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.

SEPTEMBER 2003

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

Thumbs Up! – Exhilarated vigilers in Andover and Lawrence have noticed a radical change in public sentiment! More people honk horns, wave, and have thumbs up in response to the messages people of peace are bringing.

MVPP Webpage – We now have our own webpage, wonderfully created by our webmaster, MVPP member Brian Quirk! Go to www.Merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org for the latest information on past and future events, regular vigils, and resources. Thanks, Brian, for a fabulous webpage!

Young Peacemakers – Twenty-three schools and churches in the Newburyport/Amesbury area are participating in a “Kids as Peacemakers” mural program, sponsored by the DOVE campaign. “We’re seeing that all religions have a natural truth or belief in peace, and we’re finding when we’re going into schools that teachers involved in resolving conflicts like this kind of idea.” – Merle Forney, project organizer.

Courage of Conscience – The Peace Abbey presented the Courage of Conscience Award to two area peace activists, Julie Esty, 92, Framingham, for her life-long work as a social worker, nuclear freeze and non-violence advocate, and for her contributions to social justice and world peace. Shelagh Foreman, Director of Mass. Peace Action, received the Award for her stalwart struggle to prevent nuclear war, and for her work to make the public aware of the looming danger of nuclear war.

Banning Nukes – On July 8, the U.S. House of Representatives approved a provision in the Defense Appropriation Act of 2004 that explicitly bans the use of any federal funds for the development, procurement, or use of nuclear-tipped interceptors in the proposed National Missile Defense System.

Court Victory – Miguel Estrada, President Bush’s top-priority right-wing judicial nominee, withdrew his name from consideration, and the President accepted his withdrawal. Estrada was the first of a number of right-wing nominees put forward by President Bush whose approval have been stalled by filibuster.
I can’t say how thrilled I am to be here tonight to celebrate with you an historic year of growth and activism for Merrimack Valley People for Peace. Since it would take too long to run through the impressive list of our activities and accomplishments, I have pulled together some highlights. As you survey it, you will notice the vast coalition of local and national peace and social justice organizations, which we partner with.

One of the outstanding themes of this year has been the need for grassroots organizations such as Merrimack Valley People for Peace to coalesce with local and regional organizations to build the political base necessary to move our agenda forward. Among our partners in this process over the last year have been the Lawrence Friends Meeting, Latinos United for Justice Committee in Lawrence, North Parish Unitarian Universalist Church, North Shore Coalition for Peace and Justice, the Andover Group, Veterans for Peace, School of America’s Watch, Greater Lowell for Peace and Justice, NH Peace Action, Merrimack Valley Greens, Leverett Peace Pagoda, Families for Peaceful Tomorrows, and Reading and Wilmington vigilers. Since we have had so many partners I know this list is incomplete. The truth is, none of us need stand alone. If we succeed it is a victory for all; if we fail, we all lose.

Tonight I want to especially recognize our MVPP members who have served as liaisons with other peace and justice groups including, but not limited to Bobbie Goldman and Barbara Haack who have attended many UJP strategy planning meetings, Barbara Haack for North Shore Coalition, Tom Gale for Veterans for Peace, John MacDougal for Greater Lowell for Peace and Justice, Henry, Don, Becci, and Lou for the Andover Group, and Dilania for the Latinos United for Justice Committee in Lawrence.

One of the many benefits of coalition building is membership growth. Wow have we grown! We now have more members with more new member growth this year than we have had in the last few years combined. We have also been able to reach a larger audience with our vigils, teach-in, peace concert, speakers, and rallies. This broader audience is reflected in greater media recognition with articles in the Salem News, North Andover Citizen, Andover Townsman, Eagle Tribune, and Boston Globe.

One of the other great celebrations of this last year is the growth of our Newsletter team. The Newsletter continues to be one of our best vehicles for membership participation and education. However it is an enormous task to keep the newsletter going. We started the year with Barbara Haack as Editor with distribution from Arthur and Margritte Brien. We are grateful for the substantial contributions of Michael Frishman, Bobbie Goldman, and Lou Bernieri. Please join me in recognizing our Newsletter Team. I would also like to recognize Jane Cadarette for her ongoing e-mail distributions.

It is now time to thank two very important people: Jacob Zar and Tom Gale. Jacob has been our Secretary for many years. We thank him for his steady attendance and meeting minutes. Tom has been our Vice President for the last two years. He was Newsletter Editor for Autumn 2001 and has been our liaison with Veterans for Peace as well as a wonderful resource for speakers. Tom & Jacob will be receiving Peace Flags in recognition of their service.

Please join me in celebrating our new officers and taskforce members.

Bobbie Goldman, our new President, has taken various leadership roles in MVPP over the last 18 years. For many years she served as our Treasurer. Lately she has been instrumental in building coalitions with UJP, recruiting new members, co-editing the Newsletter, and almost single handedly spearheading our Peace Flag project. Don Abbott, who steps in the role of Secretary, has also served as a liaison with the Andover Group and a steadfast vigiler. Becci Backman, who has stepped into the role of membership coordinator, will be helping Ed Meagher keep our membership and mailing lists up to date. Becci had also been a steadfast vigiler in Andover and Wilmington and attended some of the UJP organizational meetings.

We are living through a very scary period. The ongoing threats of domestic and international terrorism, the proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, threats to our civil rights, economic downturns, and continued environmental depredations, the weaponization of space, US withdrawal from arms treaties, and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are both threatening and discouraging for all of us. I thank you for holding out the hope for an alternate future. I thank you for working to see that future for our planet. – Katherine Robinson
Merrimack Valley People for Peace Highlights – 2002-2003

**September** – MVPP members vigil and petition at Marty Meehan’s Lawrence office

Sean Donahue reported on his second trip to Columbia, supported by MVPP.

**October** – MVPP members join NH Peace Action to protest Bush’s Iraq policy at Manchester Bush fundraiser

MVPP prepares 100 crosses for School of Americas protest thanks to Arthur Brien & Mary Kate Small

North Andover Citizen article on MVPP

**November** – MVPP’s Stone Soup fast raises $120 for Oxfam thanks to Lois Fisher & Susan Manning

MVPP members attend School of Americas protest at Fort Benning, GA, bring crosses

MVPP contributes $100 to legal defense of SOA civil disobedience participants

Salem News publishes an article about MVPP’s VP

Tom Gale’s trip to Iraq with Veterans for Peace

Lawrence Friends start weekly vigil at Shawsheen Square

MVPP joins Lawrence Friend’s Shawsheen Square Vigil

**January** – MVPP holds potluck fundraiser for UN Adopt-A-Minefield

MVPP joins United for Justice with Peace

MVPP joins North Parish UU Social Action Committee in Teach-In on Iraq

**February** – MVPP joins vigils in Lawrence and Reading

MVPP members attend NYC Iraq protest rally

MVPP featured in North Andover Citizen and Eagle Tribune articles

MVPP plans protest in response to imminent Iraq War

**March** – MVPP members join Andover candlelight vigil

MVPP members vigil at Marty Meehan’s Lawrence office

MVPP member Masood Sheikh letter protests Eagle Tribune Editorial for Iraq War

MVPP members participate in peace vigils throughout the Merrimack Valley and Boston

MVPP featured in Eagle Tribune article

MVPP members join Leverett Peace Pagoda’s Wake Up Peace/Walk for a New Spring

MVPP sends First Aid & Toiletry Kits to Iraq through AFSC

MVPP joins Boston peace rally.

MVPP member’s “clip board” for CPPAX and UJP

MVPP members hold first peace vigil in Wilmington

**April** – Boston Globe article features MVPP

MVPP and North Parish Social Action Committee hold Families for Peaceful Tomorrows concert

Five MVPP members Letters to the Editor published

**May** – MVPP and Andover Group vigil at George Bush, Sr. fundraiser at Phillip’s Academy

MVPP members lobby congressional representatives

MVPP members attend UJP conference in Boston

MVPP starts Peace Flag project

**June** – MVPP cosponsors Beverly “Too Many Guns, Not Enough Butter” with North Shore Coalition

MVPP tables at MA Democratic Issues Convention, and helps collect enough signatures for amendment against Patriot Act & pre-emptive war, which passes almost unanimously

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**MVPP Officers for 2003-2004**

*President:* Bobbie Goldman  
*Vice-President:* Kathie Robinson  
*Secretary:* Don Abbott  
*Treasurer:* Peter Cameron

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**Committees**

*Membership:* Becci Backman; Ed Meagher  
*Web page:* Brian Quirk

*Newsletter:* Barbara Haack, Bobbie Goldman, Lou Bernieri, Michael Frishman, Arthur and Marge Brien
Upcoming Events

September 20 Putting A Face on the Death Penalty, 8:30 am - 2:30 pm: Merrimack College, North Andover, Sakowich Campus Center, Murray Lounge – Paris Carriger, who spent 20 years on Death Row for a crime he did not commit will be the keynote speaker. Advance registration $20, at door $25, includes conference, lunch and parking. Make checks payable to Boston North Chapter, MCADP c/o Margaret Soli, 19 James Road, Reading, MA 01867-3757. For additional information contact Margaret Soli at 781-944-4426 or MCADP website www.mcadp.org.


September 20-October 4 Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride. Inspired by the Freedom Riders of the Civil Rights Movement, immigrant workers and allies will set out from eight major U.S. cities and cross the country in buses in late September, converging on Washington, D.C. to meet with members of Congress and traveling to New York City for a mass rally on October 4. Contact Martina Cruz 978-902-1875, Martina_M_Cruz@yahoo.com.

September 22 Seabrook Safety Alert! 7-9 pm, Nicholson Hall, 9 Harris St., Newburyport, MA – Panel discussion on safety violations at the Seabrook Nuclear Power Station. Panelists include a scientist from NY Attorney General Office, Paul Gunter from Nuclear Information and Resource Center, and a Nuclear Regulatory Commission whistleblower who is exposing a safety issue at Seabrook that agency and industry are stonewalling. Sponsored by: Citizens Within the 10-Mile Radius & Union of Concerned Scientists. For more information contact Amy Antonucci at amyla44@juno.com.

September 24 The U.S. Peace Movement: Where is it going School, First Floor Function Room, 120 Tremont Street, Boston – Mickey Edwards, Lecturer in Legislative Politics, Kennedy School, Elaine Hagopian, Professor Emerita of Sociology, Simmons College, Jeffrey Taliaferro, Asst. Professor of Political Science, Tufts Univ. Sponsored by Ford Hall Forum, www.fordhallforum.neu.edu, or call (617) 373-5800.

October 5 – 1-2 pm, Greater Newburyport WAND (Women’s Action for New Directions) invites the public to participate in the creation and dedication of A Living Memorial Garden for Peace at the Waterfront Park in Newburyport. Please come and plant a daffodil bulb with hope for a world without wars. The garden is in remembrance of our servicemen and women, as well as civilians who have died in the war in Iraq.

October 10, evening, and October 11 Empire is Not Healthy for Children and Other Living things – Simmons College, Boston. AFSC’s Peace & Economic Security program’s New England-wide peace conference designed to help us understand the task ahead. For more information www.afsc.org/pes.htm.

October 25 Mass March on Washington to Bring the Troops Home and End the Occupation of Iraq! Act Now to Stop War & End Racism (ANSWER) and United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ), are joining forces to call on all those who oppose the war, invasion and occupation of Iraq, to unite on Saturday, October 25 in Washington, D.C. The demonstration will also be a call to Fight Back Against the Patriot Act.
Minutes MVPP


Finances: Kathie reported that the MVPP balance was $2217.19, but it will amount to more after the checks that are still at the Post Office are counted. Members agreed to give Chris Doucet an honorarium of $125 plus $25 for gas for his inspiring and educational talk on the recent history of Iraq and the consequences of the US involvement with that country. We also agreed to give the church a $200 contribution for allowing us to have our meetings there. We then discussed newsletter finances. At this point about 80 people are paying annual dues, and we wondered who or which organizations should continue to receive free copies. We decided to postpone this issue until our July meeting.

We agreed to have a committee meeting to discuss improving the newsletter sometime in July. Aesthetics and density are among the issues.

Arthur volunteered to examine the telephone tree and to update the list. For those who have email addresses we could contact members just before the monthly meeting.

Events: Fourteen MVPP members attended a rainy but joyous celebration of the closing of Hispanic Week in Lawrence June 22. The Greater Lowell for Peace & Justice group invited MVPP to join them in the Lowell Fourth of July Parade. We also plan to highlight Hiroshima Day, August 6, at the regular Andover Vigil, and that morning (5:45-6:45 a.m.) at Raytheon. We may also participate in the Bread & Roses Labor Day event.

MVPP needs to have a new flier to hand out at events. A committee will work on this, plus study other possible handouts, such as providing copies of the Declaration of Human Rights, MVPP business cards, MVPP newsletter copies, lists of peace URLs, and have for sale T-shirts and peace flags.

Finally, Jane reported that Hattie Nestle hopes we will buy copies of the video “Invisible War” and send them to our Representatives, and also copies of the book Discounted Casualties, before HR 1483 is acted on. This is the Depleted Uranium Munitions Study Act of 2003, to “require certain studies regarding the health effects of exposure to depleted uranium munitions, to require the cleanup and mitigation of depleted uranium contamination at sites of depleted uranium munitions use and production in the United States, and for other purposes”.

July 22 -- Attendance: Don Abbott, Becci Backman, Lou Bernieri, Peter Cameron, Bobbie Goldman, Janice Koch, Kathy Robinson, Dilenia Rodriguez, Brian Quirk, Masood

Intelligence Failures

a.k.a. “Power Outages 2003”
Don Abbott, poetaster

1. Unilateral George W. Bush
   Eventually fell on his tush.
   His cries of deep pain
   Garnered global disdain,
   And the French exclaimed, “Fermez la bouche.”

2. Said Cheney, “Lest terror should worsen,
   We’ll pre-empt ‘em all and have war, son.”
   So, giving orders to George,
   He banked truth in a forge
   And spun words of mass distorition.

3. International law? He’d nix it.
   “I’ll do it myself,” Ipse dixit.
   And his love of imperium
   Drove him to such delirium,
   Not even Karl Rove could fix it.

4. If greatness depends on veracity
   And not on reckess audacity,
   What makes Bush the worst
   At being the first
   Is his peerless capacity for reckless mendacity.

5. When swagger Top Guns its agility,
   Its fiction belies all utility.
   Flight-suited testosterone
   Tries to one-up progesterone,
   But virility begets imbecility.

6. Quoth an unelected AWOL named Dub-ya
   To the terrorists, “Out! I shall rub-ya!
   To the world I’ll grant purity
   At no cost to security…”
   (except Constitutional amnesi-ya.)

7. Rummy’s decipherable muse plutocratic,
   Voiced by arrogance to the nth autocratic.
   With clamor for wealth
   Sanctioned by stealth,
   Makes him tone-deaf to tunes democratic.

8. The citizenry—elephants and donkeys—
   Lives in thrall to banal oligarchies.
   Our erstwhile great nation
   Now under siege, occupation…
   You see, we all are Iraqis!
**Weekly Vigils**

**Lawrence**, Saturday, 12-1:30 p.m., Broadway and Essex St., Lawrence Peace Coalition.

**Raytheon**, Route 133, Andover. Tuesday, 5:45-6:45 a.m.

**Reading**, second Saturday of the month, 11-12, Reading Square, Reading People for Peace.

**Andover**, Sunday, Noon-1, Shawsheen Square, Routes 133 and 28.

**Andover**, Mon, Wed, Fri, 7-8 p.m., Sat, 10:00-noon, Old Town Hall, Main St., Lou Bernieri 978-475-6847

MVPP is selling brightly colored peace flags from Italy! The flags are flying to great curiosity and interest at weekly vigils in Andover, Lawrence, Reading and Wilmington. The price is $10.00 plus any voluntary contribution for MVPP. Contact Bobbie at bg@attbi.com to find out how you, too, can be proud owner of a peace flag!

Sheikh, Mary Kate Small, Boryana Tacconi, and Jacob Zar.

Peter Cameron reported a current balance of $2,698.45.

Re. membership, Becci Backman reported that she had completed the task of cross-referencing membership and treasurer’s records. Renewals are beginning to be registered for those due at this point in the annual cycle. There currently is a newsletter mailing list of approximately 205-210, including more than 25 libraries, organizations, and elected officials. Within this overall group, approximately 80-85 rare paid memberships. The newsletter list is under continuing review.

Brian Quirk gave an update on the development of our web page, which now includes pages with news about our weekly vigils and resource links. We briefly discussed the advisability of securing the volunteer work of an editor or a small committee to oversee policy for the development and updating of web site postings. We referred this matter to the agenda of our monthly meeting in August.

Sales of peace flags, including the order of 110 new ones, continue to go well. We voted to allocate $700 for the purchase of an additional 100 flags, which are currently available at the same rate of $7.00/each, to be sold for $10.00/each. We are also testing interest in the sale of Earth Flags (cost, $11.50/each; sale, $15.00/each).

We discussed and developed plans for a Vigil commemorating Hiroshima Day, to be held on Wednesday, August 6 from 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM in front of Old Town Hall in Andover. There was broad volunteer support to handle specific details for posters, publicity, press releases and media coverage, amplification, program, notification of the Town Offices, handouts, sales items, etc. We envision an “open-mike program”, moderated informally by Don Abbott, for individuals to share poetry, stories, personal reflections, music, and periods of silence. Handouts will include information about the work and mission of MVPP and how to become a member (prepared wonderfully by Becci), the flier about the Andover vigils, and information about the origami cranes and Hiroshima. Sale items will include flags, books on depleted uranium weapons, and buttons and bumper stickers as available, etc. The program will round out with tolling of a bell and bagpipe music (thanks to Brian).

Plans for future newsletters were briefly discussed and will be placed on the agenda of our monthly meeting in August. A newsletter team in formation, consisting of Barbara Haack, Bobbie Goldman, Michael Frishman, Lou Bernieri, and Brian Quirk, will meet for follow-up.

We briefly discussed the Circle of Hope event being planned in Lowell on Sept. 10, but no action was taken.

We discussed having a booth at the Bread and Roses Festival on Labor Day, and we voted $25 to support this effort. A draft of a phone tree was reviewed and will be refined further by Becci and Bobbie. Bobbie circulated a current e-mail list for many members.

Discussion of an MVPP Banner was deferred to the August meeting.

We authorized up to $100 to be spent by Bobbie for sale items, bumper stickers and buttons.

We authorized $100 to be spent by Becci for additional books on depleted uranium weapons, for sale at the Hiroshima Vigil.

We authorized $100.00 to support the film project of Tom Jackson and the work of Jane Bernhardt ($50.00 to each).

Respectfully submitted, Don Abbott, Secretary

**August 26** -- Members present: Don Abbott, Becci Backman, Lou Bernieri, Arthur Brien, Peter Cameron, Jose Cruz, Martina Cruz, Angela Galen, Ralph Galen, Bobbie Goldman, Barbara Haack, Henry Misserville, Kathie Robinson, Dilenia Rodriguez, Mary Kate Small, Boryana Tacconi, Jacob Zar.

We were pleased to welcome the new minister of the Universalist Unitarian Congregation in Andover, Ralph Galen, and his daughter, Angela.

Peter reported a current balance of $2,238.31.

Re. memberships, Becci reported that we have 49 members (5 new) who are paid for 2004, with 44 more to be renewed. There remain approximately 90 more names on the mailing list, not counting approximately 25 local and state...
leaders who receive complimentary copies. All unpaid members will receive the next issue of the newsletter with a final reminder that they need to renew to continue to receive future copies. Kathie and Barbara will review the total list to determine who should receive a personal call to remain with us.

The Newsletter Team (Barbara, Bobbie, Lou, and Michael) had met for the hour previous to this meeting, and they reported that they are well organized for the production of the next newsletter.

Bobbie displayed sale items that she has procured for sale—especially new buttons, bumper stickers, and postcards. We decided to sell buttons and post cards at $1 each and bumper stickers at $2 each. We have a good supply of Peace Flags (at least 100), which continue to sell well, and a limited supply of Earth Flags and the book about the use of depleted uranium in weaponry, Discounted Casualties.

Members reported that the Hiroshima Vigil on August 6 was successful and very moving.

Bobbie and Lou reported on the recent UJP monthly brunch meeting of August 24. Members are urged to choose among future dates to accompany Bobbie to these very important networking and planning sessions from 10:30 am to 1:30 pm on the following Sundays: 9/21, 10/26, 11/23. Because Bobbie has a schedule conflict on 10/26, we definitely need members to go in her stead on that date.

Barbara reported briefly on her participation with other regional groups, the North Shore Coalition for Peace and Justice in Ipswich and the Women’s Action for New Development (WAND) in Newburyport. The latter is planning to dedicate a special Peace Garden October 5, Waterfront Park at 1:30 pm. Members will be encouraged to attend. Barbara serves a vital liaison function among all of us!

We finalized plans for our participation in the Bread and Roses Labor Day Heritage Festival, with Becci volunteering as coordinator, and we began to plan for a Circle of Hope Vigil in Andover on September 10, the eve of the second anniversary of 9/11, with Don as coordinator.

Jose and Martina presented plans for participation on October 4 in the Freedom Ride for Immigrant Workers in New York. Several members expressed interest either in attending or in contributing to defray the costs, and we voted to support the participation of four residents of Lawrence with a contribution of $140.

Bobbie shared information about a number of other upcoming concerts, teach-ins, and forums. Mary Kate announced that on the weekend of January 23, 2004, the People’s Music Network for Songs of Freedom and Struggle will meet in Lawrence and sponsor a number of events, including a concert featuring Pete Seeger.

We closed the meeting with brief discussion of future program ideas. Don volunteered to host an open discussion on the subject following the regular Andover Vigil on August 27. Members felt the need soon to form a Program Subcommittee to spearhead a more focused effort at education both for ourselves and the community.

Respectfully submitted, Don Abbott, Secretary

“Great is the guilt of an unnecessary war”
President John Adams
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.)

**MVPP President: Bobbie Goldman  Vice President: Katherine Robinson**

Newsletter Editors: Barbara Haack, Michael Frishman, Bobbie Goldman, Lou Bernieri, Arthur & Marguerite Brien

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**CALL AND WRITE YOUR REPRESENTATIVE AND SENATORS AND MAKE YOUR VIEWS KNOWN**

*Everyone knows one picture is worth 1,000 words.*
*Every legislator knows one letter is worth 1,000 votes.*

**Senator Edward M. Kennedy**
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202-224-4543  fax: 202-224-2417
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617-565-3170  fax 617-565-3183
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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

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If your address label does not have “2004” on it, this newsletter will be the last one you receive. We hope you will decide to continue supporting MVPP; we don’t want to lose you.

**Please renew your membership today!**