



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.

May 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

The Wheels of Justice Tour came to Andover and North Andover for 2 wonderful days, and it was a great success! We had coverage in local newspapers, made a difference to some history students at North Andover High School, learned a lot at the Friday evening potluck about the work of tour members, especially a presentation about the occupation in Palestine, and had the wonderful opportunity of getting to know Mike Miles, Dave Lippman, and Slava Davidzon at our various vigils and events. We all enjoyed seeing the Wheels of Justice bus at all of our events, and many people took notice. We had quite a crowd at our George Shrub/Dave Lippman concert, including some new folks who read about us in the Eagle Tribune or North Andover Citizen. (See more on following pages)

Resolutions opposing sections of the USA Patriot Act have been passed by 299 communities in 40 states, representing 51 million people, according to the the American Civil Liberties Union. The **State of Maine and the following New England communities** joined in passing these resolutions this March and April (news of more communities in June edition):
Somerville Manchester by the Sea Conway
Acton Sudbury Duxbury
Lexington W. Tisbury, Massachusetts;
and Portland, Maine

Nuclear whistle blower, Mordechai Vanunu who revealed the existence of the Israeli nuclear program, walked out of prison on April 21, after serving eighteen years, eleven and a half years in solitary confinement. Raytheon Peace Maker Scott Schaeffer-Duffy was there with many supporters from around the world to greet him upon his release. Eighteen white doves, living symbols of peace, were set free by the peace activists who had gathered to celebrate this Peace Hero's freedom.

MVPP vigils continue to make a difference, with increasingly more favorable responses. Our Saturday table is so successful, that we have had to replenish our supplies of buttons, bumper stickers, peace and earth flags, and books on DU, including our latest, Hiroshima Appeal for Banning DU Weapons! We have many significant interactions with people walking or driving by, even some fleeting ones with drivers.

For example, on Saturday, May 8 (the day after Rumsfeld's testimony in Congress), a frequent passer-by approached an Andover vigiler holding a sign reading WE DON'T BELONG IN IRAQ and said, "*You know, last month I wouldn't have agreed with you. But now, I'm beginning to wonder.*"
Vigiler: "*Thanks for wondering. Don't stop thinking.*"
Passer-by: "*If you people are going to be here all the time holding these flags, the least we can do is think about it.*"

Curbside Communion

by Don Abbott

At a recent Saturday vigil an unknown pedestrian, a woman probably in her 80s, came up to me and softly and slowly inquired: "Do you think we'll ever have peace?"

No one had ever asked me this question before, much less one of such penetrating simplicity. Our eyes locked and waited, unwavering for my answer.

"Probably not of the kind we seek. But we have to do better at it, don't we, for the sake of the younger ones who are following us."

"Oh, yes." And then, after a long pause, she continued, "I lost four brothers in the War. One was shot in the head and died soon after. The second took several rounds of machine gun fire in his left shoulder and died soon after. The third came home. But he was nothing, and he died soon after. The fourth also came home. He was nothing too. He's 91 now. He sits all day in a chair."

Our eyes, blurring, still held us. "Why," she asked, "why do they always take our young from us? We should bring them home."

MVPP Monthly Meeting – North Parish Church – Tuesday, May 25, 7:30 PM Printed on recycled paper
<http://www.merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org>



WHEELS OF JUSTICE

Occupations of Palestine and Iraq Mirror Each Other

Don Abbott

During the visit of the Wheels of Justice Bus Tour on April 30 and May 1, we heard two messages of overriding importance. First, the occupation of Iraq and the occupation of Palestine are inextricably related, or as tour group member Mike Miles said several times, they are "mirrors of each other." Second, nonviolent education and action ultimately can be effective in confronting war and occupation and in promoting justice and universal human rights.

While the latter message resonates with values embedded in the mission and work of MVPP over the past 20 years, the first one remains controversial, indeed very difficult to hear, both within our community and across our country. This painful reality surfaced locally when the bus tour group from Wheels of Justice was not permitted to deliver their planned, full program at North Andover High School on the morning of April 30. And we recall that MVPP's sponsorship of the facsimile Israeli Separation Wall in Andover last November did not have complete support within our own organization.

In this context, and in graphic and reasonable terms, Miles affirmed that "there must be a level playing field" not only in the Middle East but also within media and education in the United States.

Ceylon Mooney goes further when he writes on the Wheels of Justice website (<http://www.justicewheels.org/>): "...media is something that not enough activists know how to navigate or how to work...the well-informed or the newcomer. Not only must we confront the media; we have to become the media." (my emphasis)

Miles especially urged everyone to turn to the website <http://www.ifamericansknew.org/> for solid analysis of media bias and Israel/Palestine coverage. He and his activist colleagues impel us to confront the "mirror of each other" reality and to remove the sources of ignorance and prejudice that continue to fuel what is arguably the most explosive conflict of today.

Bus Trouble at North Andover High School

The story of the Wheels of Justice Tour is just not complete if some mention is not made of the controversy that swirled about in North Andover prior to its arrival. There was trouble in River City. It's a bit embarrassing to talk about, but you should know.

The town's weekly paper of April 23rd announced that the members of the bus were going to speak at the North Andover High School. It announced what their subject was. Some parents called the principal and the superintendent to complain. A man

spoke vehemently at the school committee meeting that week. The meeting was live on the local cable station. He accused the Wheels of Justice of being a front for terrorists. He felt that allowing them to speak in the High School gave them credibility. "What will happen if they pour blood on the floor?" "What if violence breaks out in the classes?" were some of the questions posed that night. More calls to the school officials followed.

Imagine! These people were going to bring their first hand experiences of recent trips to the Middle East and the stories of people there. They were going to speak about nonviolence and universal human rights in relation to occupied Iraq and the occupied Palestinian Territories.

So, the superintendent asked the teacher to invite representatives of other groups to come in to balance their message. Not on another day mind you, but on the day of the planned presentation. Representatives of the Anti-Defamation League, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion and the Merrimack Valley People for Peace were invited to speak. Fortunately, only Rabbi Goldstein of Andover, and a member of MVPP came. There would be time to speak to students and the students would have a chance to ask questions. A policeman was at the school for security sake. [The Wheels of Justice Bus was denied access to school property.] Another stipulation was that instead of a three-man presentation to two history classes, it would now be only one, Mike Miles, a founder of a Catholic Worker Farm in Luck, Wisconsin, where people study nonviolence and sustainability. There would be no power point presentation. Students would take home permission slips for parents to sign.

Tour crews had run into opposition similar to this only once before in Davis, California. And there have been almost 1,000 presentations across the country at high schools, colleges, universities and churches. The team considered canceling, but decided to appear after expressing their strong disappointment of what they viewed as censorship.

It was interesting to discover that there were no permission slips needed for the two men who spoke the previous day to the same classes about their experiences in Normandy during World War II. The reason? They were in agreement with government policy. Both Rabbi Goldstein and Mike Miles agree that "criticizing the policies of the U.S. government does not amount to a lack of patriotism".

The superintendent was very happy to have this presentation in spite of all the complaints. He recognized it as an educational moment. In the end, it was, for the students who asked intelligent questions and for everyone.

An article appeared in the Eagle-Tribune the following morning. It gave a good report of the event: "a high school forum on the Middle East that some parents feared...went off peacefully yesterday...fears that the group Wheels of Justice would espouse an anti-Israeli, anti-Semitic or anti-American sentiment were not borne out, said Principal Susan M. Nicholson and Rabbi Robert S. Goldstein." Lauren E. Levy, a student who attended one of the history classes, was quoted as saying that she and her fellow students "were surprised by Miles' wholly pacifist views. They had never talked with someone who believes countries should never go to war under any circumstances.

Isn't that amazing? Well they have now. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mohandas Gandhi may be more real to these students, not just figures from the past. It is hoped that their admonition "that the choice today is between nonviolence or nonexistence" will have more urgency for them.

So now you know about the fuss that took place in town. I wonder what playwright Arthur Miller would have done with this tale. As one of our visitors noted: "It was the best publicity we ever received for a presentation we were never allowed to make!"

Sincerely,
Jane Cadarette

P.S. Word from the bus: They gave the full presentation to six classes one day last week at Lenox High School - no censorship, no stipulations.

A Wheels of Justice Tour Memory, Sunday morning, May 2, 2004

Jane Cadarette
Mike Miles went out early for a run through our neighborhood. Then, because Dave Lippman wasn't quite ready and Slava Davidzon was gone, (his time on tour was up and he left for home on Sat.) just the two of us went to Lawrence for a quick visit with MVPP member Arthur Brien who missed the events of the last two days. Couldn't let Mike get away without meeting Arthur! We arrived at 9:43 a.m. with only a few moments to talk. Arthur was due to sing in the choir at the 10 o'clock Mass. It was touching to witness that brief but wonderful meeting of these two long-time peacemakers, two kindred souls.

Back home, we had a quick breakfast -the delicious apple dish that Boryana Tacconi prepared for us. Mary Kate Small dropped in to say goodbye. My husband, Jack took pictures, hugs were exchanged. It was time for the bus to move on to Worcester. As Mike and Dave got on board, they spoke of how impressed they are with the work MVPP is doing in the Valley. All MVPP members please pause here and take a bow! And then they were off, out the driveway, with me trailing after them wishing with all my heart I could keep them forever. I reached up toward the bus window and Mike stretched out his hand for a final farewell.

Later at Mass, as the soloist was singing "Shepherd me O Lord, beyond my wants beyond my fears from death into life" images of the last few days and thoughts of the team and the important work they are doing filled my mind and tears started flowing. Joy and sorrow combined with an immense feeling of gratitude. And although I don't know yet the full effect of these days with our new friends I do know it's been an extraordinary experience for all of us.

KEEP THE WHEELS OF JUSTICE ROLLING

Help us thank Mike Miles, Dave Lippman and Vladislav Davidzon by sending a tax deductible contribution to PRRC (attn: WOJT) PO Box 1172 Orange, CT 06477-7172

PRRC (Al-Awda) is a non-profit tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization. Under IRS guidelines, your donation is fully tax-deductible. The official registration and financial information of The Palestine Right to Return Coalition may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, 1-800-732-0999

Send your tax deductible contribution to
PRRC (attn: WOJT)
PO Box 1172
Orange, CT 06477-7172

(PRRC -Al-Awda - is a nonprofit tax-exempt 501 (c)(3) organization. Under IRS guidelines, your donation is fully tax-deductible.)



Letters to the Editor

Danger at Yankee Rowe Nuclear Reactor

Letter by Hattie Nestel to Athol Daily News, April 7, 2004

I have discovered a weapon of mass destruction, and it is only 35 miles from my home in Athol, Massachusetts. This highly dangerous weapon is entirely legal. It has been paid for by taxpayers living in the state where it exists. It is housed in a massive smoking conglomerate of buildings directly across the street from the local elementary school. The weapon of mass destruction I refer to is called the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant. It is 32 years old and has had many structural problems over the years. Vermont Yankee, bought by Entergy one year ago, has applied for a 20 per cent uprate in plant production.

Even though the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, NRC, and Entergy say the facility is safe, history tells a different story. If there were an accident at Vermont Yankee like there was at Three Mile Island or Chernobyl, all students within a ten mile radius would have to be evacuated directly from their schools. All citizens, including those in hospitals and nursing homes, would have to immediately leave the area, which could be contaminated and rendered uninhabitable for tens of thousands of years.

We Invite You to Join /Rejoin Us

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



\$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 through May, 2004. 2005 means you are paid till next year.

Twenty-five years ago, after the Three Mile Island accident we became aware of the inherent dangers posed by nuclear power plants. Chernobyl showed us the truly disastrous consequences of nuclear power. Because of Three Mile Island, no new nuclear reactors have been built in the United States, and many have been decommissioned.

Allowing the NRC to inspect Vermont Yankee is like letting the fox watch the hen house. The NRC has never shut down a nuclear power plant. Informed citizens, politicians and nuclear watchdog organizations feel the NRC, colludes with Entergy and General Electric skirting important safety regulations. They are calling for a truly independent inspection.

In addition to problems of trying to manage volatile radioactive materials in an urban area, there is the question for which no answer has ever been found. How do we get rid of radioactive waste generated by the nuclear reactor? When the NRC was asked about nuclear waste, it said the waste would be shipped to Yucca Mountain in Nevada. That is not getting rid of nuclear waste. That is sending nuclear waste to Nevada. Nevada does not want to be Vermont's nuclear dump. A large coalition of national and Nevada based organizations representing thousands of people has filed lawsuits against using Yucca Mountain as a dump for radioactive waste.

The National Academy of Sciences estimates that nuclear waste containers must isolate this toxic material for at least 300,000 years. The Department of Energy acknowledges that containers could fail after only 10,000 years! When containers leak, they will poison the aquifer beneath Yucca Mountain in one of the countries largest farming communities.

Earthquakes present another challenge to storing nuclear waste. If earthquakes occur before radioactive waste is rendered neutral, how many millions of people will die?

Neither trains nor trucks can safely ship radioactive waste from Vermont to Nevada. In addition to the normal occurrence of train crashes, we have seen terrorist attacks on trains in Japan and Spain. The most recent nuclear highway accident occurred last month when a container from the Yankee Rowe reactor car-

rying 46,000 pounds of radioactive debris slipped off the flatbed truck that was carrying it to a dump in Utah.

Finally, even if the above weren't cause enough for alarm, studies now indicate that workers in and populations surrounding nuclear power plants have a significantly high incidence of leukemia and cancer.

I agree with U.S. Representative John Olver who stated, " I believe we should limit new development of nuclear power and explore alternative sources of energy to meet our growing production needs. We should not rely on nuclear power before we discover how to safely store nuclear waste for the long term and protect Americans from its side effects. Radiation poisoning and the threat of thyroid cancer are health problems that have been linked to exposure to nuclear waste."

Hattie Nestel, Athol, MA

Note: The following letter to the editor by MVPP member Sean Donahue is relevant to all who vigil, particularly those who attend the Tuesday morning vigils in front of Raytheon.

Action Needed: Speak Out Against Police Surveillance of Activists in Andover! By Sean Donahue

BACKGROUND: For several years running, the Andover Police Department has conducted surveillance of participants in legal, nonviolent demonstrations at the Raytheon facility on Rte. 133. Officers have photographed participants in demonstrations, taken down the license plate numbers of cars parked near demonstrations, and run warrant checks on organizers whose names have appeared in newspaper articles about the demonstrations.

Last year, representatives of the Massachusetts Anti-Corporate Clearinghouse (MACC) complained to the police department about these behaviors. Nevertheless, on April 10, when we held our annual "Death and Taxes" march from the IRS to Raytheon, police again photographed demonstrators and took down the license plate numbers on their cars. They also arrested a street performer, Leslie Gabriel, on charges of obstructing a

Weekly Vigils

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, lberniere@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.

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

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

North Shore groups' vigils

Amesbury, Saturday, 9:30-11:30 Market Square

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)

Newburyport, Sunday, noon - 1, Market Square

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

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

sidewalk and disorderly conduct for putting his George Bush dummy down on a small wagon to rest his arms and then delaying turning the dummy over to police until they would tell him how he could recover his property -- even though nobody was trying to walk down the sidewalk at the time, there was plenty of room to pass on the sidewalk, and Gabriel would have moved the dummy if it had been in the way of any pedestrians.

On April 13, Sean Donahue, Director of MACC's Corporations and Militarism Project, met with Police Commander, Lt. James Hashem to discuss these issues. Hashem declined to discuss Gabriel's case because he said he was not permitted to talk about a pending criminal case, but he did discuss police surveillance of demonstrators. Lt. Hashem acknowledged that the information the officers gather and the photographs they take are kept on file after the demonstration and may be shared with other law enforcement agencies including federal law enforcement agencies. He suggested that these photographs were necessary to document any acts of civil disobedience -- however this does not explain why officers would photograph people engaged in purely legal expressions of their political views, or why they would keep these photographs after a demonstration which did not involve any acts of civil disobedience had ended.

In the current climate of increasing encroachments on our civil liberties, frequent preemptive arrests before mass demonstrations such as those held at the Republican National Convention in 00, "no-fly lists," and increasing federal harassment and intimidation of nonviolent activists police surveillance of people engaged in the legal exercise of their First Amendment rights has a chilling effect on free speech. This issue has not yet been litigated in the courts, but the cities of Worcester, MA and Denver, CO agreed to stop such practices in order to avoid lawsuits. Lt. Hashem indicated that the Andover Police Department would not change its practices.

Sean Donahue

US VETO OF UN RESOLUTION CONDEMNING ISRAELI GOVERNMENT

March 29, 2004

Editor, Lawrence, Eagle Tribune :

Dear Sir:

I strongly deplore the United States' veto of a United Nations Security Council resolution March 25 condemning the Israeli government. The resolution censured Israel for their targeted assassination of Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, a 67-year-old quadriplegic and the most prominent Palestinian Islamic figure, outside of a Gaza City mosque last week.

Eleven out of the 15 Security Council members, including France, Russia and Spain, voted to condemn Ariel Sharon's government for their latest illegal assassination. The United States' veto marked the only dissenting vote in the Security Council. Other world leaders, including the Vatican, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and the British government, have condemned the illegal assassination by Ariel Sharon as 'unlawful' and 'unacceptable'.

This veto is another indication of the Bush administration's continued policy of putting Israeli interests ahead of those of the USA. This latest veto of an overwhelmingly and internationally supported resolution does nothing to serve America's interest abroad or improve its credibility in the Muslim and Arab world.

Sincerely,

Masood A. Sheikh

North Andover

Upcoming Events

June 1, 7pm. Bridging East & West with Afaf Stevens, at the UU Church, Portsmouth, NH. Afaf is an Iraqi woman, now an American citizen. She has lived 30 years in Iraq and 30 years in the US. In her program we'll explore the rich cultural heritage and traditions existing in the Middle East, and examine the myths, misconceptions & stereotypes of diverse religious traditions. These stereotypes create barriers among people of diverse backgrounds leading to fear, mistrust, hostility and conflict. Fostering harmony and a durable peace based on mutual understanding is a moral imperative in the 21st century. Sponsored by Seacoast Peace Response & the Seacoast Alliance for Democracy. For more information, contact Amy Antonucci at 750-7506 or amy1a44@juno.com.

June 4- 6: The summer gathering of the People's Music Network for Songs of Freedom and Struggle. You may have been to their winter concert in Andover this winter with Pete Seeger et al. Now join in the fun at Camp Redwood in upstate New York. It's a family friendly affair. You can tent or stay in cabins for about \$100/adult, \$50/child (or less if that is prohibitive). If you love to sing peace and justice songs, you belong there! Come learn a bunch of them or share what you've got. For more info go to www.peoplesmusic.org or contact Mary Kate Small at marykatespeace@yahoo.com.

June 10, 7-9pm. Free Workshop on Creating Healthy Environments for Ourselves and Our Children. North Parish Church, North Andover. Sponsored by People for the Environment. (Donations accepted). Are you concerned about mercury in fish, arsenic on play structures, pesticides in our food, lead in paint and water? Are you confused by frequent reports in the media about the many toxic threats to our children's health, and how to avoid them?

Recent studies show that many diseases can be linked in part to environmental exposures. These diseases are of serious concern; 1 in 8 children in New England have asthma, 17% of U.S. children under 18 have one or more developmental disabilities, an estimated 8000 children 0 to 14 years of age are diagnosed annually with cancer in the United States. The contributors to these trends are complex - but the role of the environment deserves special attention because environmental factors are a preventable cause of harm.

This workshop, sponsored by People for the Environment, Haverhill Environmental League, and Lawrence Environmental Action Group, will provide an overview of the types of exposures you should be aware of, advice on how to prevent them and where to find safer alternatives.

The workshop will be presented by EcoSpace, a North Shore based company that educates and empowers individuals and institutions to create healthy living and work environments. The founders and workshop presenters have over 20 years of education and experience in the field of environmental health.

Minutes of MVPP Meeting, April 27 2004

The following were in attendance: Don Abbott, Becci Backman, Lou Bernieri, Arthur Brien, Jane Cadarette, Peter Cameron, Lynn Edwards, Ralph Galen, Bobbie Goldman, Barbara Haack, Brenda McCarthy, Henry Misserville, Niki Rosen, Mary Kate Small, Boryana Tacconi, Mary Todd, and Jim Todd.

Treasurer's Report: Peter reported a current balance of \$4,055.35. The table of sale items continues to be productive, thanks to Becci. We have 50 more flags on order, and we'll probably want to secure even more for events later this summer and fall. Kudos to all who were responsible, especially Becci, for the new MVPP banner now in use on the street and at events.

Membership: Becci reported that we have received the membership of Swarthmore College Peace Coalition. We also have received renewed permission from the Town of Andover to display our table during Saturday vigils in Old Town Hall square, running through November 2004.

Petitions: 1.) We decided to gather signatures on the Emergency Petition to Halt the Bombardment of Iraqi Civilians and End the Occupation of Iraq. Addressed to Members of the United States Congress, this is a national petition initiated by United for Peace and Justice. 2.) We temporarily tabled the Fund the Dream Petition Campaign to determine whether its timetable has been extended and to clarify its wording. We hope soon to participate in this effort promoted by United for Justice with Peace. In a time of increased military spending and tax cuts for the wealthy, it is a drive to gather signatures from Massachusetts citizens to call upon the Democratic Party to address needs and demands for universal health care, affordable housing, public education, and scholarship aid for students.

Newsletter: Barbara reported that poetry will be a feature of the next issue. She called for prompt submission of all material because of her travel schedule. Lou will assist with finalizing the issue, text of which must be in Brian's hand by May 14.

Website: Bobbie invited volunteer help in maintaining up-to-date information on our website, especially the chronology of recent MVPP events and activities.

Program: Don led discussion on specific program plans, many of which had been on the agenda of a planning meeting held earlier this month at his home. 1.) Wheels of Justice Tour, April 30 and May 1. We finalized plans for the visit we are sponsoring by Wheels of Justice. Special thanks to Mary Kate and Jane, among many, who are pulling together all aspects of this visit-hospitality, class visits, pot luck supper, vigils, press coverage, concert, etc. 2.) Annual Meeting, June 18. We are delighted that our featured guests will be the "Raging Grannies." We encourage all members to swell our numbers with friends on this evening when political musical satire will remind us of humor's value for the long-haul work of peace and justice activism. 3.) 20th Anniversary Concert, September 2004 (date and place to be determined). Mary Kate will take the lead in securing performers from the People's Network. Dean Stevens has already offered to

perform. 4.) Presentation by Michael Prokosch, from United for a Fair Economy (October date and place to be determined). Bobbie reported that Michael is available, and we are checking on October 13, 2004, at Memorial Library in Andover. 5.) Local March for Peace. We have strong interest in sponsoring a local march, especially one that would be another 20th Anniversary event and would connect with diverse communities in Lawrence. Conversations about this concept are ongoing. 6.) Don mentioned two new ideas, borrowed from Joe Gerson's latest letter from AFSC: a.) a symbolic Wash the Flag Ceremony (to wash the flag clear from militarism, racism, consumerism, and hegemony, modeled after recent activity spearheaded by students in Rhode Island; perhaps on Flag Day, June 14) and b.) a public reading of the names of U.S. and Iraqi dead.

Donations: We voted to make donations of \$100 each to 1.) the Urgent Emergency Appeal by LIFE (Life for Relief & Development) to respond to the immediate, critical need for food and medicine in Iraq; 2.) the War Resisters League of New England; and 3.) United for Justice with Peace.

UJP Brunches: Bobbie noted the next gatherings on May 23 and June 27 and invited members to join her.

Other Items: 1.) Mayors for Peace. Mary Kate announced the effort by Mass Peace Action to secure support by mayors in the Commonwealth to support the publicized international campaign led by the Mayor of Hiroshima, Japan, Tadatashi Akiba, calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons. She will research this effort and report back at our next meeting. 2.) We noted the upcoming community meetings of Congressman John F. Tierney in North Reading on May 1 and in Newburyport on May 15.

Support for a Member: Bobbie led a discussion about the difficult situation faced by one of our members whose son, a marine, may receive an imminent call to return for a second combat tour in Iraq. We spent careful time discussing several ways in which we might be of particular support to them both.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, May 25, 2004 at 7:30 PM.
Respectfully submitted,
Don Abbott, secretary

Editor's Note: The UJP brunch meeting has been changed to May 16. Also, with UJP's encouragement, we have started to get signatures at our Saturday vigils for the Fund the Dream and the Emergency Petition to Halt the Bombardment of Iraqi Civilians and End the Occupation of Iraq petitions and will continue to do so until the Democratic convention

Poems

The Only Sermon

if we dug a huge grave miles wide, miles deep
and buried every rifle, pistol, knife, bullet, bomb, bayonet

if we jumped upon fleets of tanks and fighter jets
with tool boxes, torches
unwelded them dismantled them turned them into scrap metal

if every light-skinned man in a silk tie said
to every dark-skinned man in a turban
I vow not to kill your children
and heard the same vow in return

if every elected leader agreed to stop lying

if every child was fed as well as race horses bred to win derbies

if every person with a second home gave it to a person with no home

if every mother buried her parents not her sons and daughters

if every person who has enough said out loud I have enough

if every person violent in the name of God were to find God

we would grow silent, still for a moment, a lifetime
we would hear infants nursing at the breast
hummingbirds hovering in flight

we would touch a canyon wall and feel the earth vibrate

we would hear two lovers sigh across the ocean

we would watch old wounds grow new flesh and jagged scars disappear

as time was layered upon time we would slowly be ready
to begin

*Rev. Dr. Andrea Ayvazian
Dean of Religious Life
Mount Holyoke College
South Hadley, MA*



"Manifesto for Preemptive Peace"

Cede not your rights for the sake of security.
Resist all trespass on your soul.

Practice truth, with forgiveness.
Refute death and start all over.
Outwit the dead-end; manifest a miracle.

Believe in the power of whimsy.
Never be young enough to know everything.
Put yourself in the hands of a respectful mind.

Banish "exclusive" from the lexicon.
Argue each source of ignorance and prejudice.
Wrestle with angels, but don't make them weep.

Sit still and let grace amaze.
Breathe out, to breathe in.
Accept the long haul.

Proclaim the justice of food.
Bake the bread of life.
Always make room in the inn.

Sanction transcendence.
Remember: You may.

by Don Abbott

"Enemies"

If you are not to become a monster,
you must care what they think.
If you care what they think,

how will you not hate them,
and so become a monster
of the opposite kind? From where then

is love to come—love for your enemy
that is the way of liberty?
From forgiveness. Forgiven, they go

free of you, and you of them;
they are to you as sunlight
on a green branch, You must not

think of them again, except
as monsters like yourself,
pitiable because unforgiving.

by Wendell Berry

"Cowardice asks the question - is it safe?
Expediency asks the question - is it politic?
Vanity asks the question - is it popular?
But conscience asks the question - is it right?
And there comes a time when one must take a position that is
neither safe, nor politic, nor popular; but one must take it
because it is right."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"PATRIOTISM IS THE LOVE OF ONE'S COUNTRY.
WAR NEGATES LOVE. THE FIRST VICTIM OF WAR IS
LOVE." (from the February, 2002 MVPP newsletter)

NATURE'S CLEANERS located at 1105 Osgood Street, Butcher Boy Plaza, North Andover, Nature's Cleaners is the only environmentally friendly clothes cleaning establishment in New England. The owner, David Nobil, believes that there are only 12 such establishments in the United States. As such, he cleans clothing for a client in Ohio! Understand that the dry cleaning business is controlled by the petrochemical industry. Dry cleaners are a major source of water pollution, because the water waste generated by each location is hazardous waste and ought to be treated as such, but frequently is simply disposed into septic systems and sewer systems. By contrast, Nature's Cleaners is a "wetcleaning" operation, using soap and water and a great deal of personal care for each item cleaned. The result is clothing which is softer, fresh smelling, and safe for those who have developed sensitivities to chemicals. And the benefits for the environment are substantial.

Please support Nature's Cleaners or insist that your local dry-cleaner become a wetcleaner.

Insets

Mark your calendar! Celebrate 20 years of MVPP's activism at our annual meeting on Friday evening, June 18, 2004, starting with a pot-luck dinner at 6:30 at North Parish Church in North Andover.

After a brief meeting, including election of officers and board members, the well-known Boston gaggle of "**Raging Grannies**", dressed in outrageous hats, will entertain us with their satirical songs to protest nuclear power, militarism, racism, corporate greed and more. Join us for this evening of celebrating MVPP's activities and events, and to hear a fine performance from a seasoned troupe of women who have sung throughout New England.

Have you visited our MVPP website at merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org?
Over 700 people have visited it since last September!

COMING EVENTS

Weekly Vigils
Recent Events

NEWS/INFORMATION

Links to Resources Iraq Body Count

ACTION

Contact Government Cost of the War In Iraq
Submit News or Events
VOTE! Register to vote
Defend the Environment Late news

ABOUT MVPP

Contact MVPP
Join/Renew!
Directions Next Meeting
Why we still vigil
Letters to Editor
Officers
Newsletter
(get acrobat reader)
(archived minutes/newsletters)

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

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

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

**PEACE IS
PATRIOTIC**

The MVPP Newsletter is printed monthly and has a current mailing of 120. We are grateful for suggestions, comments, and help with publication. (2004 on your mailing label indicates that your 2003-2004 dues have been paid.)

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

Every legislator knows one letter is worth a thousand votes.

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Form: <http://kerry.senate.gov/text/contact/email.html>

A link to all of **US legislature:**

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

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