



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 - August 2007

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

Boryana Tacconi

MVPP member J. Arthur Brien received the 2007 Award for Excellence in Social Justice Actions from the New England Conference of the United Methodist Church in a heartwarming ceremony held at Gordon College on June 10th. The award was presented by Bishop Peter Weaver in front of a full house, with almost all of Arthur and his wife Marguerite's eight grown-up children sitting in the first row and several MVPP members present. Warm words were spoken about Arthur's lifelong work for peace and social justice, about his involvement with the Habitat for Humanity, the Bread and Roses soup kitchen, the Merrimack Valley Project and the MVPP.

Anyone who has known Arthur for a while can imagine how impossible it is to mention in a 15-minute speech all that he does to make this world a better place! However, the audience heard how he was arrested several times for protesting the U.S. involvement in various wars and how he can be seen attending a prayer vigil for the unborn one day and marching in solidarity at a gay parade or attending an immigrant's rights event the next day. We heard about his early morning vigil at Raytheon every Tuesday protesting the production of missiles, about his Saturdays dedicated to Habitat for Humanity projects, and much more.

Arthur answered in his usual gentle, sincere and modest way. Later in this newsletter, we publish the full text of his acceptance speech. He was also honored for his peace and justice work at the MVPP annual meeting on June 15th and in an Eagle-Tribune article by Yadira Betances on June 23rd.

President Bush was handed a handwritten letter signed by fifty members of the Presidential Scholars (membership is one of the of the highest honors for graduating high school students) Presented at his meeting with them in June, the letter read: "As members of the Presidential Scholars class of 2007, we have been told that we represented the best and brightest of our nation. Therefore, we believe we have a responsibility to voice our convictions. We do not want America to represent torture. We urge you to do all in your power to stop violations of the human rights of detainees, to cease illegal renditions and to apply the Geneva Convention to all detainees, including those designated enemy combatants."

The letter was written during the night before the meeting by six of the students and signed the next morning by fifty in a group of 136. In the words of Leah Anthony Libresco, one of the authors of the letter: "I came down thinking if I'm going to be in the room with the President, I've got to say something, because silence betokens consent, and there's a lot going on I don't want to consent to."

President Bush read the letter and said, "America doesn't torture people". At which Mari Oye, the student who handed him the

letter, retorted, "If you look specifically at the points we made, we ask you to cease illegal renditions," and other students also stepped forward and spoke up. Mari Oye (a graduate from the Wellesley High School in Massachusetts) later said, "It happened in the space of about a minute, but it was a very interesting minute."

The citizens of Scituate, MA scored a major victory in protecting their children from military recruiters when the School Committee voted 5-0 to limit the military recruiters only to the Guidance Office. Previously the recruiters used to set up among the students in the cafeteria. Scituate activists put in a few months of work within the community to reach this result. The critical factor for the vote was having the committee hear from lots and lots of constituents.

Several counterrecruitment activists have been working with the AFSC to implement the same restrictions statewide. A hearing at the State House in May went very well. State Senators and Representatives need to constantly hear from all of us and be asked that they support House Bill 562, proposed by State Rep. Carl Sciortino and eleven other sponsors, which reinforces privacy provisions in the No Child Left Behind Act. Legislators

MVPP Monthly Meeting – First United Methodist Church – Tuesday, November 28 – 7:30 PM .
<http://www.merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org/>

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also need to be asked to strengthen the bill along the lines of regulations recently adopted by the Cambridge School Committee: Require all recruiters to meet with students in the Guidance Office; require that an adult third party be present during the meetings; announce the arrival of recruiters a week ahead of time; restrict recruiters by not allowing them to approach students who have not made appointments or whose parents have signed opt-out forms.

And more good news from Jamaica Plain, where the UJP counter-recruiting group has succeeded in unlimited tabling at the English High School!

Not only is impeachment becoming more and more an everyday conversation theme (thank you, Bill Moyers!), but the first "Impeachment Headquarters" opened its doors in a storefront near the Beverly Center in Los Angeles – on Independence Day!

"This is an impeachment 4th of July", said Byron de Lear, a Green Party activist. He called removing Bush and Cheney "a patriotic duty to restore the integrity of the United States."

Those assembled cited various Bush actions or policies, including lies that led the U.S. into war, torture, the illegal spying on American citizens and the curtailment of privacy and civil rights in the name of fighting terrorism.

About 300 gathered for a noon rally at nearby La Cienega Park where one of the speakers was Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Los Angeles), who is a member of the House Judiciary Committee. "We can make changes through organizing", she said. "If the numbers are in the streets, Congress will listen."

Activists plan to meet every Saturday afternoon at the Impeachment headquarters, where they will spread the word about <http://www.bcimpeach.com>, do phone banking and coordinate plans to circulate petitions and lobby elected officials. They report that 79 municipalities and townships nationwide have passed impeachment resolutions.

The timeless tradition of traveling to bring change into the world is being upheld by several groups of people around the U.S. this summer. Cindy Sheehan (her return to the peace movement after a short period of respite is already major good news) and a group of like-minded people traveled from Crawford, TX to New York between July 10 and July 29. The journey led them to Ft. Benning, GA (home of the infamous "School of the Americas"), to New Orleans and to Washington, D.C. They were joined in DC by about 300 impeachment activists and marched to the Capitol to insist that the House Judiciary Committee immediately start impeachment procedures against Bush and Cheney. More details and the complete schedule of the "Journey for Humanity" can be found at www.thecampcasey-peaceinstitute.org/.

Vietnam Veteran and Methodist minister Bill McDannel and his wife Jonna have been on the road from San Diego, CA to Washington, D.C. since November 2006. Bill covers the whole distance step by step while Jonna is driving the little camper that is now their only home (they sold their house to be able to do the walk). Bill McDannel's views, his petition to end the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the couple's road journal are wonderful and inspiring reading. His web site is <http://wtetw.com/>. (There, you can see the color picture of Boryana talking to them. The black and white picture is on p 7.)

And two teenagers are walking and sometimes biking from San Francisco, CA, to Washington, D.C. Ashley Casale, 19, of the Wesleyan University in Connecticut, and Michael Israel, 18, of Jackson, CA have been on their approximately 3,000 miles "March for Peace" since May 21st. They were recently joined by Northern Illinois University freshmen Tom Garrett, 19. The young people are committed to spreading the message of peace as a reaction to the war in Iraq in particular and global violence in general. Their web site is <http://marchforpeace.info/>.

New Haven, Connecticut is starting to issue ID cards to undocumented immigrants, beginning July 24th. The cards will serve as identification for bank services and if police ask for an ID. They can be also used at libraries, beaches and parks, and as debit cards for city parking meters and at 15 downtown shops. At a time when a rising number of states and cities are cracking down on undocumented immigrants, New Haven is the only city nationwide to have this program. The idea is to integrate so-called "illegal" immigrants into the community, protect them from crime that can happen because of a lack of documentation, and encourage them to be more willing to report crimes to police.

Although the move has prompted protests from groups and individuals opposing illegal immigration, the proposal sailed through the board of aldermen in June 25 to 1. The New Haven mayor was supportive, the Yale Law School provided legal representation and advice, and local immigrant-rights groups lobbied in support of the measure.

The first ever United States Social Forum held in Atlanta (June 27th-July 1st) was a great success. Up to 15,000 people participated in the plenaries, workshops and cultural events. The Forum focused on six key movement building struggles: **Gulf Coast Reconstruction in the Post-Katrina Era; War, Militarism and the Prison Industrial Complex; Indigenous Voices; Immigrant Rights; Integrating Gender and Sexual Justice Across Our Movements; and Workers' Rights in the Global Economy.** All those issues, deeply interconnected and related to the crises in our communities within today's reality, were explored through workshops, presentations, debates and performances during the five days of the Forum.

The Social Forum began with a strong peace and justice theme as many of the about 3,000 people in the opening march carried anti-war signs and banners. The Peace and Justice tent right outside the Civic Center main doors attracted a lot of visitors. United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ) was a strong presence among the nearly 1,000 groups at the Forum. It led several workshops such as *Torture, Terror and Political Repression – From Cointelpro and Attica to Guantanamo and the Patriot Act; Ending the War in Iraq, Preventing a New War; "Keep On Singing Loudly": the Power of Politics and Song; Militarism – the 800 lb. Gorilla in the Classroom* and others.

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: Wednesday, 5-7 pm; at the Peace Pole, Memorial Park (by the YMCA); 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).

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

Honored

Arthur Brien



MVPP recognized Arthur Brien after the New England Conference of the United Methodist Church gave him an award for exemplary living. Jim Todd and Mary Kate Small had recommended Arthur.

Here is Arthur's acceptance speech, given June 10. It is taken from the copy he typed on a real typewriter. Emphasis is in capital letters.

Bishop WEAVER, Rev. We Chang, Members of the New England Conference of the United Methodist Church, And Friends of Peace!!

I am overwhelmed, Humbled and Very Privileged to be this Year's recipient of your Social Justice Award.

I especially find Great Joy in the ecumenical Spirit by which your choice of a recipient was made, since I am a Christian of the Roman Catholic Tradition, from Lawrence, MA!

I believe that many in this chapel could have been chosen for this honor, nevertheless... I do accept it, with the thought that it will be a reminder for me to better serve Christ in the future.

One thing for certain is that I could not accept this honor without acknowledging my Wife Marguerite and our family for their STRONG SUPPORT. Thank You Marguerite and Family!!

I have also been very fortunate to have been brought up in a good Christian home and environment. I have lived in an ERA which produced many holy people... such as Martin Luther King, Gandhi, the Berrigan brothers, Mother Theresa, and Dorothy Day to mention just a few. These saintly people provided great examples for me to TRY TO EMULATE.

In the final analysis I have done nothing more than what is Required of any follower of Christ.

In HIS non-violent teaching of LOVE, Love of God, Love of Neighbor, LOVE of Self, and also Love of Enemies (which is not easy to do) I find that there is NO more EFFECTIVE Way to respond to the evils of the world, and to respond to the evils of our Government and its leaders.

These Non-Violent teachings of Christ provide ME with the strenght to witness for Christ in my daily life... whether it is by vigiling against the IMMORALITY of the unjust and illegal war in IRAQ... OR TRYING TO do a little to bring it to an end... or to bring the troops home safely as soon as possible. To approve the Warmakers would be to BETRAY Jesus. The LIGHT OF GOD'S TRUTH AGAINST THE HORRORS OF WAR MUST BE BROUGHT TO Light. If we sow violence it is impossible to reap non-violence. or to sow War cannot bring about PEACE.

I also must be more Loving and Compassionate towards the rest of Humanity, since we are all Sisters and Brothers CREATED IN GOD'S Image!!

This command to LOVE all people brings on much responsibility. It requires that I, in my small way, work to alleviate hunger, help to eradicate poverty, work for better race relations, more affordable housing, to work to protect our environment among others.

Thus far, history has shown us that violence does NOT bring about Social Justice or true lasting PEACE. WE really must get the Human family to try something different to solve our ills. I personally think that another REVOLUTION IS CALLED FOR. A revolution of LOVE.

This may sound as FOLLY to many people but if we call ourselves FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST HIS FORMULA OF LOVE TO ACHIEVE TRUE JUSTICE AND PEACE should be given the opportunity to put into practice.

When all is said and done I KNOW that it is in God's Unconditional LOVE OF ALL that we will achieve our goals of Justice and Peace.

I THANK GOD FOR YOU AND ALL YOUR GOOD WORKS TO TRY TO GET THIS BEAUTIFUL FORMULA OF GOD TO SUCCEED. It will in God's own time.

May God bless us all!!!
Thank You.

Willie, S.N.D. – A Short Story

By Mary Kate Small, with additions by Jane Cadarette



Sister Willie, with MVPP in NYC at the Republican National Convention, 2004

Preface

I started to write about Willie this morning in the wee hours. At one point I was moved to get up and go search through some boxes of 'junk,' looking for my report card from Senior Year to see what the name of my Religion class was with her. It was a social justice one, I know. Well, I never found it, but as I just now returned to the garage to close up boxes out there, I couldn't believe what I did find. Years ago, I wrote out a quote from a tape Willie lent me, words from Miriam Therese Gillis. (You don't know how much stuff I have! That I found this paper at this moment in time – something I forgot I'd ever copied - is astonishing!) I offer them to you now as I begin this reflection on William Julie Hurley, Sister of Notre Dame, friend, Earth steward, amazingly warm and wonderful soul.

And it is no accident that... we find our lives unfolding now, with our particular histories and our gifts and our brokenness and our experiences and our wisdoms. ...And I think that really what we are deeply in need of is a transforming vision, a vision that's deep enough, that can take us from where we are and bring us into a new place, that opens the future up to hope. ...that's really what we've got to be

about, being people of hope. ...Just as one single, tiny, fragile person, I know my life is significant.

-Miriam Therese Gillis, from her cassette entitled "The Fate of the Earth"

Chapter 1, The Start of a Beautiful Friendship

*... 'Love is touching souls.' Surely you touched mine
'Cuz part of you flows out of me in these lines from time to time...*

Joni Mitchell, "A Case of You"

"These lines..." Not only lyric lines. Protest lines. Picket lines. Any meaningful kind of line comes to mind. If it was a question of peace and justice, "Sister Willie," nee Margaret (Peggy) Hurley would have been there. As for the "touching souls" part, how many? How deeply? It's anyone's guess. This woman was a presence. Born in January of 1937, gone to God this July 2, 2007, Willie's funeral Saturday afternoon was a beautiful testimony to an incredible life. But as Jane and I were talking last night, we remembered more and more people we still needed to notify about her passing.

About 30 years ago (December 1, 1978?), Sister William Julie walked into my life at Saint Mary's High School in Lawrence. If memory serves, the day I met her was the day my brother Ed was leaving for Senegal to begin his work for Catholic Relief Services. She presented a slide show about her life in southern Africa that very day! Immediately what she had to say had great relevance to me. In the three decades that we knew each other, that never changed.

Sister Willie was a part-time teacher at Saint Mary's High School – physics and religion were her subjects there, as I recall, maybe biology, too. We'd only see her for half the day because the other half was spent a block down the street at the Lawrence Jail. She worked there 11 years, not only teaching these downtrodden souls, but genuinely loving them. The priest who said her funeral Mass got choked up as he mentioned Willie's ability to let each person she came into contact with know how much we mattered, making us feel like everything we said and did was important. I only had Willie for one class those three years at St. Mary's, but she became a friend all the same. We were kindred spirits. She knew how to relate and reach out to so many of us. I remember that we had a deal to try to lose 10 pounds together. Upon completion of this goal, we agreed to go for an ice cream. I believe we succeeded!

Chapter 2, Blame Willie

*It is a legacy, passed down from you to me
What we choose to be, who we are.
It is a legacy... and the roots run deep.*

Pierce Pettis, from his song "Legacy"

It occurred to me for the first time just this morning that I have Willie to thank for connecting me with one of my dearest friends today – Arthur Brien. We met protesting at the then Avco plant in Wilmington some 20 years ago. Willie always spoke so admiringly of that fellow vigil. I would only get there now and then on those Tuesday mornings, but those two – they were committed! And then there were Ann and Sue and Kate, David and Clare, Paul, the Schuchardts and others. Willie introduced me to these kind people. I now realize it was her 'imprimatur' that helped me know that these unusual ones, who sometimes got arrested for their beliefs, were all right. I saw so many of them

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at her funeral who have become my friends over the years. I owe this woman a debt of gratitude that can only be repaid now with grateful prayers and the way I live my life.

The birds begin their morning songs outside my window now. Willie so loved nature! She was full of wonder and awe in the presence of all forms of life. I remember having breakfast at Stelio's in Wilmington with Willie and the gang after a protest one morning. I had my baby girl with me at the time. Peggy the aunt showed herself then as she held my girl. Reflecting on her vow of chastity she said to all of us, "See what I gave up!" believing God would reward her for the great sacrifice. Having lived in Africa among people who had tremendous respect for family, one of Willie's pastoral lessons was that the Church hierarchy should rethink its ban on allowing priests to marry. She knew the number of vocations would increase enormously on that continent were that the case.

Her stances were indeed radical to some. She had more than one run-in with conservative Catholic bishops. Her most famous one got her kicked out of Zimbabwe. Locally, in her work with AIDS victims (she was the founder of Julie House in Lowell for those with HIV/Aids), her outspokenness regarding condoms and clean needles really ruffled one Cardinal's feathers. (Note that she outlasted him in her Massachusetts' ministries!)

Stemming from her love of life, respect for the wonders of the universe and her scientific background, awareness of the New Cosmology became a force that propelled her through the last decades. She studied it, taught it, lived it. Her enthusiasm for this field was contagious. Also during these years, she became part of the Gaia chorus, women who sing songs of reverence for the Earth, many written by Carolyn McDade. Two CD albums were created, "O Beautiful Gaia" created in 2003 and the latest just weeks ago which Willie was so pleased to be part of - The Earth Charter set to music. Two rows of women sang so beautifully at Willie's Mass, accompanied by Carolyn McDade on the piano.

Chapter 3, Remembering

Memories light the corners of my mind...
Marvin Hamlisch "The Way We Were"

I have a feeling that the profound influence this woman has had on the world will reverberate through time. Moments with her, that I had forgotten, have come back to me now. Depressed one time, I remember her kindness as she dropped me off from some event and tried to offer words of comfort. Before Raytheon's sponsorship, when I participated in the Walk for Hunger, over 20 years ago, reunions with our beloved Willie happened along the

20-mile route. She was indebted to the Walk. Shortly after one walk, not feeling well, she discovered that she had breast cancer.

At moments during her wake and burial, I felt like a Quaker, moved to share several thoughts about Willie that were unplanned. At the end of a period of sharing their memories, I lead the assembly in a call and response song I knew Willie would love. "Sacred the land. Sacred the water. Sacred the sky, holy and true. Sacred ourselves. Sacred each other. All reflect God who is good." She was probably friends with Sister Ardith Platte (a Phil Berrigan's housemate/Jonah House community member), who taught it to me. At her graveside, after a few songs had been sung, I offered the Pat Humphries tune known to many protesters: "We're gonna keep on moving forward... never turning back." It's a song where you can invent verses and sing it for a while. I created one verse on the spot to end my contribution. "We're going to sing her song forever..."

The life of Sister William (name chosen for her brother killed in the Korean War) Julie Hurley was a song that will long be sung – by her family, friends and Sisters in Christ. When I got the news of her death, I didn't cry right away. I imagined she was immediately embarking on a guided tour of the rest of the Cosmos that she so loved while walking this earthly journey. I was happy for her.

The night of her funeral, I prayed to her. I am grateful that I have a good friend in high places. I believe she will intercede for us as she can. Perhaps equally important, we have the opportunity to make her life resonate on this plane by our loving actions. She was a consummate teacher. Her story-telling can continue through those of us who will always love her.

The light of stars in distant galaxies reaches us miraculously each night. May those of us touched by Willie's stardust - and any of you just seeing her light now - be forever blessed by its grace and moved to shake her beauty all around this planet so in need of peace and healing.

Recent Events

MVPP had its annual meeting On June 15, with over 30 people in attendance. After the traditional (and yummy!) pot-luck meal, we elected the new MVPP officers. Our hardworking President Bobbie Goldman, Vice President Becci Backman and Treasurer Sue Imhoff stepped down for a well-deserved break. The new MVPP officers are: Ralph Galen, Acting President; Jim Todd, Vice President; Mary Todd, Clerk; and Arthur Brien, Treasurer.

Arthur Brien and Bobbie Goldman were honored at the meeting. Arthur, in recognition of the "Award for Excellence in Social Action" he had received five days earlier from the New England United Methodist Conference. Bobbie, as she stepped down from being the MVPP president for the past strenuous 4 years. Both got flowers, an avalanche of loving thoughts and good wishes, and a special song put together for each of them by the Curbside Singers (alias Mary, Jim and Boryana). Bobbie also got gardening tools and a compass pointing to the closest yard sale in case that she might suddenly find herself with too much time on her hands.

One night in Newburyport

Niki Rosen

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world." This quote from Margaret Mead came immediately to mind Sunday June 17, at our weekly vigil at Market Square, Newburyport.

I had a chance meeting with three people after the vigil. One was a young man who had just graduated from Waring High School and had been one of the students who was part of the carpool I drove for my grandson last year. The three were on their way to the Firehouse Center for Performing Arts, just across the street, to perform in a play, "The Argument", by Gregory Moss, directed by Stephen Haley. Being very fond of them, I attended the show, which was an intense "poem", as it was called by a reviewer, about people, both alive and dead, after Katrina. It was a powerful story of life and death connections.

After the performance, the actors, author and director were on stage to answer questions from the audience. During a description of how the play affected the audience, Stephen Haley used the example of driving into Newburyport that day, commenting on the lovely day, the beauty of the architecture, and the restoration of the town. Then, he noticed, right across the street, were people holding signs about "Bringing our troops home now" and holding peace flags. He asked himself "Should I honk or not?", then "Hell, yes. Here is a group of people with the courage to stand up for what they believe! And that's what this play is about!". The audience clapped.

After it seemed that the questions and comments about the performance were over I raised my hand, then said, "As one of those people who stands in Market Square every Sunday from noon to 1 pm, I am both honored and humbled-- for all of our peace vigilers and peace workers, to have our work equated to the power and beauty of this play! Thank you!

Then the whole audience stood and clapped. I cried!

In Kennebunkport, Maine, On July 1, a protest rally and march took place while Presidents Bush and Putin were

meeting in the Bush family compound. The event was organized by the Kennebunk PEACE Department, Maine Lawyers for Democracy and The Maine Campaign to Impeach.

Well over 2000 protesters came to Kennebunkport to call for an immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq and the removal of permanent bases. There also was a loud call for impeachment and holding Bush and Cheney accountable for the illegal war in Iraq, the mutilation of the Constitution, torture, war crimes and much more. Speakers included David Swanson from After Downing Street, John Caminski from Maine Lawyers for Democracy, and Gold Star parents Melida and Carlos Arredondo from Military Families Speak Out. The music by MVPP member Pat Scanlon and his stalwart choir of Veterans for Peace had the whole audience singing along. Pat was also the stage manager of the rally.

The march along a beautiful scenic route was led by a funeral procession mourning the loss of Lady Liberty, whose 7 feet tall statue was lying in a casket until the moment when it rose back to life, buoyed by the collective energy of the marchers. Several MVPP members were among the participants. Due to the presence of many national and international reporters who had been attracted by the meeting of the two Heads of State, the protest got worldwide media coverage.

On July 26, Henry Misserville and Kay Printer hosted a house projection of the film, "War Made Easy (How Presidents and Pundits Keep Spinning Us to Death)" based on the book by Norman Solomon and narrated by Sean Penn. They had a good turnout and were even talking of showing the film one more time. The film contains remarkable archival footage of official distortion and exaggeration from LBJ to George W. Bush, revealing in detail how the American news media have uncritically and even enthusiastically dispersed the pro-war messages of several presidential administrations. Thank you, Kay and Henry, for popularizing this important documentary.

A Day In Washington, D.C.

Boryana Tacconi

Cindy Sheehan and her fellow travelers from the two-week Journey for Humanity had announced their plan to march to the Capitol on July 23, 2007, to meet with the head of the House Judiciary Committee Rep. John Conyers, and demand that he initiate impeachment proceedings. It looked like a wonderful action to be part of, so I got on a Greyhound bus in Boston and nine hours later arrived in Washington, D.C.

Around 9 a.m. people started gathering at Arlington Cemetery, putting signs together and getting ready to march. Veterans for Peace and CODEPINK seemed to be best represented as groups, but of course they weren't the only ones there. Judy from Vermont had come by herself on the train. Her T-shirt said: "Work before pleasure: Impeach Cheney first!" Bill and Jonna McDannell from San Diego, CA (see "Good News") were there with their 9-year old granddaughter Katelyn. I met Susan from San Francisco and Vets for Peace from all over. And of course there were familiar faces all around: Cindy Sheehan, Carlos Arredondo, Col. Ann Wright, Rev. Lennox Yearwood, Medea Benjamin, David Swanson, Ray McGovern... People were greeting and hugging old friends and meeting new ones. We were getting enthusiastic honks and waves from the passing cars. In contrast with this happy atmosphere of a family reunion, a counter-demonstration of about a dozen individuals with posters stood rigidly on the sidewalk across the way, calling us every

name in the book through a huge bullhorn. Well, if they had expected the demonstrators to pay attention to them or to engage in shouting matches, they must have gone home sorely disappointed.

About 300 of us made our way to the Capitol at a spirited pace, shouting: "Nancy, Nancy, you are able: put impeachment on the table!" and "Conyers, Conyers, need a reason? Torture, lies, war and treason!" The Washington police were very cooperative and helpful, and we got plenty of thumbs-up from the passersby. We went into the Capitol building. While a couple of hundred people packed the halls outside Rep. John Conyers' office, Cindy Sheehan, former CIA analyst Ray McGovern, Rev. Lennox Yearwood and others met with the Congressman inside.

An hour later, they came out with darkened faces. Contrary to his pre-election promises in 2006, Rep. Conyers had told them that "impeachment isn't going to happen because we don't have the votes" and that "our only recourse was to work to get a Democrat in the White House." That from the man whose judiciary committee staffers already a year and a half ago had produced such an excellent report summarizing and documenting the crimes of Bush and Cheney. And how much more has happened since! Cindy Sheehan briefly shared the outcome of the meeting and announced that she is going to run against Rep. Nancy Pelosi in 2008. After that, she and about 45 more people sat down in Rep. Conyers' office refusing to leave, and were arrested by the Capitol Police while the rest of us boomed and shouted "Impeach Bush and Cheney!" and "Shame on Conyers!"

About 40 of us visited the office of Speaker Nancy Pelosi and spoke with her chief-of-staff. CODEPINK's Medea Benjamin told her how totally irresponsible it was for the Speaker to say that impeachment was off the table. When the chief-of-staff replied that the Speaker's priority was to end the war, we insisted that the two were interconnected in many ways and not mutually exclusive. There were a couple of Nancy Pelosi's constituents among us, who expressed their dissatisfaction in strong terms.

It was a refreshing experience to walk around the city afterwards with a couple of CODEPINK members. On the way back from Congress to the house that CODEPINK is renting, several people stopped them in the street to ask what had happened today, what they are up to next, or just to say a couple of encouraging words. Today supportive from the side, tomorrow taking action, who knows? As for the impeachment effort, numerous actions around the country show that the grassroots impeachment movement is rapidly growing. Congress hasn't seen anything yet.

Photo: courtesy of Bill McDannell Jonna McDannel and Boryana at the march



At the Lowell Folk Festival, on July 28, MVPP and the Greater Lowell for Peace and Justice once again set up tables side by side. Our two canopies adorned with rainbow PEACE flags were a lovely sight and attracted a steady flow of visitors of all ages during the whole day. We distributed our usual wide range of peace, justice and counter-recruiting literature, the DVD "Iraq Veterans Speak Out" and Pat Scanlon's CD "Where Is the Rage" and had on display our button and bumper sticker collection. The conversations we had with many of our visitors were as always an important and inspiring part of our presence. It was great to meet a lot of people in their late teens and early twenties who came to the table and stopped to talk. Several people signed up to our mailing list and we received about \$240 in donations.

Coming Events

Sunday August 5, Watertown

**From Hiroshima to the Middle East
No Nukes - No Wars**

5:30 Gather at St John's United Methodist Church
(80 Mt. Auburn St.)

8:30 After Walk, gather at Watertown Square to Launch Candle Boats on the Charles River.

Monday, August 6 Andover Vigil to Remember the victims of Hiroshima&:00 pm Old Town Hall, Main St.

WALK FOR A NUCLEAR FREE FUTURE



SHUT DOWN VERMONT YANKEE
No Cash Cow for Entergy!

Hiroshima Day to Nagasaki Day
Aug. 5–Aug. 9, 2007

The focus of this walk will be on stopping a twenty year license extension for Vermont Yankee and all refurbishing and building of nuclear weapons.

Photo: Redemske Design

AUG. 5: Middlebury, assemble night of 5th
AUG. 6 DAY: Walk Middlebury area
AUG. 6 EVE.: Potluck and overnight in Middlebury
AUG. 7 DAY: Walk Rutland area
AUG. 7 EVE.: Potluck/sleep overnight
Rutland/ Shrewsbury area

AUG. 8 DAY: Walk Montpelier/Barre area
AUG. 8 EVE.: Potluck dinner /sleep in Montpelier
AUG. 9 DAY: Walk Burlington/Shelburne
AUG. 9 EVE.: Potluck dinner, Burlington
Each night potluck and a discussion regarding activism around shutting down Vermont Yankee.

Citizens Awareness Network, www.nukebusters.org
413-339-5781 For contact information on the road:
cell phones: Hattie 978-790-3074, Deb 413-834-3280

On Friday, August 10, **singer/songwriter, activist and MVPP member Mary Kate Small** will be the featured artist at the Live Lawrence Traveling Cafe organized by the Robert Frost Foundation. 7:30 PM, at the Mill City Gourmet.

Kennebunkport vigil.Saturday, August 25: Cindy Sheehan will be joining us for a **ANTI-WAR PROTEST RALLY & MARCH in Kennebunkport, Maine**, when Bush is likely to be in town for his vacation. She will also be setting up a **CAMP CASEY** in Kennebunkport for 10 days. Cindy Sheehan and Jamilla El-Shafei will be working on getting speakers of national prominence for this event and they have some great music lined up already! Rep. Dennis Kucinich and Rep. Maxine Waters will be speaking. The Indigo girls will be singing! We want to see thousands of protesters descending on Kennebunkport!!!

Maine Veterans for Peace will provide free housing to VFP from out of the area. College students from out of the area will be offered **FREE CAMPING** at a farm near Kennebunkport.

Think of street theater and floats (non-motorized) for the march up to Walker's Point. It would be great to see people organize themselves by avocation such as: **TEACHERS FOR PEACE, POETS FOR PEACE, LAWYERS FOR PEACE, FARMERS SAY FARMS NOT ARMS, LIBRARIANS, ECT. VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES** are plentiful. please contact Jamilla at jamillaelshafei@yahoo.com. Web: www.kportprotest.org.

Also, Friday night the 24th, there will be a supper and concert.

August 29: A DAY OF PRESENCE

A national effort that the media cannot ignore; a day during which we demand that our national decision makers redirect our

tax dollars away from war and war profiteering to create a regional Marshall Plan that restores New Orleans and the Gulf Coast. On 8/29 the tens of thousands who can travel to New Orleans will gather for the massive demonstration being planned there.

For the rest of us: call our congressional and state representatives and the White House to demand the restoration and betterment of New Orleans, Gulf Port, Biloxi and the entire Gulf Coast region. White House switchboard: (202) 456-1414. U. S. Congressional switchboard: (202) 224-3121

September 3, Labor Day at the **Bread and Roses Festival** On the Common in Lawrence, noon till evening.

Letter to the Editor

William Rusher doubts that President Bush could be such a "monster" as to allow the 9-11 attacks to occur to justify his attacking Iraq. Well, the evidence is quite strong that he and his advisors are and had an agenda to benefit from them. Just consider:

1. He was warned a month before that Al-Qaeda was planning to mount an attack in the U.S. and he chose to ignore it.
2. It is well-known that his managers were planning the Iraq invasion years before the 2000 election. The 9-11 attacks were just the excuse they needed to do so. It is becoming increasingly clear, even to Republicans, that the administration blatantly and repeatedly lied about the evidence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and their terrorist involvement, mounting a major public relations campaign for 1½ years to generate support for the invasion.
3. He has used the 9-11 attacks to draw more and more power into his office by pushing through legislation (such as the Patriot Act, which was submitted far too quickly to not have already been written) and issuing executive orders that repeal much of the Bill of Rights and move us closer and closer to a police state. These "powers" have been used to establish prisons all over the world where "enemy combatants" are sequestered away without access to any legal due process and routinely tortured in violation of the Geneva Conventions. Of course, he did have "legal" opinions written to justify this. Fortunately, the courts have been sticking up for the Constitution.
4. The administration continues to allow American service men and women to die and be permanently wounded while cutting services for them when they come home.
5. The new oil distribution law that they are pushing for in Iraq reveals the true purpose for the war: It would give 2/3 of the profits to American and British oil companies and leave crumbs for the Iraqis. Similarly, Vice President Cheney's company, Halliburton, and the private security contractors (big Republican campaign donors all) have made obscene profits off of the war and stolen billions of dollars of the taxpayers' money.

All of this and much more demonstrate the callousness of the Bush Administration and proves how they care little for the lives of ordinary people and much more for enriching their friends and consolidating power.

Michael Bleiweiss
Methuen

Picture from Curbside Visit

(from the previous newsletter),
Turns out Pat's friend was with Dennis. Can you guess who that
is in the umbrella's shadow?



Membership

If your label now says 2008 you are up-to-date.

If not, please fill in the membership form in this newsletter and
send it to:

P.O. Box 573
North Andover, MA 01845

Poem

The Trouble With Our State

By Daniel Berrigan

The trouble with our state
was not civil disobedience
which in any case was hesitant and rare.

Civil disobedience was rare as kidney stone
No, rarer; it was disappearing like immigrant's disease.

You've heard of a war on cancer?
There is no war like the plague of media
There is no war like routine
There is no war like 3 square meals
There is no war like a prevailing wind.

It flows softly; whispers
Don't rock the boat!
The sails obey, the ship of state rolls on.

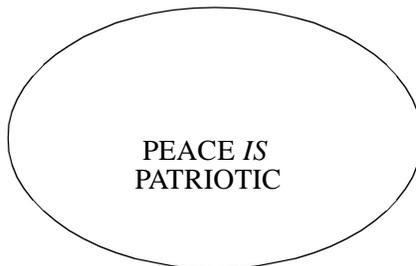
The trouble with our state
--we learned only afterward
when the dead resembled the living who resembled the dead
and civil virtue shone like paint on tin
and tin citizens and tin soldiers marched to the common whip

--our trouble
the trouble with our state
with our state of soul
our state of siege

--
was
Civil
Obedience

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

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



The MVPP Newsletter is printed monthly and has a current distribution of 200. We are grateful for suggestions, comments, and help with publication. (Unless **2008** appears on your label, your dues have expired. Please remember to renew.)
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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
House: <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2004/index.asp>

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