



## 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.

October 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

**Our 20th anniversary concert was a great success!** We have some very talented members and supporters! We made over \$1000 from the proceeds of tickets, sales, sponsors, and goodies, and we all enjoyed the inspiring music.

**Asra'a Mizyad** and her father, mentioned in the "Good News" section of the September MVPP newsletter, finally arrived in Houston, Texas for her to receive medical treatment, including a prosthetic arm. Both Cole Miller and Alan Pogue brought Asra'a from Iraq, where she had lost her right arm during a U.S. missile attack on her villa five years ago. The latest news is that she has an Arabic speaking doctor/translator and a warm Arabic speaking home in Houston. "All is going fine."

**A federal judge ruled September 29 that a USA Patriot Act provision that allowed the FBI to secretly obtain Internet and telephone records without a judge's warrant is unconstitutional**, citing that "democracy abhors undue secrecy." He ordered the Justice Department to stop issuing subpoenas to communications firms ordering them to turn over customer records.

**Federal Court Rules South Dakota Violated Voting Rights of Native Americans.** In a historic victory for voting rights, a federal court ruled that South Dakota violated the 1965 federal Voting Rights Act when it approved a statewide redistricting plan that dilutes the voting power of Native Americans. The ACLU filed the case on behalf of four Native American voters in December 2001 after the state legislature drew a new legislative district map that packed Native Americans into a single district.

"If the state had drawn districts more fairly, Native Americans would have been a majority in two districts instead of a 90 percent supermajority in only one," said Bryan Sells, a staff attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union's Voting Rights Project, which had challenged the plan. "Redistricting has historically been used to disenfranchise minority voters. Today's decision will help rectify this longstanding problem."

**"Nonviolent resistance, persistence and courage produce results."** Five Israeli army draft resisters ("Refusers"), Haggai Matar, Noam Bahat, Adam Maor, Shimri Zameret and Matan Kaminer were released September 23 from army ranks after spending almost two years in confinement for having resisted mobilization as long as the army is one of oppression and occupation. They are instead for living in peace and equality with their Palestinian neighbors and friends.

**Anti-nuclear community celebrates long-sought shut-down of submarine warfare "Trigger",** Clam Lake, Wisconsin. The Navy's Space and Warfare Systems Command (SPAWAR) announced Sept. 17 that it permanently will shut down and then dismantle its extremely low frequency (ELF) submarine transmitter system Project ELF. The giant transmitter sends one-way messages to submerged British and U.S. submarines around the world. It was built to allow Trident ballistic missile submarines to

**MVPP Monthly Meeting – North Parish Church – Tuesday, October 26, 2004 7:30 PM** *Printed on recycled paper*  
<http://www.merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org>

get close enough to the USSR to launch a sneak attack or first-strike with nuclear weapons.

The bad news is that the U.S. still deploys 14 Tridents, the deadliest and most expensive weapons system in human history.

## Recent History

**MVPP'S 20th Anniversary Concert**, September 18, 2004

After a gloomy day with heavy morning rains and dense afternoon clouds, a breath of fresh air awaited all who attended the MVPP 20th Anniversary Concert. The set-up committee arrived to find our usual meeting place transformed into a coffee house through the unexpected help of Kim Adami. The sound system was functioning and ably managed by Pete Titcomb. Both Kim and Pete, regulars on the Coffee House Committee at North Parish, assisted immeasurably. Along came Pat Scanlon and Kathy Slade with indoor and outdoor peace decor. Pat brought banners for inside, and two of Kathy's wonderful Peace Doves graced the entry area, greeting guests. All manner of cookies and pastries and tea and fair trade coffee (generously donated by Starbucks of Andover) tempted palates. Dean Stevens sold lovely crafts from Central America, MVPP had its array of buttons and bumper stickers, and Dean, Pat, Ralph Galen and the Prince Myshkins offered CDs to keep memories of the evening alive. Even before the music began, you knew it was going to be a special evening.

To properly commend each performer is beyond the length of this article. Suffice to say that inspired performances were given by Nat Magavero, Pat Scanlon, the Reagan Babies, Ralph Galen, Dean Stevens (our headliner), the Merrimack Valley Peace Choir (consisting of eight members of MVPP), Mary Kate Small, the Prince Myshkins and ending with Dean and his son, Daniel. The themes were largely peace related and political in content. There were familiar songs and new. We sang along and hooted. Eyes misted as lyrics reminded us, yet again, of the senselessness of violence and war. All performers graciously donated their time so that we could raise money to further our twenty year history of donating funds to local, national and international advocacy, educational, and relief organizations. We note that the song, "We Don't Have a Minute to Hate," sung by the Peace Choir was authored by our own Don Abbott (inspired by the eulogy Mamie Till gave at the funeral of her lynched and murdered son, Emmett Till, in 1955).

Many thanks to all who worked to make this a rousing evening of camaraderie and merriment. Special thanks to Mary Kate for the inspired line-up of talent and to each performer who gave so generously of their time and tal-

ents. The concert reluctantly wrapped up around 10:30 with many lingering to enjoy each other's company. As one attendee noted the next day, "I want to repeat the entire concert in Groton in the very near future. It was so wonderful!" Apt praise for the event that kicked off the celebration of our 20th year.

Becci Backman

## Upcoming Events

**Election Day Poll Monitoring Training** Mon. Oct. 18, 6 - 9 PM, Suffolk Main Function Room, 1st Floor, . In conjunction with Impact2004 and Election Protection, both non-partisan organizations aimed at ensuring voter's rights in swing states, the Suffolk Civil Rights Group will be holding a free training for those interested in poll monitoring in New Hampshire on Election Day. The training will provide specifics on voting laws and procedures for helping voters who have been turned away. Please note that if you are interested in attending on Election Day (Tuesday, November 2nd) you must be available the entire day. (Transportation, food and materials will be supplied on Election Day.) If you are interested in attending or have questions, please email [civilrights@suffolk.edu](mailto:civilrights@suffolk.edu).

**Economic Forum: War and the Economy** Tues. Oct. 19, 7 - 9 PM, Memorial Hall, Andover Public Library. Mike Prokosch, formerly with United for a Fair Economy. Free admission. This is an opportunity to look at the Iraq war spending items and what we could get for the same money if we spent it on social needs at home. Mike will explain the "Reagan Vise": using military spending hikes plus tax cuts for the rich to squeeze out social spending. He poses that the far right wing agenda to "cut government in half over the next 25 years, (which he calls Shrink, Shift, and Shaft) will contrast to Dr. Martin Luther King's call to overcome the "giant triplets of racism, militarism, and extreme materialism."

**Howard Zinn: "Hope Rests on Doing Something"** Thurs. Oct. 21, 7PM, at Cambridge Friends Meeting, 5 Longfellow Place (off of Brattle) in Cambridge, Howard Zinn will give the 2004 Pat Farren Lecture entitled "Hope Rests on Doing Something" as a benefit for Peacework Magazine. Suggested donation: \$50 -\$10 sliding scale. One of today's most respected historians, Zinn is the author of numerous books including the best-selling "A People's History of the United States". Zinn also wrote "Emma" (a tribute to Emma Goldman) and is a columnist for The Progressive. For additional information, send email to [sburke@afsc.org](mailto:sburke@afsc.org) or call 617-661/6130.

**Seymour Hersh reports on Chain of Command: The Road from 9/11 to Abu Ghraib.** Fri. Oct. 29, 6:30 PM, Faneuil Hall at Quincy Market, This is a free public lecture and discussion sponsored by the Ford Hall Forum, Mother Jones, The Boston Phoenix, and the WAND Education Fund. Seymour Hersh, the Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative reporter who exposed the Abu Ghraib prison scandal, shares his revealing and unflinching perspective behind the public story of the Bush Administration's "war on terror," its intelligence failures, and what he describes as the lies and obsession that led America into Iraq. For more information, call (617) 373-5800 or go to <http://www.fordhallforum.neu.edu>

**International Action Day for Banning Uranium Weapons** Sat. Nov. 6, International Action Day for banning uranium weapons, initiated by The International Campaign to Ban DU Weapons since this date has been set by UN as the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict. Join the Online Petition Campaign on the ICBUW website at <http://www.bandepleteduranium.org> to ban uranium weapons. The goal is to get signatures by 2/15/05 to appeal to the EU Parliament or to NGO's involved the UN Disarmament Committee to be held in Geneva next spring. ICBUW calls upon you to engage, in your own areas, in actions for banning uranium weapons and requests that you post your plans on the ICBUW's homepage..

**From The Rule of Force to The Rule of Law In U.S Middle East Policy** Sat. Nov. 6, 9AM - 6 PM MIT, Building 10, Room 205, Dual Occupations: From The Rule of Force to The Rule of Law In U.S Middle East Policy. Speakers include Noam Chomsky, Robert Jensen, M. Shahid Alam, Naseer H. Aruri, Professor George Bisharat, Willard Hohanson, Rev. Don Wagner, Susan Alram, Nancy Murray, and others. For more information contact Dr. Elaine Hagopian, [echagop@aol.com](mailto:echagop@aol.com).

**Pat Scanlon** Sun. Nov. 14, 11:00AM, Community Church of Boston, 565 Boylston Street, Copley Square, Pat Scanlon will be performing five songs during the service with Willie Sordillo and Bill Perry. This service will be honoring Veterans for Peace, from which there will be veterans from WW11, Korea, Viet Nam, and Iraq. A Veteran from Iraq will speak. For more details, see the web site for Community Church at [www.commchurch.com](http://www.commchurch.com).

**School of the Americas** Fri.-Sun., November 19-21, Fort Benning, Georgia, Shut down the School of the Americas (SOA)! The US Army School of the Americas (renamed the Western Hemispheric Institute for Security Cooperation) has long been know throughout the Americas as a combat training facility for the Hemisphere's most notori-

ous human rights violators. SOA graduates have been linked to almost every major human rights violation in Latin America since the school's inception 60 years ago. Today, the school continues to train members of the Colombian military, a military with one of the most infamous human rights records and one that even the US State Department says continues to have close ties with illegal armed groups on the US terrorist list. Protesters will gather again this year to continue together in the struggle until the SOA is closed and the policies it represents are changed forever! Friday, Teach-in, trainings, and caucuses will begin.

Saturday & Sunday, Thousands will gather at the main gate of Fort Benning for rallies, music, speakers and nonviolent direct action. For more information, visit <http://www.soaw.org>. or call our own Mary Kate Small at 978-475-3274.

**Carolyn McDade and Friends** Sun. Nov. 21, 3:00PM, First Church In Ipswich, United Church of Christ. As autumn colors fill the woods and Thanksgiving approaches, join musician Carolyn McDade and Friends to sing, celebrate and honor the Ipswich River Watershed Association's work to restore the Ipswich River. Sr. Willie Hurley and Ann Eno are members of the chorus of forty-five who sing of fields and forests, rivers and sea from their CD "O Beautiful Gaia." Free admission.

**STONE SOUP Supper** You are invited to MVPP's annual 'STONE SOUP' supper, Tues, Nov. 23, 6:30 P.M. at the North Parish Church, (Old North Andover Common) sharing a simple meal of bread and soup. Donations from this fasting day will go to Oxfam America's Fast for a World Harvest fund drive. After the meal MVPP will conduct a brief meeting, followed by a video of pertinent interest to our group.



MVPP 20th Anniversary meeting, June 2004.

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## Weekly Vigils

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

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

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

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

Old Town Hall, Main St. - Lou Bernieri 978 475-6847, lberneri@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 pm, Broadway and Essex Streets, Lawrence Peace Coalition, Martina Cruz,  
martina\_m\_cruz@yahoo.com.

**Newburyport**, Sunday, 12 - 1 pm in Market Square, Niki Rosen, 978 463-3208

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

**Salem NH**, Thursdays at 7 pm, Sat. 12:30-1:30 pm. Corner of rts. 28 and 97. Henry Misserville, 918 470-0663.

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

## North Shore groups' vigils

**Gloucester**, Saturday, Noon-1 pm, Grant Circle

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

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

**Marblehead**, Wednesday 5-7 pm, at the Peace Pole, Memorial Park (by the YMCA), Tom Gale 631-1218

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

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

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## Of Interest

### You have a Legal Right to be a Conscientious Objector

Frances Crowe, now 85 and one of the founders of Tra-  
prock Peace Center, recently discussed her views on con-  
scientious objection. She discussed the facts, informing  
young men and women today how to establish their human  
right to not participate in killing, and their legal right in the  
United States to not participate in war. Frances described  
immediate steps young people and supportive friends and  
family can take. She urged established conscientious objec-  
tors to speak up: "Anyone who is conscientiously opposed  
to participating in any war facing them, on moral, ethical,  
philosophical or religious grounds, with the same degree of  
intensity as you would hold a religious belief, has a right  
not to be drafted. There are four questions draft boards  
have traditionally asked.

1. What do you object to about war now? What is the nature of your belief-- is your objection moral, philosophical, ethical or religious?
2. Where did those beliefs come from? What influenced you?
3. How is that objection showing up in your life?

4. Would you be willing to serve as a military medic?  
(Many would not, because the priority of military medicine  
is not to heal the wounded, but to get people back to fight-  
ing -- and killing -- as quickly as possible.)

Frances Crowe insists that young people must be clear  
about what it is about war they object to, (war now, not past  
wars). Even though no place is provided on draft registra-  
tion cards, you can write in the margin, "I am a conscien-  
tious objector." Before you mail in your registration card,  
make a copy for yourself and date that by sending it to  
yourself, signed receipt requested. Leaving it sealed in the  
envelope helps create a paper trail of your history as a con-  
scientious objector. Begin now to build a file where you  
can add poems, research papers, letters of recommenda-  
tion, notes on conversations with family, soldiers, activists  
and clergy, or the music, movies, and cultural events that  
influence you to object to war. If the draft is instituted, you  
might have as little as 30 days to prepare to go before your  
local draft board. Exploring your conscience now or dis-  
cussing your process in a group setting can support you as  
you develop clarity about your thinking and feeling.

\$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  
MVPP  
P.O. Box 573  
North Andover, MA 01845-0573

MVPP is registered with the IRS as a non-profit organization  
Contributions are tax deductible. **“2004” on your mailing label indicates that your membership is paid only through May 31, 2004. 2005 means you are paid till next year.** We currently have 123 members counting the family members within a member group, and last year, approximately one third of those members joined/renewed at higher than the basic rate.

**Depleted Uranium: Dirty Bombs, Dirty Missiles, Dirty Bullets: A death sentence here and abroad**, by Leuren Moret, author of a critical article from which the first few paragraphs follow. The entire article is found at: <http://www.mindfully.org/Nucs/2004/DU-Dirty-Bombs18aug04.htm>.

“Vietnam was a chemical war for oil, permanently contaminating large regions and countries downriver with Agent Orange, and environmentally the most devastating war in world history. But since 1991, the U.S. has staged four nuclear wars using depleted uranium weaponry, which, like Agent Orange, meets the U.S. government definition of Weapons of Mass Destruction. Vast regions in the Middle East and Central Asia have been permanently contaminated with radiation.

And what about our soldiers? Terry Jemison of the Department of Veterans Affairs reported this week to the American Free Press that “Gulf-era veterans” now on medical disability since 1991 number 518,739, with only 7,035 reported wounded in Iraq in that same 14-year period. This week [18 August, 2004] the American Free Press dropped a “dirty bomb” on the Pentagon by reporting that eight out of 20 men who served in one unit in the 2003 U.S. military offensive in Iraq now have malignancies. That means that 40 percent of the soldiers in that unit have developed malignancies in just 16 months.”

**Who Will Make Us Safer from the Biggest Threat Facing the US?** By Carah Ong, Oct. 1, 2004. Another important article, too long to publish in its entirety, which examines where President Bush and Senator Kerry stand on four key policies that would protect Americans and their families:

- Oppose creating dangerous new nuclear weapons that will lead others to follow our example.
- Ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and continue the current moratorium on nuclear testing, which are essential elements to promoting the international non-proliferation regime and protecting American security.
- Cancel funding for and plans to deploy offensive missile “defense” systems that could ignite a dangerous nuclear arms race and offer no security against terrorist weapons of mass destruction.
- Work with Russia to reduce the nuclear arsenals of both countries and ensure that nuclear weapons and materials stay out of the hands of terrorists or countries seeking to acquire nuclear capabilities.

This critical article can be found at:  
[http://www.wagingpeace.org/articles/2004/10/01\\_ong\\_who-will-make-us-safer.htm](http://www.wagingpeace.org/articles/2004/10/01_ong_who-will-make-us-safer.htm)

It is up to us voters to elect a President who will make us safer from the biggest threat facing the US.

### **Work to do before November 2**

The big push is on to say no to the present administration’s AGENDA. We must put all our effort into talking and listening to people’s worries and urge them to vote, and in fact, be available on Election Day to drive those who need assistance both in New Hampshire and Massachusetts. There is still much to do to overcome sentiments such as observed recently on a bumper sticker: “God Have Mercy, Because We Won’t.”

## Jonathan Schell

"This is the most important crisis our country has faced since the Civil War," said **Jonathan Schell** at a recent **Cape Ann Forum** in Gloucester to an overflow audience of over 100 people. Author of the seminal book, *The Fate of the Earth*, about the real possibility of nuclear annihilation, Schell stated that the agenda of the present administration is driving our country on a course of "global military superiority over the entire earth. The United States has to be so powerful that every other country can get out of the military field," adding that being the sole global police and military force "knows no parallel in American foreign policy."

Schell fears that the present agenda includes further steps against the "axis of evil"- Iran and North Korea, and a strengthening of the Patriot Act which would include a crackdown on dissidents in the United states, further eroding our civil rights, which would be easier to accomplish under a one-party control of Congress and the Judiciary, plus control of the media.

"We can have an empire or can have a republic at peace with the world. We cannot have both."

## Do's and Don'ts of Working with Congress

Source: Witness for Peace, Washington, D.C.

### Do's

- Learn members' committee assignments and their specialties
- Build a relationship with the aide(s) that handle your issue
- Relate legislation to situations in their home state
- Use voting records to ask why the member voted the way they did.
- Show openness to and knowledge of the counterarguments.
- Admit what you don't know. Offer to find out and send information back to the office. Use a variety of tactics—call, write, visit, etc.
- Build a broad-base coalition to attend meetings.
- Think long term. Your members of Congress will take notice when they realize this issue is important to their constituents.

### Don'ts

- Don't overload a congressional visit. Introduce only one or two topics per visit.
- Don't threaten, pressure, or beg or speak with a moralistic tone.
- Don't be argumentative: speak with calmness and commitment so as not to put them on the defensive.
- Don't overstate the case. Members and staff are very busy.

- Don't expect members to be specialists: their schedule and workload make them generalists.
- Don't make promises you can't keep.
- Don't leave the visit without leaving a position or fact sheet.
- Don't forget to follow up!

## Howard Zinn, *The Optimism of Uncertainty*

September 2, 2004

In this awful world where the efforts of caring people often pale in comparison to what is done by those who have power, how do I manage to stay involved and seemingly happy?

I am totally confident not that the world will get better, but that we should not give up the game before all the cards have been played. The metaphor is deliberate; life is a gamble. Not to play is to foreclose any chance of winning. To play, to act, is to create at least a possibility of changing the world.

There is a tendency to think that what we see in the present moment will continue. We forget how often we have been astonished by the sudden crumbling of institutions, by extraordinary changes in people's thoughts, by unexpected eruptions of rebellion against tyrannies, by the quick collapse of systems of power that seemed invincible.

What leaps out from the history of the past hundred years is its utter unpredictability. A revolution to overthrow the czar of Russia, in that most sluggish of semi-feudal empires, not only startled the most advanced imperial powers but took Lenin himself by surprise and sent him rushing by train to Petrograd. Who would have predicted the bizarre shifts of World War II--the Nazi-Soviet pact (those embarrassing photos of von Ribbentrop and Molotov shaking hands), and the German Army rolling through Russia, apparently invincible, causing colossal casualties, being turned back at the gates of Leningrad, on the western edge of Moscow, in the streets of Stalingrad, followed by the defeat of the German army, with Hitler huddled in his Berlin bunker, waiting to die?

And then the postwar world, taking a shape no one could have drawn in advance: The Chinese Communist revolution, the tumultuous and violent Cultural Revolution, and then another turnabout, with post-Mao China renouncing its most fervently held ideas and institutions, making overtures to the West, cuddling up to capitalist enterprise, perplexing everyone.

No one foresaw the disintegration of the old Western empires happening so quickly after the war, or the odd array of societies that would be created in the newly independent nations, from the benign village socialism of Nyerere's Tanzania to the madness of Idi Amin's adjacent

Uganda. Spain became an astonishment. I recall a veteran of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade telling me that he could not imagine Spanish Fascism being overthrown without another bloody war. But after Franco was gone, a parliamentary democracy came into being, open to Socialists, Communists, anarchists, everyone.

The end of World War II left two superpowers with their respective spheres of influence and control, vying for military and political power. Yet they were unable to control events, even in those parts of the world considered to be their respective spheres of influence. The failure of the Soviet Union to have its way in Afghanistan, its decision to withdraw after almost a decade of ugly intervention, was the most striking evidence that even the possession of thermonuclear weapons does not guarantee domination over a determined population. The United States has faced the same reality. It waged a full-scale war in Indochina, conducting the most brutal bombardment of a tiny peninsula in world history, and yet was forced to withdraw. In the headlines every day we see other instances of the failure of the presumably powerful over the presumably powerless, as in Brazil, where a grassroots movement of workers and the poor elected a new president pledged to fight destructive corporate power.

Looking at this catalogue of huge surprises, it's clear that the struggle for justice should never be abandoned because of the apparent overwhelming power of those who have the guns and the money and who seem invincible in their determination to hold on to it. That apparent power has, again and again, proved vulnerable to human qualities less measurable than bombs and dollars: moral fervor, determination, unity, organization, sacrifice, wit, ingenuity, courage, patience--whether by blacks in Alabama and South Africa, peasants in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Vietnam, or workers and intellectuals in Poland, Hungary and the Soviet Union itself. No cold calculation of the balance of power need deter people who are persuaded that their cause is just.

I have tried hard to match my friends in their pessimism about the world (is it just my friends?), but I keep encountering people who, in spite of all the evidence of terrible things happening everywhere, give me hope. Especially young people, in whom the future rests. Wherever I go, I find such people. And beyond the handful of activists there seem to be hundreds, thousands, more who are open to unorthodox ideas. But they tend not to know of one another's existence, and so, while they persist, they do so with the desperate patience of Sisyphus endlessly pushing that boulder up the mountain. I try to tell each group that it is not alone, and that the very people who are disheartened by the absence of a national movement are themselves proof of the potential for such a movement.

Revolutionary change does not come as one cataclysmic moment (beware of such moments!) but as an endless succession of surprises, moving zigzag toward a more decent society. We don't have to engage in grand, heroic actions to participate in the process of change. Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can transform the world. Even when we don't "win," there is fun and fulfillment in the fact that we have been involved, with other good people, in something worthwhile. We need hope.

An optimist isn't necessarily a blithe, slightly sappy whistler in the dark of our time. To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness. What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives. If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places--and there are so many--where people have behaved magnificently, this gives us the energy to act, and at least the possibility of sending this spinning top of a world in a different direction. And if we do act, in however small a way, we don't have to wait for some grand utopian future. The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory.

## Poem

### Prayer for Leadership

by Joan Chittister, OSB

Give us, O God,  
leaders whose hearts are large enough  
to match the breadth of our own souls  
and give us souls strong enough  
to follow leaders of vision and wisdom.

In seeking a leader, let us seek  
more than development for ourselves--  
though development we hope for--  
more than security for our own land--  
though security we need--  
more than satisfaction for our wants--  
though many things we desire.

Give us the hearts to choose the leader  
who will work with other leaders  
to bring safety  
to the whole world.

Give us leaders  
who lead this nation to virtue

without seeking to impose our kind of virtue  
on the virtue of others.

Give us a government  
that provides for the advancement  
of this country  
without taking resources from others  
to achieve it.

Give us insight enough ourselves  
to choose as leaders those who can tell  
strength from power,  
growth from greed,  
leadership from dominance,  
and real greatness from the trappings of grandiosity.

We trust you, Great God,  
to open our hearts to learn from those  
to whom you speak in different tongues  
and to respect the life and words  
of those to whom you entrusted  
the good of other parts of this globe.

We beg you, Great God,  
give us the vision as a people  
to know where global leadership truly lies,  
to pursue it diligently,  
to require it to protect human rights  
for everyone everywhere.

We ask these things, Great God,  
with minds open to your word  
and hearts that trust in your eternal care.

## Minutes: MVPP Meeting, September 28, 2004

The following were in attendance: Don Abbott, Becci Backman, Lou Bernieri, Arthur Brien, Jane Cadarette, Peter Cameron, Bobbie Goldman, Barbara Haack, Sue Imhoff, Barbara Jordan, Brenda McCarthy, Brian Quirk, Kathie Robinson, Masood Sheikh, Terry Sirois, Mary Kate Small, Jim Todd, and Mark Towner. We welcomed guests Rachel Krall, and Eddie Kuroki.

**Treasurer's Report:** Peter reported a cash balance that had grown to \$6,160.90, due to strong table sales, membership renewals, and proceeds from the September 18th benefit concert, the latter netting \$1,028.75. We again lauded Becci for her leadership in all the logistics that make our tabling efforts so successful, at both regular and special events like the Bread & Roses Festival and Groton Fest.

**Membership:** Becci reported that 69 members to date have either renewed or subscribed, largely in response to the recent mailing. Others continue to renew on a rolling basis. Tabling continues to be an effective way to promote new memberships.

**Name and Purpose of MVPP:** A motion was made and seconded to officially ratify the change of our organization's name to Merrimack Valley People for Peace, Inc., to conform with practice since 1993, and to accept our current statement of purpose, as defined in a recent letter to all members. A total of 50 affirmative votes had already been registered by proxy. Six paid members, present and not having voted by proxy, voted for the motion, bringing the total to 56 in the affirmative, well above the two-thirds required for the motion to carry. Becci, Bobbie, and Don will finalize the paperwork to file these changes with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Don reminded members that the revised by-laws, as passed by the directors in August, with "gender-free" language, will be placed on file and made available on request to any member.

**Resignations of Directors:** Bobbie announced the intention of two directors to step down, Lee Blumel and Susan Manning.

**Upcoming Activities and Events:** We reviewed logistics for upcoming activities and events, including: a.) Know Your Town, Saturday, October 2 in Andover; tabling from 10 am to 1 pm. b.) Westa Fiesta, Friday thru Sunday, October 2-4; a fundraiser for Andover Youth Services, who have invited us to be one of the select organizations to participate—our networking with young people in the area is growing stronger! c.) UFPJ Voter Education Leaflets, 10,000 arriving in first week of October; many member present agreed to assist in broadly disseminating them to peace groups, sundry organizations, and individuals. d.) Economic Forum, "Economic Justice? War and the Economy," October 19 at Memorial Hall Library in Andover, featuring Mike Prokosch; fliers are now available and publicity is underway. e.) "It's Time for Solidarity School," November 11-14, in Sandwich, MA, sponsored by UMass Labor Extension Program and Mass Jobs with Justice; highly recommended program to promote a more effective coalition among the labor and peace movements. f.) Annual Protest at the School of the Americas in Ft. Benning, Georgia, the weekend before Thanksgiving; Mary Kate is the point person.

**Other items:** a.) Becci circulated several copies of The Peace Book, by Louise Diamond, published by The Peace Company. With over 60,000 copies in circulation, this book is available at \$4.95 each. It is the intention of the author to make the book readily accessible as gifts. For more information: [www.thepeacecompany.com](http://www.thepeacecompany.com). MVPP is

considering making quantities available. b.) Brenda happily invited everyone to an Open House on Election Night, November 2, at her home in North Andover. c.) Masood graciously invited us once again to attend (as several of us did last year) a Ramadan observance at his mosque in Methuen, at a date to be announced. d.) Jane cordially invited us to come to her home in North Andover, October 16, for a late afternoon-early evening gathering to meet Stuart Leiderman, environmentalist/expert on devastated marshes in Iraq; singers are especially welcome to join their voices with Stuart's other talent in music.

**Donations:** We voted donations in the stated amounts to the following:

--\$200 to Alan Pogue, documentary photographer in Iraq, who has recently assisted bombing victims to receive health care in Texas.

--\$250 to the Association of Haitian Women, for hurricane relief.

--\$100 to the Agape Community, for their work promoting non-violence.

--\$ 75 to Andover Youth Services, to support their several youth programs.

--\$50 to Lazarus House to support their work with the homeless in Lawrence.

--We tabled for future vote our consideration of donations to the U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation and to the tapes project of the wheels of Justice Tour.

**Kudos:** A prolonged standing ovation was given to Mary Kate for her absolutely invaluable leadership on behalf of the September 18th 20th Anniversary Concert. Becci mentioned that our friends in Groton would love to have us do a reprise for their community!

**Guest Presentation:** The balance of the evening was turned over to our guest, Georgia Hollister Isman, Massachusetts Volunteer Coordinator for ACT (America Coming Together). She outlined the work of this massive voter contact program that is mobilizing voters against the agenda of the current administration, and explained ways that volunteers can help through rapid responses to the upcoming debates, canvassing, telephoning, driving to the polls, etc. Further information is available at [www.ACT4Victory.org](http://www.ACT4Victory.org).

**Next Meeting:** The next monthly meeting will be held at 7:30 pm on Tuesday, October 26.

Respectfully submitted,  
Don Abbott, Clerk

## Historical Quotes

*"You ask me about the sack of Baghdad. It was so horrible there are no words to describe it. I wish I had died earlier and not seen how the butchers destroyed these treasures of knowledge and learning. I thought I knew the world, but this holocaust is so strange and pointless, I am struck dumb."* -

A Persian Traveler's writing of Holagu's Mugol attack on Baghdad, 1258 CE

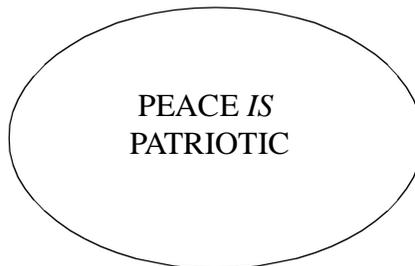
*"The Common people do not want war, but they can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. All you have to do is tell the people they have been attacked and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same in every country"*  
Herman Goering of the Third Reich



Dilenia was often interviewed at the protest against the Republican Convention in NYC.

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The MVPP Newsletter is printed monthly and has a current mailing of 120. We are grateful for suggestions, comments, and help with publication. (2004 on your mailing label indicates that your 2003-2004 dues have been paid up to May 31, 2004)  
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Newsletter Editors: Barbara Haack, Lou Bernieri, Bobbie Goldman, Brian Quirk, Arthur & Marguerite Brien

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

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White House Comment Desk: 202 456-1111  
E-mail: [president@whitehouse.gov](mailto:president@whitehouse.gov)

**Senator Edward M. Kennedy**

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2400 JFK Building, Boston MA 02203  
617 565-3170 fax: 617 565-3183  
Form: <http://kennedy.senate.gov/contact.html>

**Senator John F. Kerry**

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978 531-1669 fax: 978 531-1996  
E-mail: <http://www.house.gov/tierney/email.htm>

A link to all of **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\\_tasers/votes.htm](http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/legislative/a_three_sections_with_tasers/votes.htm)

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

**State Voting Information** Look up who you vote for:

<http://www.wheredoivotema.com/bal/myelectioninfo.php>

*Every legislator knows one letter is worth a thousand votes.*