



**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.

November 2021 – June 2022

MVPP is no longer a 501-C3 organization. See <https://merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org/NewsJy21-Nov21.pdf>

November 23, 2021

We met online for Stone Soup, so recalled the story but did not make soup. We did collect money for Oxfam and refugees through paper mail.

We decided to help Afghan refugees individually, by supporting other local efforts. The following items were needed for the Afghan Refugees:

- Money – checks may be sent to MVPP, or to Oxfam or International Institute directly
- Child safety seats
- Winter coats
- Car rides
- Accommodations

Pat Scanlon joined the meeting after his call with the International Institute. He reported that the Institute already had 50 volunteers.

December 2021

We don't meet in December.

January 25, 2022

We met online. We discussed how MVPP could play a role in helping Afghan Refugees. Barbara Haack said three churches in Newburyport and one in West Newbury were already hosting Afghan Refugees families.

A large Afghan family was being hosted by the House of Peace. Many members have expressed their willingness to donate money, or clothing and household goods.

MVPP agreed to endorse the Mass Peace Action petition condemning Israeli Defense Ministry's order declaring six Palestinian civil society organizations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory to be "terrorist organizations." The groups are: Addameer, al-Haq, Defense for Children-Palestine, the Union of Agricultural Work Committees, Bisan Center for Research and Development, and the Union of Palestinian Women Committees. The designation effectively outlaws the activities of these civil society groups and authorizes Israeli government to close their offices, seize their assets and jail their staff members, and it prohibits funding or even publicly expressing support for their activities.

We decided through email to endorse the NPT, the Non-Proliferation Treaty, calling for no first use of nuclear weapons.

MVPP Members plan to continue Sunday Vigil (12:00 - 1:00 pm) at Shawsheen Square but to change the Thursday morning Vigil at Raytheon to 2:45 pm.

Boryana has been participating in a vigil for Voting Rights held at Shawsheen Square (10-11 am) on Saturdays.

<http://www.merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org/>
You can view newsletters on line (where most links work) at <https://www.merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org/oldmins.htm>

Printed on recycled paper

February 22, 2022

We met online. We continued the discussion about helping Afghan Refugees. Brian Quirk had spoken to Pat Scanlon to find out what the North Parish UU Church is doing. Brian also bought a pressure cooker for one of the Afghan families connected with the House of Peace in Ipswich.

Kathie Robinson thanked Barbara Haack for forwarding the invitation to a lecture and discussion on Afghanistan culture organized by the Women in Action Huddle of Greater Newburyport. Cultural differences are challenging, including that Afghan society is very male-dominated, so women who want to help might find it difficult to establish good rapport with the men.

Ruth Canonico reminded us of the unexpected passing of humanitarian hero Dr. Paul Farmer.

March 22, 2022

We met online. We agreed that the best way for MVPP to help Afghan refugees would be for its members to donate directly to the organizations already engaged in supporting and settling the refugees. Brian Quirk will list the names and contacts for the organizations on the MVPP website.

The attendees discussed the Russian Invasion of Ukraine and the resulting horrific humanitarian crisis for the Ukrainian people. Masood Sheikh recommended that members watch the documentary "Putin's Road to War," which was aired recently on PBS Frontline. The documentary shows how the breakup of the USSR shook Putin and how he managed to grab power to resurrect the USSR Empire. Masood asked the attendees to reflect on the contrast between the loud protests now and the silence when Putin was conducting similar crimes in Chechnya and Syria. That lack of reaction then may have emboldened Putin to this greater act of aggression. Peace groups opposed these Russian efforts, but spoke mostly to the US government against involvement, as we do regarding Ukraine.

Allan Sifferlen reported that on March 21 five women had made their way to the roof of the Raytheon building in Cambridge, had set off smoke devices and locked themselves together to protest Raytheon's weapon sales to Saudi Arabia and Israel, and what they call Raytheon's role as purveyor of death. All five were arrested. On the ground, between 20 and 30 people held signs and chanted. The activists said they were from the group Resist and Abolish the Military-Industrial Complex.

Allan also informed the attendees that Mass Peace Action planned to hold a Webinar on "Nuclear Weapons and

Merrimack Valley People For Peace

Massachusetts - Why MA needs a Nuclear Weapons Commission, and how you can make it happen" from 3:00pm to 4:30pm on Saturday, March 26. The Webinar will be addressed by Jonathan King, Joseph Gerson and many other distinguished speakers.

April 26, 2022

We met online. We spontaneously talked about the Celebration of the Life of our beloved friend and MVPP member Jim Todd three days before. Everyone present had attended it either in person or via zoom. We were still moved by this beautiful event, by the witness of Jim's family and friends and the atmosphere of love and deep fondness.

Brian reported that he will contact the department in Merrimack College that was interested in Mary Todd's library, after the long covid delay.

Brian has compiled a list, from member submissions, of reliable groups and organizations helping refugees; and put it on the MVPP rise-up list and web site, as a resource for members who would like to make personal donations. <https://merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org/2022Ukraine.htm>

We wondered if there is a way to support the peace movement in Russia. Allan will contact a Quaker group in Moscow and find out if and how we could do that. Caveat: under the present Russian Federation law, any person or organization receiving help or being in contact with the West and especially the US can be labeled a foreign agent and enemy of the state, with grave consequences (this from Boryana, based on current information.)

Dee Halzack expressed the concern, shared by many of us, that the Afghan refugees are being put aside because of the Ukrainian refugees. She also posted an article about how to support Russian defectors.

<https://wagingnonviolence.org/2022/04/defections-russian-soldiers-crucial-to-end-putins-war-ukraine/>

We had a lively free discussion about the situation in Ukraine, everyone reporting on news and analyses that we had seen, read or heard.

May 24, 2022

We met online. We decided to have the Annual Meeting on Zoom again, Tuesday, June 28 at **7 or 7:30**. We considered speakers for the Annual Meeting, including David Less

from Abrahamic Reunion, Susan Nicholson, Sarah Benson from the International Institute, and Noam Chomsky.

We hope to arrange a meeting with Rep. Trahan, to discuss nuclear arms, Yemen, and Israel's designation of six human rights groups as terrorists.

There will be a Lowell Folk Festival this year, so we will plan for that.

Events 2022

November 2021

Armistice Day was described in the July to November newsletter.

<https://merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org/NewsJy21-Nov21.pdf>

Our stone Soup Supper was on-line.

February 2022

The Sunday vigil at Shawsheen Square and the Thursday vigil at Raytheon are going on in all kinds of weather. The Raytheon vigil has been moved to 2:15 pm, when a long stream of employees is leaving the facility. Several MAPA members joined us for two of the Raytheon vigils, so both times there were 14-15 participants holding signs and giving out leaflets to Raytheon employees, encouraging them to become 'whistleblowers.' Amazingly, quite a lot of people actually took the leaflets. The second of those vigils was covered by the Andover Patch, including a photo and quoting the sign, "Raytheon - good people, bad products" which replicates one of Arthur Brien's original signs.

Brian Quirk reported that he went to a vigil at Rep. Seth Moulton's office regarding the Yemen War Powers Resolution.

Boryana Tacconi called President Biden's office to ask for dropping all charges against Julian Assange, and spoke with an aide.

March 2022

Masood, at the behest of Allan Sifferlen and his fellow members of FCNL, has approached Congressman Moulton's office to request a time slot for a discussion about the Yemen War Powers Resolution, H.J. Res. 87.

Members attended MAPA demonstrations before and after the invasion of Ukraine, urging diplomacy, not military escalation.

April 2022

The Sunday vigils at Shawsheen Square and the Thursday vigils at Raytheon are being carried on. Phil made several great new signs for the Raytheon vigil. Boryana participated at the Good Friday vigil to abolish the death penalty in Reading.

May 2022

Allan Sifferlen organized an interesting Zoom meeting with Quakers in Moscow, and a supporting organization in the US, . We heard about their activities, and how they cope with political pressure. It was interesting to see how they see things from inside Russia. It is safer for individuals than for organizations to support their efforts.

Members attended and contributed to the Veterans for Peace Memorial Day commemoration at Boston Common.

Masood and Allan met with church representatives and MAPA with Rep. Moulton's office.

June 2022

In January 2021 we celebrated 50 countries having ratified the TPNW, the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. That number is now up to 62, with 24 others well along in the process!

Allan was in a meeting led by the Friend's Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) with the staff of MA senator Elizabeth Warren, to promote House.J. Res. 87; legislation to invoke constitutional war powers to end unauthorized United States military involvement in Saudi Arabia's brutal war in Yemen. They hope to pass it before the president visits Saudi Arabia to press for more oil production.

Coming Events

June 2022

Tue. June 28, 7pm MVPP Annual Meeting

July 2022

Sat. Jy 30, MVPP will have our table and tent at the Lowell Folk Festival

August 2022

Sat. Ag 6, Hiroshima vigil (tbd)

September 2022

Mon. Sept. 5 MVPP table at Bread and Roses Festival

Our website posts events:

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

Mass Peace Action Events:

<http://masspeaceaction.org/events/>

Thoughts

Now What?

The invasion of Ukraine posed a new challenge to the peace movement. Before the invasion, we could insist on diplomacy and be consistent with our beliefs. We could care for refugees and warn of the dangers of nuclear war. Some thought NATO's expansion and military exercises had provoked Russia.

But the actual invasion was a new reality. Now our most sickening fear was that the US would provide arms until all Ukrainian soldiers and many civilians were killed. But what could we do? Ukrainians were willing to defend their home with arms, and what choice did they have? They already knew what life dominated by Russia would be like. They did not have the abstract choices we in the peace movement are used to thinking of. Our theories were being tested. Revelations of atrocities at Bucha soon reinforced the horror they faced.

Our peace groups faced divisive issues. Should we support some level of military aid, or hope peaceful means could somehow succeed? Both seemed unlikely. Some oppose NATO and some see why NATO is attractive. Some say the US and its peace movements' not

resisting Russia's aggression in Chechnya and Syria encouraged Russia to invade Ukraine. The peace movement has long focused on protesting our government, but this situation makes us oppose the Russian government too. We in the peace movement now see we must oppose evil on both sides. When discussed this with Masood at a vigil, he said Mohamed told his followers, "Whoever of you sees an evil must then change it with his hand. . . tongue. . . or heart [as you are able]." *Hadith 34* .

As world citizens, we are responsible to pay attention to more than the government where we vote. Fortunately, our government has prevented an escalation to nuclear war. (Remember this when we challenge the US updating its nuclear arsenal, and when opposing first use of nuclear weapons.) Many Ukrainians are being sacrificed and Russians are being harmed by our sanctions. Our arms manufacturers are benefitting by our supplying Ukraine. Our underdog is holding off the bear, which looks worse the longer it goes on. There are still plenty of reasons to urge our government to do right. It will take imagination and diligence. I dreamt of the US being able to protect cities from incoming missiles as works in Israel's "Iron Dome," but hear it is not practicable.

What else can we do? It would be nice to support the peace movement in Russia. We can to a limited extent, not through our organizations, but individually and discretely. We can support Russian resister refugees. We can link arms symbolically in public statements supporting Russian resisters. And we can support refugees from Ukraine, Afghanistan, and other places.

Brian Quirk

Membership

**To continue to receive this newsletter... We Invite You to Join /Rejoin Us
(Unless 2021 appears on your label, your dues have expired. Please remember to renew.)**

\$20.00 Individual

\$10.00 Student/Senior

\$30.00 Family

Circle One

\$50.00 Supporting

\$75.00 Sustaining

\$100.00 Peacemaker

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ E-Mail _____ Date _____

Return to

P.O. Box 573

North Andover, MA 01845

MVPP is no longer 501(c)(3) organization.

Check here if you prefer to receive your newsletter via e-mail.

Weekly and Monthly Vigils

Andover: Sunday, noon-1 pm; Shawsheen Square, Junction of Routes 133 and 28; Lawrence Friends Meeting/
Shawsheen Peace Witness; Allan Sifferlen, 978-397-6432.

Andover: Thursday, 7:00-8:00 am; in front of Raytheon plant near Routes 133 and 93; Raytheon Peacemakers;
Allan Sifferlen, 978-397-6432.

Gloucester: Saturday, noon-1 pm; Grant Circle.

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

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

Newburyport: Sunday, noon-1 pm; Market Square; Paul Paulsen (978) 462-7894

Reading: 2nd Saturday/each month, 11 am-noon; Reading Square; Reading People for Peace; Larry Piper,
vigils@ReadingPeace.org

Rockport: Wednesday, noon-1 pm; First Congregational Church (silent for peace).

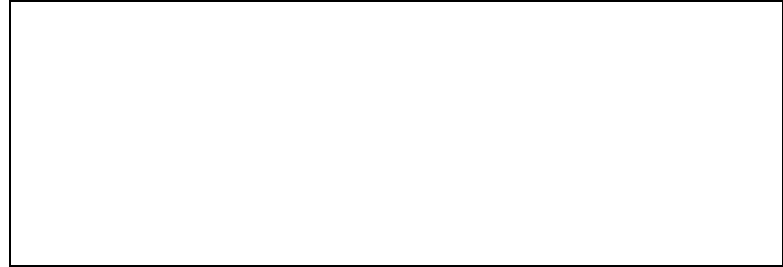
Salem, MA: Saturday, 11-noon; Riley Plaza (by the Post Office).

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

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

PEACE IS
PATRIOTIC

ANNUAL MEETING June 28, 2022 7 pm



The MVPP Newsletter is printed periodically and has a current distribution of 70. We are grateful for suggestions, comments, and help with publication. MVPP President: Brian Quirk. Vice President: Masood Sheikh
Newsletter contributors: Brian Quirk, Boryana Tacconi, and Masood Sheikh

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

Every legislator knows one letter is worth a thousand votes.

President Joseph Biden (202) 456-1414 switchboard
The White House (202) 456-1111 comments
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500
Contact: www.whitehouse.gov/contact/

Senator Elizabeth Warren (202) 224-4543
317 Hart Senate Office Building Washington DC 20510
Form: www.warren.senate.gov/?p=email_senator

Senator Edward J. Markey (202) 224-2742
218 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510
Form: www.markey.senate.gov/contact

Representative Seth Moulton (District 6)
1408 Longworth
House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515 21 Front Street
(202) 225-8020 Salem, MA 01970
fax (202) 225-5915 (978) 531-1669 fax (978) 224-2270
Form: <https://moulton.house.gov/contact/>

Representative Lori Trahan (District 3)
1616 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC
20515 202-225-3411
15 Union St, Suite 401, Lawrence, MA 01840
978 459-0101
11 Kearney Square, 3rd floor
Lowell, MA 01852 978 459-0101 fax: 978-459-1907
Haverhill Citizens Center 10 Welcome Street
492 Main Street Acton, MA 01720 (978) 263-1951
Contact: <https://trahan.house.gov/contact/>

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

How Senators and Representatives voted:
US Senate: www.senate.gov/reference/common/faq/how_to_votes.htm
US House: clerk.house.gov/evs/2004/index.asp

State Voting Information: Find your representatives at:
<http://wheredoivotema.com/bal/MyElectionInfo.aspx>

State Bills
<http://www.mass.gov/legis/hbillsrch.htm>