The Merrimack Valley People for Peace will present "An Evening with Alice Rothchild" at the Old Town Hall, 20 Main Street, Andover, Mass.

Alice Rothchild, MD is the author of “Broken Promises, Broken Dreams: Stories of Jewish and Palestinian Trauma & Resilience” published last month by Pluto Press. She will share her experiences of the reality of life in Israel, the complexity of Jewish Israeli attitudes, and the hardships of Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza.

Through her work with a medical and human rights project, Rothchild is able to offer a unique personal insight into the conflict.

Dr. Bernard Lown, Prof. Emeritus Harvard School of Public Health and Co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize praised her book saying that it “…is a soul searching, painfully honest examination of ordinary people bonded in a tragic embrace. Ultimately, this powerful book is about healing festering wounds and narrowing irreconcilable differences. It deserves the widest readership.” The book will be available for purchase at the event.

For information please contact: Richard Hudak (978) 474.4135.

**Book Review**

MVPP member Mona Igram has already read Alice Rothchild’s book and shares her review here:

**Broken Promises, Broken Dreams**

**Stories of Jewish & Palestinian Trauma and Resilience**

By Alice Rothchild

“For me the other side, the enemy, is not the Palestinian people. For me the struggle is not between Palestinians and Israelis, nor between Jews and Arabs. The fight is between those who seek peace and those who seek war. My people are those who seek peace.”


What happens when we refuse to be enemies? Alice Rothchild, a Jewish doctor, a human rights activist at home and abroad, a mother and caregiver, asks this question of herself and others as she documents conversations with Israelis and Palestinians in search of an answer.

As an organizer of the Jewish Voice for Peace Health and Human Rights Project in Boston, Alice Rothchild organized four health and human rights delegations to Israel and the Occupied Territories, traveling there in 2004 and 2005. During her travels, she interviewed Palestinian and Israeli health care workers, activists and citizens to detail the trauma and resilience experienced by all who live there.

Dr. Rothchild interviews pediatricians, psychiatrists, psychologists and medical students. Her conversations with people inform the reader, through individual stories, of how Palestinians deal with the trauma of living in a situation where they are not in control. Rather than focusing on statistics which show how many Palestinians were killed or beaten or tortured, she focuses on the psychological aspects of the Occupation. Dr. Rothchild chronicles stories by Palestinians of all walks of life who are subject to arbitrary shows of authority by young, sometimes teenage, Israeli soldiers. She describes checkpoints where Palestinians must be meek and submissive in order to cross and where they are beaten or arrested on a soldier’s whim. She describes the divisions and economic devastation that Israeli settlements, infrastructure and the wall are causing to Palestinian society and the economy.

Dr. Rothchild interviews several Israelis who have differing opinions on and experiences with the Occupation. Two of the most striking interviews in her book are with Dr. Ruchama Ma-

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Merrimack Valley People For Peace
March - May 2007

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Step It Up On April 14th, tens of thousands of Americans gathered across the country in the largest-ever demonstration against global warming. Over 1400 “Step It Up” events were held in all 50 states, urging the U.S. Congress to introduce legislation reducing heat-trapping carbon emissions by 80 percent by 2050. This amazing explosion of grassroots energy came as an overwhelming surprise for the organizers, environmentalist Bill McKibben and six recent college graduates, who had hoped to inspire maybe up to 100 global warming rallies around the country. Instead, they were joined by every kind of people in every corner of the country, moved by deep concern, coming up with creative and elaborate ideas, taking pictures of their events to send to Congress. (To mention only the Sea of People in Manhattan: demonstrators dressed in blue delineating the part of the city that would be submerged if half of the Greenland ice sheet melted.)

The Andover “Step It Up” event gathered about 350 supporters in the Old Town Hall. Students of all 14 of Andover’s public and private schools collaborated to create the Step It Up banner. Andover’s State Senator Susan Tucker and State Representatives Barry Finegold and Barbara L’Italien addressed the audience and called for community members to work towards cutting carbon emissions. Local bard and MVPP member Pat Scanlon got the whole audience singing along with him in his witty adaptation of “You Are My Sunshine”. Hundreds took part in the group picture and visited information tables set by local organizations and schools. MVPP had a table too, offering – thanks to Becci Backman’s knowledgeable stocking-up - a rich display of Peace, Justice and Environment buttons, bumper stickers and printed information. We were happy to be invited to participate, a sign for the deepening links between the environmental and the peace and justice movements.

Impeachment Vermont state senators voted on April 20 to call for the impeachment of President Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney, saying their actions in the U.S. and abroad, including in Iraq, have raised “serious questions of constitutionality, statutory legality, and abuse of the public trust.” By a 16-9 vote, the Vermont Senate urged the state’s congressional delegation to introduce and support articles of impeachment. The Vermont Senate is the first legislative chamber in the country to call for impeachment. There has been a relentless pressure from grassroots activists urging it to do so. Forty towns voted in favor of similar impeachment resolutions at their annual town meetings in March.

A grassroots impeachment movement is gaining momentum all around the country. On April 28th, it found expression in over 130 pro-impeachment actions, which were held in many states, including a protest of hundreds - right in the face of President Bush who was visiting the Kendall Miami-Dade College on this day. Reports and photos of the actions can be found at www.a28.org, including the Boston event at Faneuil Hall (see “Recent Events”).

Dr. Rothchild’s book is striking in its honesty and perspective. She describes her transformation as a child enamored of the Israel of myths and dreams, to her deeper understanding of Israel and Palestine, and her acknowledgment of the “appalling excesses of the Israeli Occupation of Palestine.” She felt an obligation to draw attention to these excess in order to “see the face of the Palestinian “enemy” as equally human and equally entitled to what we would want for ourselves and our Israeli brothers and sisters.” As Dr. Nurit Peled Elhanan states “My people are those who seek peace.”

GOOD NEWS

Boryana Tacconi

Solar pioneers MVPP members Mary and Jim Todd recently became the first homeowners in Lawrence to “go solar” with the solar panels they had installed on their roof by NexGen Energy Solutions, a new and rapidly gaining popularity local company. The Todds took the decision to install the panels after seeing the documentary “An Inconvenient Truth.” The electric and hot-water roof panels now provide much of the utility needs for their household. On sunny days they can even sell electricity back to the region’s electric grid and literally see the meter going the other way. A grant from the Massachusetts Technology Council helped finance the project.

A big article about NexGen Energy Solutions featuring the solar reconstruction they did for the Todds appeared recently in the Eagle Tribune.

As we all know, Mary and Jim’s environmental concerns go hand in hand with their deep commitment to world peace and justice. Congratulations on your solar panel roof, Mary and Jim! May the sun shine bright on it and may you lead the way for many more homeowners to follow your example.
Workers gain The Coalition of Immokalee Workers, representing over 4,000 mostly immigrant workers who labor in the agricultural fields of Southwest Florida, recently waged a successful campaign against McDonalds over the price paid for tomatoes picked in Florida. Under the new agreement the farm workers will have an increase of thirty-two cents per packet of tomatoes. This was their next big victory after they won a campaign against Taco Bell in 2005. The workers’ struggles were supported by students all over the country who were organizing in solidarity with them, as well as by the AFL-CIO and the National Council of Churches. According to Immokalee Workers activists, next on the list is Burger King.

Immigrant rights For the second year in a row, hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets on May Day in a massive display of solidarity for immigrant rights in the United States. Marches were held in cities including Los Angeles, Chicago, Detroit, Denver, Washington, Phoenix and New York. Other than the confrontation in Los Angeles, where police disrupted an evening protest, firing rubber bullets and tear gas at thousands gathered in a park, the events went mostly without incident. Calls focused on demanding a path to citizenship for undocumented workers, ending raids and deportations that have divided whole families and rejecting anti-immigrant legislation.

Hundreds of students, especially in Los Angeles and Detroit, walked out of class to support the demonstrations.

Recent Events

On March 4, MVPP and the UU Congregation in Andover jointly hosted the 6th annual Walk for a New Spring. About 50 people came to the potluck supper to spend the evening with our dear friends from the Leverett Peace Pagoda and their co-walkers and hear about their work on abolishing war and nuclear weapons and about the progress of the Mayors for Peace project. We also had a short presentation by members of the group “No More Victims”, which is involved in helping Iraqi children injured in the war to get medical treatment in the U.S. The Walkers jointly with MVPP members held vigils at Textron systems in Wilmington and Raytheon in Andover to protest the manufacturing of weapons in both facilities.

On March 19, MVPP sponsored a vigil to commemorate the fourth anniversary of the U.S. invasion in Iraq. The vigil was called by Moveon.org and was one of about 1400 events held countrywide. About 60 people gathered in the very chilly evening to share each other’s presence, their outrage with the war and their determination to work for peace. The strong wind made it impossible for candlelight as planned, but we had good speeches, good music and most importantly, a strong presence of young people. Special thanks to Jim Todd, Masood Sheikh and Ralph Galen for opening and closing the event with prayers, to Don Abbott for his speech and for providing the sound system, to MFSO mother Anne Chay and Veteran for Peace member Pat Scanlon for their speeches, to Bill Kolbe, Brian Quirk, Mary Kate Small and Pat Scanlon for the inspiring music, to Thea Shapiro for providing the heartbreaking display of well over 3,000 fallen soldiers’ names, and to everyone for coming.

On March 24, over twenty MVPP members participated at the Greater Boston area Stop the War! Troops Home Now! rally and peace-and-justice fair attended by thousands at the Boston Common. The event was organized by a coalition of groups to commemorate the fourth anniversary of the war in Iraq. Speakers included Howard Zinn, Cindy Sheehan, Melida Arredondo and others. MVPP member Pat Scanlon sang, surrounded by fellow Veterans for Peace. The rally was followed by a spirited march over Beacon Hill, through Government Center, Faneuil Hall, Downtown Boston and back to the Common. The event united peace, labor, community, environmental, immigrant right traditions — to name just a few — bringing a strong message that just as we have to end the war in Iraq, so do we have to meet the challenges at home.

On April 14, MVPP had a table at Andover’s Step It Up 2007 National Day for Climate Action in the Old Town Hall (see more on the event in “Good News”). Thanks to Becci Backman’s thoughtful stocking-up, we were able to offer a large assortment of bumper-stickers and buttons carrying environmental messages. Even more important than the sales was our presence at the event, witnessing for the deep links between the work for preserving the Earth and the work for global peace and justice.

On April 28, a spirited, funny and angry event took place in front of Faneuil Hall in downtown Boston, right around the statue of Samuel Adams. “The People’s Impeachment of George Bush” was one of about 130 grassroots pro-impeachment actions that took place around the country on that day. The participants, several hundreds at their peak, cheered the speakers...
Coming Events

May 15, Tuesday at 7:30: ALICE ROTHCHILD, Boston area activist, physician, and author discussing her book: BROKEN PROMISES, BROKEN DREAMS. Stories of Jewish and Palestinian Trauma and Resilience. Old Town Hall, 20 Main St, Andover

May 23, Wednesday, 7:00: THE CORPORATION, documentary. Discussion following. Rockport Public Library, 17 School St, Rockport Film series sponsored by NSCPJ & Fellowship of Reconciliation. An entertaining and provocative look at the powerful impact of these global economic behemoths on the U.S. and the world, particularly on working people, public health, poverty, war and human rights. This widely acclaimed film explains what a corporation is, its curious history, and what people are doing from India to California to Bolivia to exercise popular control over corporate control.

June 6, Wednesday, 7:00: HYDRO-POLITICS IN ISRAEL-PALESTINE A talk and slide show by SKIP SCHIEL Rockport Public Library, 17 School St, Rockport Sponsored by NSCPJ & Fellowship of Reconciliation A slide presentation by Skip Schiel, a renowned photographer and peace activist, will show how the scarce resource of water has become a dramatic mirror of power relationships in the villages and cities of Israel and Palestine.

May 22 MVPP monthly meeting at the United Methodist Church, North Andover.

Thursday, May 24 "Where is the Rage?" Project - "Peace Package Packing Party" The long awaited "Peace Package Packing Party" will take place at the Andover UU Church, 6 Locke Street. Anyone who can help will be welcome. We have the hall from 3pm till 10pm. The first couple of hours will be transporting all the material, DVDs, CDs and extra tables to the church. Each "Peace Package" will contain up to 17 pieces of literature, two DVDs and a CD provided by most of the major peace organizations in the country. We will be making up between 3,000 - 3,500 packages and preparing them for bulk mailing to approximately 1,800 peace groups, 1,000 Unitarian Universalist Congregations and 500 College and Public Radio Stations.

Volunteers are welcome from 5pm on. Please come and help for as long as you can. We will order some pizza. If anyone would like to make something and contribute to an ongoing potluck, that would be great. Members from Veterans for Peace, Military Families Speak Out, Raging Grannies, Code Pink, Merrimack Valley People for Peace and others will be helping out. Bring your peace signs and banners for display around the hall.

To find out more about the "Where is the Rage?" Project and see which groups are participating please go to Pat’s web-site: www.patscanlon.com

Directions: North or South - Route 93 to exit 41 (Route 125) go towards Andover. Go approximately one mile take Route 28 north (Main Street). Go approximately two miles, you will pass Phillips Academy. Once past the last light at Phillips (there are three), go two blocks on the left - Locke Street (three houses down on the left). You can park on either Main Street or Park Street. Thanks, I look forward to seeing you at the "PPPP". Peace, Pat Scanlon

PS. If you are available to help with the set-up please let me know.

May 27, Sunday at 10am: Memorial Day Service at North Parish UU Church. Carlos and Melida Arredondo will be speaking. Pat Scanlon will be playing music. Carlos will have his wagon with the coffin and crosses on display.

June 15, Friday, 6:30 PM MVPP annual Meeting at the United Methodist Church, North Andover. Pot luck supper, election of officers, and program to be announced.

July 28, Lowell Folk Festival. Help us at the the table!

August 25 Kennebunkport vigil with Cindy Sheehan. 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. We want to see thousands of protesters descending on Kennebunkport!!!

The Maine Veterans for Peace will be providing 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.

Be thinking 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 FER PEACE, FARMERS SAY FARMS NOT ARMS, LIBRARIANS, ECT. VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES are plentiful. please contact Jamilla at jamillaelshafei@yahoo.com. Web: www.kportprotest.org.

September 3, Labor Day at the Bread and Roses Festival On the Common in Lawrence
Membership

It is that time of year again. If you label now says 2007 you are up-to-date. In June your label should say 2008.

Please fill in the membership form in this newsletter and send it to:
P.O. Box 573
North Andover, MA 01845

Letters to the Editor

Gloucester Daily Times on April 11th

Decontaminating Fear

Fear is a natural, often necessary emotion experienced from the earliest days of humankind to the present. Loss, pain, threats and impending chaos result in feelings of vulnerability. In a society like this one that puts a high priority on economic security and accruing power, to feel vulnerable is akin to dying to the self and its dreams.

Everyone, everywhere is vulnerable, though. This reaction seems to be innate and rightly so, since it alerts and possibly protects you from harm. If you went forth into every circumstance with a feeling of being immortal and invulnerable, you'd be a target for serious backlash.

Of course, there are people whose lives intentionally foretell their deaths as lessons in giving themselves over to the cause of service to and love of others. Jesus, Gandhi, Martin Luther King put fear aside and led humankind to higher planes where previously unknown capacities came into focus. Caring, compassion, sacrifice may not have moved front and center for many people but these responses are no longer considered otherworldly and unattainable.

In everyday life, some fear-inducing entities, whether they're pinpointed as climate change, bird flu or terrorists are met with a societal barrage of supposed solutions. The "warriors" among you stand ready to take on any and all threats and demolish them. When it comes to terrorists, the call goes out, "Victory over terror!"

Terror is an emotion. Can guns and bombs kill emotions? On a personal level, can simply hearing the word "terror", cause an upwelling of fear that's debilitating instead of challenging? And what, exactly, would victory consist of when there are no standing armies representing a nation to be vanquished? Can there be victory in Iraq when U.S. troops are, in effect, refereeing a civil war and are viewed as occupiers, not compatriots, anyway?

George Soros said, "Waging war against an abstraction (and emotions are abstractions) prevents dealing with each threat on its merit". You've learned that fear-inducing threats can serve political purposes rather than lead to an examination of realities on the ground or in the rafters. In some cases, indiscriminant labeling of people you don't know, whose language you don't speak, whose motivations are a mystery, is hardly the way to resolve looming differences. Consider the word, "Islamofascists". It bespeaks the ultimate in threats. Winning or holding power through the use of such words keeps whole populations subservient to the people who fashion them.

Frederick Douglass said famously, "Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will. Find out what any people will quietly submit to and you have found the exact measure of injustice and wrong that will be imposed on them." He was speaking about the injustice of slavery and his words are on the mark today.

As quiet submission proceeds, those in charge can undermine basic rights, due process and privacy. Dissent is silenced or scorned, most noticeably in the media. If you back off and decide not to look at the ways your basic rights are being corroded, you've deserted your Founding Fathers and your spiritual guides. Awareness and appreciation of the interconnections that abound in this world, can mean facing up to fear. Instead of fighting or fleeing, you can use the energy and focus that fear offers to come together in the cause of humankind and our planet.

The Jewish sage, Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav said "The whole world is a narrow bridge. The most important thing is not to be afraid." Co-existing on a narrow bridge points to the need for cooperation, careful planning and shared perceptions, respect for differing views, and refusal to deny anyone his or her place in this agreed-upon firmament.

War is not the answer to fear. Intelligent assessment, imagination and collective wisdom are.

Cynthia Fisk is a member of the North Shore Meeting of The Religious Society of Friends
Curbside visit

This time, alone yesterday in Shawsheen’s cold rain, wearing my STOP FUNDING THIS WAR sign, I felt someone to the left side behind my shoulder. Turning, I met the eyes of an ordinary man, also by himself, hatless in a plain tan raincoat. His eyes locked in mine as he held out his hand:

“I just had to stop and thank you for standing here like this, on a day like this. I’m Dennis Kucinich.”

“You certainly are! And I want to thank you for every right stance you continue to take on all the important issues.”

“Well, we’re going to turn this country around.”

We chatted for about 5 minutes, hardly loosening the grip on our handshake. He was on his way from New Hampshire to his next speaking engagement in CT. He said he “would speak about this.”

I mentioned that my most frequent message to those who stop to talk is what Rabbi Abraham Heschel said in the ‘60s during his witness against the Viet Nam War: “In a free society, some are guilty and all are responsible.”

Leaning closer, he asked me to say that once more.

He repeated it slowly and clearly, “Some are guilty and all are responsible.”

And I re-emphasized the critical first phrase, “In a free society…”

“Got it!”

We exchanged warm thanks once more, and he left as he had arrived, inconspicuously.

(And yesterday morning, as I wondered about standing out in this weather, I thought for a minute that I might just take a day off…)
The MVPP Newsletter is printed monthly and has a current distribution of 200. We are grateful for suggestions, comments, and help with publication. (Unless 2007 appears on your label, your dues have expired. Please remember to renew.)


President George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500
White House Comment Desk: 202 456-1111
E-mail: president@whitehouse.gov

Senator Edward M. Kennedy
304 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
202 224-4543 fax: 202 224-2417
2400 JFK Building, Boston MA 02203
617 565-3170 fax: 617 565-3183
Form: http://kennedy.senate.gov/contact.html

Senator John F. Kerry
304 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
202 224-2742 fax: 202 224-8525
One Bowdoin Sq., Boston, MA 02114
517 565-8519 fax: 617 248-3870
Form: http://kerry.senate.gov/text/contact/email.html

Representative Martin Meehan (District 5)
2447 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
202 225-3411 fax: 202 225-0771
305 Essex Street, Lawrence, MA 01840
978 681-6200 fax: 978 682-6870
E-mail: martin.meehan@mail.house.gov

Representative John Tierney (District 6)
120 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
202 225-8020 fax: 202 225-5915
17 Peabody Sq, Peabody, MA 01960
978 531-1669 fax: 978 531-1996
E-mail: http://www.house.gov/tierney/email.htm

A link to all in US legislature:
http://thomas.loc.gov/home/legbranch/legbranch.html

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

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