Bernieri, Ralph Galen, Joan Kulash, Masood Sheikh, Mary Todd.

A motion was approved to accept the following slate of MVPP Officers for 2004-2005:

President:	Bobbie Goldman
Vice-President:	Kathie Robinson
Secretary:	Don Abbott
Treasurer:	Peter Cameron

Treasurer's Report: Peter reported a current balance of \$4,631, compared to \$2,048 at last year's Annual Meeting in June. The successful sales of flags and other table items account for most of this increase.

President's Report: Bobbie presented a full recap of MVPP activities for the past year, warmly thanking individuals who had contributed to their high success.

Vice President's Report: In celebration of the 20th Anniversary of MVPP, Kathie recounted significant markers of our history, with deep appreciation for those on whose shoulders we stand.

Special Guest Performance: For the rest of the evening we were treated to a most entertaining choral performance by "The Raging Grannies," whose original and mirthful lyrics nourished our humor, resolve, and sanity for the work ahead.

Respectfully submitted,
Don Abbott, Clerk

Minutes of the MVPP June Meeting

June 22, 2004

The following were in attendance: Don Abbott, Becci Backman, Lou Bernieri, Arthur Brien, Jane Cadarette, Bill Callahan, Peter Cameron, Jose Cruz, Martina Cruz, Lynn Edwards, Bobbie Goldman, Barbara Haack, Brenda McCarthy, Brian Quirk, Kathie Robinson, Masood Sheikh, and Boryana Tacconi. We extended a warm welcome to new friends, Bob O'Leary and Toby O'Leary.

Treasurer's Report: Peter reported a current balance of \$4,631.63, with some recent checks of approximately \$140.00 still to be deposited.

Memberships: Becci reported that our members stand at 123, with renewals now being tallied on a daily basis.

Sales: Business continues to be brisk at our table. Orders are underway for 450 flags, awaiting confirmation with contacts in Italy. Becci and Barbara will staff the table at the June 25th concert for peace by Tommy Sands, a benefit for The House of Peace.

Committees: Bobbie reviewed the committee list, inviting members to indicate where they would like to put their time in the coming year. We hope to have a final list in place by mid- to late-summer.

Newsletter: Gratitude to those who produced the recent issue. Don acknowledged all current and past writers and editors, remarking that many individuals at the recent Annual Meeting had publicly praised the traditional high quality of the monthly publication and said how much it has clearly meant to many over the years. Deadline for completed copy for the next issue is July 18.

Website: Bobbie again requested additional volunteer help in updating the Website. Boryana kindly expressed interest. A committee would probably be helpful for this work, in addition to a periodic assessment of website audiences and functions.

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



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

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ E-Mail _____ Date _____

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 currently have 123 members counting the family members within a member group, and last year, approximately one third of those members joined/renewed at higher than the basic rate.

Publicity: Jane reported that she and Mary have lined up all of the work for publicizing the September 18th MVPP Benefit Concert and the October 13th program with Mike Prokosch. The article by Esther Friedman, who attended the Annual Meeting, should be appearing soon in the North Andover Citizen.

Review of By-Laws: Becci reported the need for us to review our By-Laws in a few instances, and a small group—consisting of Becci, Don, Brenda, and Kathie—volunteered to meet before the July monthly meeting to consider drafting any amendments.

Upcoming Events: We reviewed the calendar. 1.) Tommy Sands Concert in Ipswich, June 25; Becci, Barbara, and Jane plan to attend. 2. Fahrenheit 9/11; many intend to see it over its inaugural weekend of June 25. Members were encouraged to consider writing follow-up letters to the editor. 3.) Howard Zinn: You Can’t Be Neutral on a Moving Train; June 29 at Coolidge Corner; Boryana, Bobbie, Brian plan to attend with others considering the evening because Howard Zinn will speak afterwards. 4.) UJP demonstration on June 25 at Copley Square; Don, Bobbie, Peter and Masood plan to attend. 5.) Boston Social Forum, July 23-25; many from MVPP are registering. Whether and when to set up our table is being left to Becci to decide, once volunteer helpers (potentially 7) have weighed in with their availability. 6.) Veterans for Peace harbor dinner cruise, July 22; Mary Kate invites others to join her in accepting the invitation from Veterans for Peace to sing at their dinner on the eve of their conference, which happens to coincide with the Boston Social Forum. All who are interested should contact Mary Kate, and we need to be at the dock at 5:30 PM. 7.) Vigil in Salem, NH,

Thursday, June 24, 7-8 PM. Henry’s excellent suggestion, with Lynn Edwards’s invitation, moves forward for our first vigil in our neighboring “swing state.”

Future Programs: 1.) Hiroshima Vigil, August 6, Andover Old Town Hall Square; Don will organize. Jane will try to obtain the bell from North Andover. 2.) Mobilization in New York, August 29; many planning to attend; unresolved question as to whether we can officially endorse it. 3.) Bread and Roses Festival, September 6; to be on next month’s agenda. 4.) MVPP Benefit Concert, September 18; venue confirmed—North Parish Church in North Andover; Mary Kate continues to coordinate. We seek volunteers to work on an ad book for the concert. 5.) Program on Economic Justice with Mike Prokosch, October 13; we seek an overall coordinator for the event to be held at 7 PM at Memorial Library in Andover. Brian offered to seek co-sponsorship from other organizations. 6.) School of the Americas Watch, Shut Down the School of the Assassins, November 19-21; Arthur and Mary Kate invite others to join them on their annual witness with thousands in Fort Benning, GA. 7.) Hosting Michael Moore in the Merrimack Valley? Becci has been in contact with Moore’s booking agent. While nothing is at all certain, it appears that he might enjoy being hosted for a visit to our region. Due to current priorities in his schedule, nothing could be considered before Spring ’05. Costs and venue (3,000 capacity?) are issues.

Demilitarizing Our Schools: Jose and Martina reported on a critical initiative being organized in Lawrence by Latinos United for Justice: mobilizing parents and families to oppose the portion of the *No Child Left Behind Act* that requires public high schools to provide military recruiters with the names, addresses, and phone numbers of their stu-

dents, whenever they ask for it. (Such information is usually sent in early fall.) Informing families about this requirement AND about how they can prevent its enactment is a priority, especially at the opening of schools in September. MVPP has already provided Jose's organization with buttons publicizing this issue, and we stand committed to help in any other way that Jose and Martina may request. The August newsletter will provide a feature on this issue.

Why We Still Vigil: Don led a brief discussion about his sense that we need to update our statement and brochure, *Why We Still Vigil*, especially in light of a.) the U.S. occupation of Iraq, b.) the continuing Israeli occupation of Palestine and c.) the alleged June 30th "handover of sovereignty" to Iraq. We have an opportunity more specifically to highlight our published concerns about these issues, which are frequently discussed with passers-by at our regular vigils. Don will consult with members and draft amended wording for review at the July monthly meeting.

Endorsement: We unanimously voted to support "Two Letters from the Silent Majority", an initiative of United for Peace and Justice, demanding the immediate end to the occupation of Iraq. We authorized Bobbie to sign these individual letters to President Bush and to Senator Kerry.

Donations: We unanimously voted donations as follows: 1.) \$100 to the Free Camilo Committee, in support of war resister Camilo Mejia. 2.) \$200 to the North Parish Unitarian Universalist Church, as an annual donation in lieu of rent. 3.) \$100 to United for Peace and Justice, as an annual membership. 4.) \$100 to the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors.

Miscellany: Becci, Brian, Don, and Peter reported briefly on their recent meeting with a staff member in Marty Meehan's office in Lowell. Acting at that time strictly as individuals, they addressed Meehan's role as a senior member of the House Armed Service Committee and expressed concerns about the occupation of Iraq, the Israeli occupation of Palestine, and devastating weapons systems--especially depleted uranium and bioweapons. The proposed bioweapons lab in Boston (Massachusetts Avenue and Albany Street) received much attention in this discussion, and the staff member indicated she would forward this issue to Meehan as a priority. For further information: <http://www.bostonmobilization.org/bioweapons.html>.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 27, 2004 at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Don Abbott, Clerk

UPCOMING EVENTS

See the events page on the MVPP website for information on the plethora of events in mid summer!
<http://merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org/events.htm>

Also on the web find letters to the editor, and info about the "Stonewalk"

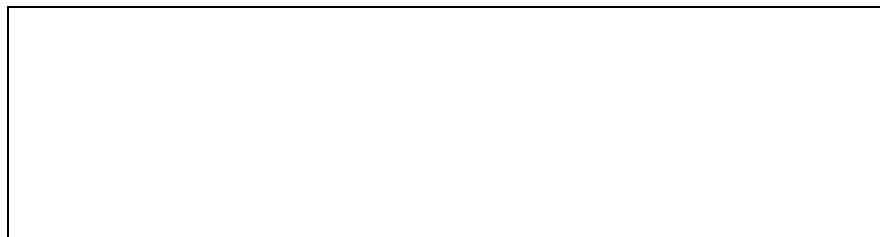
"If you want a symbolic action, don't burn the flag; wash it." *Norman Thomas, a pacifist and the Socialist Party candidate for President in 1940, 1944, and 1948.*

No newsletter in August

The MVPP newsletter staff is taking a vacation in August. Your next issue will be in September. Remember to come to the September 18 Musical Celebration/ Fundraiser honoring the Merrimack Valley People for Peace in our 20th year!

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<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 June 1, 2004)
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A link to all of **US legislature**:

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How Senators and Representatives voted

Senate: http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/legislative/a_three_sections_with_tasers/votes.htm

House: <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2004/index.asp>

Every legislator knows one letter is worth a thousand votes. **State Voting Information** Look up who you vote for: