



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.

April 2005

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

Compiled with the help of Boryana Tacconi

The legendary "John the Jogger" returned to Andover in March and stood with his vigiling friends! The saga about him is almost too much to fathom. He immediately nicknamed us "Saddam's Glee Club." Then, from March to November 2003, he heaped almost daily verbal abuse, often of the very worst kind, on Andover vigilers. But after 8 months, he began to soften his tone, even stop and engage in civil chat. Many of us were skeptical and refused to believe that real change was happening. He said he would even stand with us some day. Lou vowed that he would go back to church if John ever held one of our flags with us. Then, in January 2004, John left town, never to be seen again...until he was sighted on the sidewalk one Sunday noon just a few weeks ago. A joyful reunion ensued, and he came straightway to Shawsheen Square to be greeted by the Sunday vigilers. The historic moment was captured on film. John, who now lives in Boston, has vowed to come back again soon and take "his gang" out for coffee. As G. K. Chesterton said, "The most incredible thing about miracles is that they happen." Now, we just have to be sure Lou goes to church...at least once.



John, standing center, with "his gang."

50 Vermont town meetings voted on March 1 to pass Iraq War Resolutions calling on the President and the Congress to take steps to withdraw American troops from Iraq. The campaign to get those resolutions on town meeting agendas was spearheaded by the Vermont Network on Iraq War Resolutions, Green Mountain Veterans for Peace, and the Vermont Chapter of Military Families Speak Out. It was part of a new effort by anti-war activists to take the debate over the war to a distinctly local level.

"There is nothing more quintessentially local than war, and the local connection is the National Guard," said Ben Scotch, a former director of the Vermont American Civil Liberties Union who helped draft the model resolution for the town meetings. "We need these people here. They are family, they are friends, they are workers down the street. They make up the fabric of society in Vermont. Discussions over the appropriateness of their use in the war need to start in our own communities."

Activists hope the Vermont resolution campaign will spread nationwide. Already, Amherst, MA, – where city council meetings routinely begin by reading aloud the names of Iraqis and US soldiers who have died in the war – and Arcata, CA, have passed "Bring the Troops Home" resolutions.

The Supreme Court bars the death penalty for juveniles.

The landmark decision came in a 5 to 4 ruling on March 1 declaring that the execution of juveniles violates the Eighth Amendment's ban on cruel and unusual punishment. It throws out the death sentences of about 70 juvenile murderers and bars states from seeking to execute minors for future crimes. The ruling cited the overwhelming weight of international opinion in banning death penalty for those under 18. It was noted that the U.S. was the only country in the world that still officially permitted the executions of juveniles.

Tomato pickers from Florida claimed victory in a four-year campaign against Taco Bell. *The Coalition of the Immokalee Workers (CIW)* recently called off a four-year, national boycott of Taco Bell they had waged since 2001, after the fast food giant

MVPP Monthly Meeting – North Parish Church – Tuesday, April 26, 2005, 7:30 PM

Printed on recycled paper <http://www.merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org>

Weekly Vigils

Andover: Sunday, noon-1 pm; Shawsheen Square, Junction of Routes 133 and 28; Lawrence Friends Meeting/ Shawsheen Peace Witness; Allan Sifferlen, asifferlen@sbra.com.

Andover: Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 7-8 pm; Saturday, 10:45 am-noon (in good weather, 10-noon); Old Town Hall, 20 Main St.; Merrimack Valley People for Peace; Lou Bernieri, lbernieri@andover.edu.

Andover: Tuesday, 6:30-7:30 am; in front of Raytheon plant near Routes 133 and 93; Raytheon Peacemakers; Arthur Brien, 978-686-4418.

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 Route 133).

Lawrence: Saturday, noon-1 pm; Broadway and Essex Streets; Lawrence Peace Coalition; Martina Cruz, martina_m_cruz@yahoo.com.

Marblehead: Wednesday, 5-7 pm; at the Peace Pole, Memorial Park (by the YMCA); Tom Gale, 781-631-1218.

Newburyport: Sunday, noon-1 pm; Market Square; Niki Rosen, 978-463-3208.

Reading: 2nd Saturday/each month, 11 am-noon; Reading Square; Reading People for Peace; Bob Connor, bobconnor1@yahoo.com.

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

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

Salem, NH: Saturday, 12:30-1:30 pm; at corner of Routes 28 and 97; Henry Misserville, 978-470-0663.

You can buy Rainbow Peace Flags, buttons, bumperstickers, etc. at Saturday vigils in Andover.

agreed to increase wages for tomato pickers by an extra penny per pound and to improve their working conditions. The average salary of farm workers picking tomatoes amounts to \$7,500 a year, well below the poverty line. There also have been many reports of systematic mistreatment in the fields, even including cases of alleged slavery in the Florida agricultural system with over 1,000 workers being held captive.

After years of organizing against growers and ranchers, including general strikes, hunger strikes, and a 230-mile protest march through the state, the migrant workers of CIW in 2001 launched a boycott against Taco Bell, the largest purchaser of Florida tomatoes. The engagement of students nationwide then became critical to the positive effective pressure of their campaign. The CIW cause was joined by the Student Farmworker Alliance through which 22 colleges and high schools (among them the University of Chicago, UCLA, Notre Dame, Cal State San Bernardino, and UT Austin) successfully managed either to remove or block a Taco Bell franchise from their campus. The victory over Taco Bell is one of the biggest labor victories in years and organizers see it as a first step to change the agriculture industry and "to make fast food into fair food."

Staff Sergeant Camilo Mejia has been honored by the Peace Abbey in Sherborn, MA, with the Courage of Conscience Award, presented to him on March 15. The first American veteran of the Iraq War to publicly refuse further military service, Mejia was released from prison on February 15, after having served most of a one-year term at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma. He had applied for the status of conscientious objector, citing moral reasons and misgivings about the legality of the war and the conduct of U.S. troops toward Iraqi civilians and prisoners.

The Courage of Conscience Award is presented each year by the Peace Abbey out of its desire to promote the causes of peace and justice, nonviolence and love. Past recipients include Thich Nhat Hanh, Mother Teresa, Daniel Berrigan, Kathy Kelly, William Sloane Coffin, OXFAM, and September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows, among many others. Mejia is the first of a growing courageous handful of active military who have publicly stated their opposition to the Iraq War and declared themselves ready to face the consequences.

Congressmen Meehan and Tierney were among the six members of the Massachusetts delegation who recently voted against the emergency supplemental appropriation of \$80 billion to fund the ongoing military occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. They were among 43 courageous colleagues in Congress who voted not to fund these wars and occupations. It is heartening to see them register such votes, especially since a month earlier, there was not a single Massachusetts congressman who had come out against this funding bill. We need to thank them all and then keep applying our pressure to help them and others build the momentum to end these operations.

In mid-March, students around the country launched a national week of counter-recruitment protests to mark the second anniversary of the Iraq invasion. In Hunter College, New York, the Campus Anti-war Network staged a protest at a career fair featuring military recruiters. Counter-recruitment protests were held at City College in New York, San Francisco State University, and the University of Wisconsin in Madison. As the militarization of youth becomes a more prominent issue in schools, colleges, and communities, we can expect student voices of resistance to grow.

Anti-War protests were held in more than 800 cities and towns across the country on the March 19-20 weekend to mark the second anniversary of the Iraq invasion. According to United for Peace and Justice, this is more than twice the number of events that took place a year ago to mark the first anniversary of the war. MVPP members took part in the rally and march in New York on March 19 and the Boston rally on March 20 (see p. 5). The regular, two-hour Saturday vigil in front of the Old Town Hall in Andover was attended by about 25 participants and was featured in the Sunday Eagle-Tribune. Barbara Haack reported a turnout of over 30 people in Newburyport both on Saturday and Sunday, with signs, flags, music and cheering honking horns!

A prominent feature of many of the March 19-20 protests was the courageous witness of growing numbers of veterans and military families. Two examples among many: 1.) the public statement at http://www.truthout.org/docs_2005/032105Y.shtml by the Iraq Veterans against the War and 2.) the video footage at http://www.truthout.org/docs_2005/031805A.shtml covering the protest at Ft. Bragg in Fayetteville,

NC, attended by at least 4,000, the largest demonstration ever in that location. The increasing witness of the military in public protest may be signaling a turning point in resistance to the current war. It is significant when people in our armed forces tell the administration that it no longer has legitimacy.

Palestinian filmmaker Hanna Elias is dubbing Richard Attleborough's 1982 film "Gandhi" into Arabic with the intention of bringing Mahatma Gandhi's message of non-violence to Palestinian, Syrian, and other Arab audiences in their own language. Elias feels that these audiences can relate to the film and find many parallels to contemporary conditions: e.g. occupation of one country by another country and relations between Muslims and non-Muslims. "When Palestinians see this film," Elias says, "they will understand that it is a two-way street. Because when you see 'Gandhi,' you can not escape to see that violence hurts both sides and it comes from both sides." Hanna Elias also wrote and directed "The Olive Harvest," a West Bank love story that he filmed with a Palestinian cast and an Israeli crew.

Students at Swarthmore College (PA) have created the Genocide Intervention Fund (GIF) to help end the genocide in Darfur, Sudan. GIF is a tax-exempt fund designed to support African Union peacekeepers in Darfur—the UN-supported peacekeepers providing security on the ground for the people of this region. It has already received overwhelming public support from elected officials and policy experts. Beginning on April 6, the GIF will launch the "100 Days of Action Campaign," a grassroots campaign to raise \$100,000 and to facilitate the writing of 10,000 letters to government officials urging them to take action to stop genocide in Darfur. Colleges, universities, religious organizations, schools, and individuals are urged to participate. Any MVPP members who wish to do so, should go to <http://www.genocideinterventionfund.org/>.

A heavy wet snowfall on March 12th couldn't keep hearty souls from attending "Swing, Sing, Sway, and Speak for Peace"-- a wonderful event organized by Mary and Jim Todd and sponsored by MVPP at the First United Methodist Church. Our wonderful DJs, Jim Todd and Patti Coffill, guided us through an evening in which the joy of music, dance, laughter and being together was intertwined with the seriousness of the purposes that bring us together.

Mary and Jim had put together an excellent program of heart-warming recordings, ranging from such symbols of the peace and justice movement as "We Shall Overcome" to less known pieces that everyone enjoyed dancing to. Mary Kate Small shared a recording of a recently deceased friend and fellow songwriter, Jolie Rickman.

And we had live music too! Brian Quirk was right there with his bagpipes, and so were "The Curbside Singers" with a sing-along program of "homemade" songs by Mary and Jim, Don Abbott, and Boryana Tacconi. A rich collection of various percussion instruments (where did you find all these treasures, Mary and Jim?) was used with much delight by everyone present. And who could ever forget Arthur Brien as leader of the dancing line! Towards the end of the evening everyone joined in singing a spirited "Happy Birthday" to Betsy Abbott. Thank you, Mary and Jim, for this great evening, and thanks to all who came.

A fierce student campaign on behalf of Fenway High School math teacher Obain Attouoman won him permission to stay in the United States until at least 2007. Attouoman, a US resident since 1992, had been fighting to stay in the country since he missed an immigration hearing in 2001 because of misreading the handwritten date on the official letter. A judge ordered him deported back to his native Ivory Coast from which he had fled to escape political persecution. He lost an appeal, was held for several months in Suffolk County Jail on a deportation warrant, and released in March 2004 after a rally drew hundreds of supporters.

His students and colleagues started a furious lobbying campaign, writing letters, making phone calls, setting up a petition, and sending a delegation of six students and two adults to Washington. Their efforts reached out to a broad public and to politicians including Gov. Romney and Senator Kerry. A Senate subcommittee stopped Attouoman's scheduled deportation by requesting a formal background report from the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The move came at the request of John Kerry, who introduced legislation that would allow Attouoman to stay in the United States.

The passion and maturity that the Fenway High School students put into the struggle to keep their beloved teacher impressed all of us who signed the petition or followed the story. "It's just an incredible feeling," said Attouoman after hearing the good news, "to have children express such a high sense of responsibility."

What Can I Do?

"Changing Minds, One at a Time" by Howard Zinn
published in *The Progressive*, March 2005

As I write this, the day after the inauguration, the banner headline in The New York Times reads: "BUSH, AT 2ND INAUGURAL, SAYS SPREAD OF LIBERTY IS THE 'CALLING OF OUR TIME.'"

Two days earlier, on an inside page of the Times, was a photo of a little girl, crouching, covered with blood, weeping. The caption read: "An Iraqi girl screamed yesterday after her parents were killed when American soldiers fired on their car when it failed to stop, despite warning shots, in Tal Afar, Iraq. The military is investigating the incident."

Today, there is a large photo in the Times of young people cheering the President as his entourage moves down Pennsylvania Avenue. They do not look very different from the young people shown in another part of the paper, along another part of Pennsylvania Avenue, protesting the inauguration.

I doubt that those young people cheering Bush saw the photo of the little girl. And even if they did, would it occur to them to juxtapose that photo to the words of George Bush about spreading liberty around the world?

That question leads me to a larger one, which I suspect most of us have pondered: What does it take to bring a turnaround in social consciousness--from being a racist to being in favor of racial equality, from being in favor of Bush's tax program to being against it, from being in favor of the war in Iraq to being against it? We desperately want an answer, because we know that the future of the human race depends on a radical change in social consciousness.

It seems to me that we need not engage in some fancy psychological experiment to learn the answer, but rather to look at ourselves and to talk to our friends. We then see, though it is unsettling, that we were not born critical of existing society. There was a moment in our lives (or a month, or a year) when certain facts appeared before us, startled us, and then caused us to question beliefs that were strongly fixed in our consciousness--embedded there by years of family prejudices, orthodox schooling, imbibing of newspapers, radio, and television.

This would seem to lead to a simple conclusion: that we all have an enormous responsibility to bring to the attention of others information they do not have, which has the potential of causing them to rethink long-held ideas. It is so simple a thought that it is easily overlooked as we search, desperate in the face of war and apparently immovable power in ruthless hands, for some magical formula, some secret strategy to bring peace and justice to the land and to the world.

"What can I do?" The question is thrust at me again and again as if I possessed some mysterious solution unknown to others. The odd thing is that the question may be posed by someone sitting in an audience of a thousand people, whose very presence there is an instance of information being imparted which, if passed on, could have dramatic consequences. The answer then is as obvious and profound as the Buddhist mantra that says: "Look for the truth exactly on the spot where you stand."

Yes, thinking of the young people holding up the pro-Bush signs at the inauguration, there are those who will not be budged by new information. They will be shown the bloodied little girl whose parents have been killed by an American weapon, and find all sorts of reasons to dismiss it: "Accidents happen. . . . This was an aberration. . . . It is an unfortunate price of liberating a nation," and so on.

There is a hard core of people in the United States who will not be moved, whatever facts you present, from their conviction that this nation means only to do good, and almost always does good, in the world, that it is the beacon of liberty and freedom (words used forty-two times in Bush's inauguration speech). But that core is a minority, as is that core of people who carried signs of protest at the inauguration.

In between those two minorities stand a huge number of Americans who have been brought up to believe in the beneficence of our nation, who find it hard to believe otherwise, but who can rethink their beliefs when presented with information new to them.

Is that not the history of social movements?

There was a hard core of people in this country who believed in the institution of slavery. Between the 1830s, when a tiny group of Abolitionists began their agitation, and the 1850s, when disobedience of the fugitive slave acts reached their height, the Northern public, at first ready to do violence to the agitators, now embraced their cause. What happened in those years? The reality of slavery, its cruelty, as well as the heroism of its resisters, was made evident to Americans through the speeches and writings of the Abolitionists, the testimony of escaped slaves, the presence of magnificent black witnesses like Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman.

Something similar happened during those years of the Southern black movement, starting with the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the sit-ins, the Freedom Rides, the marches. White people--not only in the North, but also in the South--were startled into an awareness of the long history of humiliation of millions of people who had been invisible and who now demanded their rights.

When the Vietnam War began, two-thirds of the American public supported the war. A few years later, two-thirds opposed the war. While some remained adamantly pro-war, one-third of the population had learned things that overthrew previously held ideas about the essential goodness of the American intervention in Vietnam. The human consequences of the fierce bombing campaigns, the "search and destroy" missions, became clear in the image of the naked young girl, her skin shredded by napalm, running down a road; the women and children huddled in the trenches in My Lai with soldiers pouring rifle fire onto them; Marines setting fire to peasant huts while the occupants stood by, weeping.

Those images made it impossible for most Americans to believe President Johnson when he said we were fighting for the freedom of the Vietnamese people, that it was all worthwhile because it was part of the worldwide struggle against Communism.

In his inauguration speech, and indeed, through all four years of his presidency, George Bush has insisted that our violence in Afghanistan and Iraq has been in the interest of freedom and democracy, and essential to the "war on terrorism." When the war on Iraq began almost two years ago, about three-fourths of Americans supported the war. Today, the public opinion polls show that at least half of the citizenry believes it was wrong to go to war.

What has happened in these two years is clear: a steady erosion of support for the war, as the public has become more and more aware that the Iraqi people, who were supposed to greet the U.S. troops with flowers, are overwhelmingly opposed to the occupation. Despite the reluctance of the major media to show the frightful toll of the war on Iraqi men, women, children, or to show U.S. soldiers with amputated limbs, enough of those images have broken through, joined by the grimly rising death toll, to have an effect.

But there is still a large pool of Americans, beyond the hard-core minority who will not be dissuaded by any facts (and it would be a waste of energy to make them the object of our attention), who are open to change. For them, it would be important to measure Bush's grandiose inaugural talk about the "spread of liberty" against the historical record of American expansion.

It is a challenge not just for the teachers of the young to give them information they will not get in the standard textbooks, but for everyone else who has an opportunity to speak to friends and neighbors and work associates, to write letters to newspapers, to call in on talk shows.

The history is powerful: the story of the lies and massacres that accompanied our national expansion, first across the continent victimizing Native Americans, then overseas as we left death and destruction in our wake in Cuba, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and especially the Philippines. The long occupations of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, the repeated dispatch of Marines into Central America, the deaths of millions of Koreans and Vietnamese,

none of them resulting in democracy and liberty for those people.

Add to all that the toll of the American young, especially the poor, black and white, a toll measured not only by the corpses and the amputated limbs, but the damaged minds and corrupted sensibilities that result from war.

Those truths make their way, against all obstacles, and break down the credibility of the warmakers, juxtaposing what reality teaches against the rhetoric of inaugural addresses and White House briefings. The work of a movement is to enhance that learning, make clear the disconnect between the rhetoric of "liberty" and the photo of a bloodied little girl, weeping.

And also to go beyond the depiction of past and present, and suggest an alternative to the paths of greed and violence. All through history, people working for change have been inspired by visions of a different world. It is possible, here in the United States, to point to our enormous wealth and suggest how, once not wasted on war or siphoned off to the super-rich, that wealth can make possible a truly just society.

The juxtapositions wait to be made. The recent disaster in Asia, alongside the millions dying of AIDS in Africa, next to the \$500 billion military budget, cry out for justice. The words of people from all over the world gathered year after year in Porto Alegre, Brazil, and other places--"a new world is possible"--point to a time when national boundaries are erased, when the natural riches of the world are used for everyone.

The false promises of the rich and powerful about "spreading liberty" can be fulfilled, not by them, but by the concerted effort of us all, as the truth comes out, and our numbers grow.

Recent Events

March 20th Rally in Boston Common: Protest to End the U.S. Occupation of Iraq. MVPP members join large and diverse mix of veterans and military, youth, labor, and regional peace and justice groups.

Reported by Don Abbott

On the first day of Spring and the second day of the third year of the Iraq War and Occupation, close to 20 of our members stood in solidarity with three to four thousand protesters in Boston Common. The gathering was notable for its numbers of veterans and military families and its diversity across racial, generational, and ideological lines. For close to three hours, young leaders of Boston Mobilization introduced speakers, poets, and performers who voiced a loud and often spirited demand for the U.S. to bring our troops home now and to begin to use our resources for programs of social and economic justice at home and abroad. Among the highlights were brief testimonies by veterans and military families, plus moving speeches by Howard Zinn and long-time MVPP member, John Schuchardt.

Zinn, ever the historian with a long, wise, and penetrating view, reminded us that the tide turned during the Viet Nam War when American citizens, often led by the military and veterans, told their government that it had lost its claim to legitimacy. So too, he proclaimed, the occupation of Iraq will end, followed by the work to end the "occupation" of America by corporate-military power.

Schuchardt, ex-Marine, lawyer, Plowshares activist, and co-founder of House of Peace in Ipswich, spoke eloquently on behalf of Veterans for Peace, of which he is a member. Afterwards, he graciously agreed to let us print his comments in full:

"Veterans for Peace proclaims what blind leaders deny: War is the problem, never the solution!"

"My generation was force-fed the propaganda of Anti-Communism and given short time to make hard decisions about Viet Nam. 58,000 of us came home in body bags. Countless thousands, shattered in mind and spirit, never found their way home.

"The Cold War ended and Clinton and Bush declared Anti-Terrorism to be the future.

"But I look out and see the rich in power and the poor in prison. I see white faces of a new globalism that looks like the old colonialism. I see a Wall Street so dependent upon war it needs enemies and will sacrifice friends.

"I've seen this bright, shining lie before. To the men and women in uniform I say, don't bear the shame and don't die for a lie. Once again, America is on the wrong side of the law, the wrong side of history. Once again, America is bringing ruin at home and death and destruction abroad.

"Modern war is war against civilians, especially against women and children. It's time to take the glory out of war. When these masters of War use ruthless technology to terrorize, bomb, and burn women and children, it is cruel, criminal and cowardly. We desperately need new ways, men and women together, to address War as the Pre-eminent gender issue of all time. We have got to heal our culture of violence and make gentle this world of male domination and aggression.

"I tremble for our children and our children's children in a Paranoid Nuclear America that threatens to undo the works of Genesis.

"Don't let the Pied Pipers of Patriotism do to your generation what they did to mine! The War on Communism was an insane fraud that forced humanity to the brink of self-destruction. Don't let the demonic hysteria of the War on Terrorism finish the job.

"When leaders proclaim threats a virtue and negotiation a vice, when they know all about torture and nothing about human dignity, when they glorify death and destroy life, when they want the pleasure, privilege and profit and make others suffer the pain, it is time to cry out.

"It's time to Come Home America! At long last, come home. End the nightmare of war, build the dream. Feed the hungry. Comfort the broken-hearted. Let the prisoners go free! Act with malice towards none and mercy towards all!"

"Abolish War! Another world is possible!"

-John Schuchardt

Priorities for Action

Opposing the Construction of B.U.'s Bio-Lab

Reported by Don Abbott

Plans move ahead for Boston University to build at the border of Roxbury and South Boston a highly controversial and potentially dangerous facility for research on biological weapons. Depending on one's perspective, it is known as a "BioSafety Level 4 Lab" or a "Bio-weapons Lab." UJP and others have placed high priority on opposing the construction of this lab.

The following article related to this issue appeared on the op-ed page of The Boston Globe on February 23, 2005. Co-author, Prasannan Parthasarathi, met with several MVPP members on March 6 in North Andover to present detailed information on this issue and to engage our help. On March 31, Becci Backman and Don Abbott attended a house party on the issue in Newton sponsored by Boston Mobilization.

State Representative Gloria Fox of Roxbury has introduced a very important bill: "An Act to Protect the Public Health and Environment from Toxic Biological Agents," HD# 4249. This critical bill, which is gaining support, addresses one of the most alarming facts about this issue--there are NO federal or state regulations for BSL4 laboratories! The legislation would create a regulatory program for BSL4 labs and full transparency for their work, thus preventing the creation and proliferation of clandestine bio-weapons projects.

At the urging of MVPP members, State Representative Barbara l'Italien and State Senator Sue Tucker have both co-sponsored this bill. We ask all members to follow this issue closely and to let our reps and senators know that we expect them to support this legislation.

The lure of bio-weapons

by Bernard Lown and Prasannan Parthasarathi; The Boston Globe, February 23, 2005

Boston has long been a world leader in medical research -- home to seminal discoveries that have cured lethal diseases, prolonged life, and revolutionized the very practice of medicine. But Boston University's plan to construct a high security laboratory known as BioSafety Level Four will diverge from that tradition. By undertaking research on biological weapons, the lab will be a source of new and highly dangerous pathogens.

Supporters of the laboratory argue that its activities will be devoted exclusively to defensive research on biological weapons. The Pentagon has stated that its goal is to develop genetically engineered biological weapons in order to discover defenses against them. These inevitably will have offensive capabilities.

Testimony before the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission exposed the porous boundary between offensive and defensive biological weapons research. During the apartheid era, leading physicians and scientists were persuaded to join a burgeoning biological weapons program on the grounds that they were undertaking only defensive research. In top-secret laboratories, the government also funded research on biological weapons for offensive purposes. The findings of the so-called

defensive laboratories were channeled to the scientists doing the dirty work.

Security from the threat of biological weapons depends on sound international agreements to ban such weapons along with enforceable mechanisms for monitoring and compliance. Indeed President Nixon in 1969 unilaterally and unconditionally renounced biological weapons and scrapped the US research program on the grounds that "mankind already carries in its hands too many of the seeds of its own destruction."

Six years later under US leadership, the Biological Weapons Convention, a landmark among weapons control treaties, was ratified by more than 145 countries. Such wisdom is no longer in evidence.

The irony is that the US government is now heading in the opposite direction.

The widely recognized weakness of the Biological Weapons Convention in preventing proliferation led in 1995 to negotiations for a new protocol.

After several years of intense international talks, a new strengthened protocol was agreed upon, but the Bush administration rejected a binding treaty approach and ended the negotiations.

This unilateral action has been interpreted as an abrogation of the treaty and as a prelude to a US secret research program on offensive bio-weapons. National security is to be achieved through military superiority and technological dominance.

A key lesson of the tragic 9/11 experience is thereby forgotten. All the advanced offensive weapons the Pentagon had amassed, at a cost of many trillions of dollars, were overcome by terrorists armed with simple box cutters. Also forgotten is that the first significant bio-terror attack in the United States likely emerged from a weapons facility such as the one now being planned in Boston. There is ample evidence that the anthrax in the letters mailed to Congress and elsewhere came from the Army biological weapons laboratory at Fort Detrick, Md.

The unilateralist policies being now pursued by our government will surely unleash global proliferation. Are we ready to become accomplices in a sordid biological weapons race? Are we willing thereby to tarnish the good name of our city?

Bernard Lown, who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1985, is professor emeritus at the Harvard School of Public Health. Prasannan Parthasarathi is associate professor of history at Boston College.

Resisting the Militarization of Youth

Reported by Mary Todd

On March 13, Bobbie Goldman and Mary Todd attended the most recent in a series of regional strategy sessions on how to resist the continuing militarization of youth. The meeting was held in Lowell and hosted by Greater Lowell for Peace and Justice. MVPP is part of a Boston area UJP task group working on anti-military recruitment in public schools, colleges, and universities. The group will develop action plans and resources for local groups to use. Plans will include getting equal time when military recruiters come to high schools; identifying ways to involve both high school and college students; informing school personnel, teachers, and parents about the aspect of the No Child

To continue to receive this newsletter... **We Invite You to Join /Rejoin Us**

\$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 01845-0573

MVPP is registered with the IRS as a non-profit organization. MVPP 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 May 2005.** We now have more than 100, counting family members within a member group. Last year, approximately one third of those members joined/renewed at higher than the basic rate.

Left Behind Act that requires schools to provide names and addresses of all students unless they opt out. (Many principals and superintendents are uninformed about their obligation to inform parents of the opt-out. Parents and students are also uninformed.) As a group, we also need to educate ourselves about No Child Left Behind, our rights to access on sidewalks and property near schools (hand-billing rights, etc.), and the 9th Circuit Court ruling granting equal access (i.e. when the military comes to your local high school, you have a legal right to give students an opposing view). Some local groups, notably Dorchester People for Peace, have had successes in high schools and are sharing what works in their community. Other groups have had less success and the group discussed obstacles they face in getting into schools.

For these meeting, MVVP joins Greater Lowell for peace and Justice, Dorchester People for Peace, Nashoba Valley Peace and Justice, Arlington UJP, AFSC Cambridge, Chelsea Uniting Against the War, Green-Rainbow Party, Roslindale Neighbors for Peace and Justice, and Military Families Speak Out. Other peace groups are welcome to join. UJP plans to have a link on their website for anti-recruitment information.

Editor's note: See p.11 for ongoing discussion about this critical issue.

Global Perspectives

The People's Ratification of the Kyoto Global Warming Treaty

“The People's Ratification is a nationwide petition drive designed to give thousands of citizens a chance to respond in a way that we now cannot. We are telling our local officials, our nation's leaders and the international community that we do not go along with the Washington party line. We want to set a good example and be responsible stewards. We care deeply about the future viability of the planet. And, we are ready to commit ourselves to a clean energy future.”

The above preamble introduces an interesting citizen's petition initiative, which we urge readers to consider signing. It can be found at <http://www.kyotoandbeyond.org/petition.html>.

When faced with a grave threat to a livable future for ourselves, our children and future generations, it is our duty as Americans to respond.

To date, some 140 nations have ratified the Kyoto Protocol, which enters into force in February 2005, in order to arrest the intensifying destructiveness of global climate change.

In contrast, the United States, which generates 25 percent of the world's polluting carbon emissions with only 5 percent of its population, refuses to join in this worldwide effort to keep this planet hospitable to civilization.

We recognize the current goals of the Protocol are too low – and its timetable too long -- to effectively halt the escalating instability of the global climate.

We also recognize the Kyoto Protocol is the only existing diplomatic framework through which the entire global community can address this unprecedented challenge.

We further recognize that the Constitution of the United States grants us the ultimate authority of government.

Therefore, as citizens of the United States, we hereby ratify the Kyoto Protocol and demand that our elected representatives follow suit.

Additionally, we pledge to support subsequent phases of the Kyoto Protocol to reduce worldwide greenhouse emissions by 70 percent. This global transition to clean energy would address nature's demand for a stable climate even as it generates millions of clean energy jobs.

Finally, we declare, through this act of ratification, our allegiance to the democratic process, our fundamental and mortal relationship with this Earth and our essential solidarity with every other member of the human family.

To sign or to download and print the petition:
<http://www.kyotoandbeyond.org/petition.html>

Letters

To a War Resister

While home on leave from Iraq, EMFN Andrew S. "Drew" Plummer joined his father, a Viet Nam vet, at a "bring our troops home" vigil. When asked by a reporter for his opinion on Iraq, he replied: "I just don't agree with what we're doing right now. I don't think our guys should be dying in Iraq. But I'm not a pacifist. I'll do my part." The U.S. Navy charged him with violating Article 134 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice: disloyal statements. He was prosecuted, convicted, and demoted. MVPP member Mary Kate Small wrote him the following letter of support from our group.

February 23, 2005

Dear Drew Plummer,

Last night our local peace group met. During the course of our regular monthly meeting, we were informed of your situation. On behalf of the Merrimack Valley People for Peace (of Massachusetts), I am writing you today to let you know of our support, gratitude and sincere good wishes for you.

We read a general letter from your father that said you were at first in a south Georgia jail. I wonder if you're at Fort Benning. Several of us have been there to protest the notorious School of the Americas. One year I was detained with a couple thousand others and received a ban and bar letter from the base.

Being in a holding cell for even a short time can be boring and unpleasant. If you spend time in the brig, I hope you find plenty of inner peace when you need it. In my few short times in jail, I've remembered my heroes who have been there before me – Martin Luther King, Dorothy Day, Henry David Thoreau, Nelson Mandela and especially Jesus! You've probably heard the story of Emerson visiting Thoreau in jail. Ralph said, "Henry, what are you doing in there?"

Thoreau, keenly aware of the rightness of his refusal to pay tax that supported slavery replied, "Ralph, what are you doing out there?"

Of course, our hope for you is no further detention, no bad consequences for your great stand. I'm glad you're not currently in confinement. I pray you'll soon know freedom again and be with those you love. Thank you.

Peace!

Mary Kate Small, Andover

P.S. Our group has a nice website, www.merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org, and a highly acclaimed newsletter. If you want to keep in touch, drop a line.

War is more costly than charity

Lawrence Eagle-Tribune; published February 27, 2005

I write as a retired United Methodist pastor to add to President Bush's 2005 State of the Union address.

He shared: "The only force powerful enough to stop the rise of tyranny and terror, and replace hatred with hope, is the force of human freedom." If I had written that speech I would have

added another powerful force -- acting with goodwill and generosity toward all people, including our enemies. This is a fundamental value of all religious and faith communities throughout the world.

In his book, Confessions of an Economic Hitman, Richard Perkins indicated that if our country spent forty billion dollars (of the eighty billion dollars a year for the cost of war) for food, housing, health, education, water and sanitation, the United States of America could provide adequate resources for every single person in the world! Astounding! Charitable giving is an amazing and powerful force that would also significantly reduce the tyranny and terror now engulfing the world. Religious communities, Muslim, Jewish, Christian and others, must unite and demonstrate the dynamic power of generous and sacrificial giving embedded within our religious teachings and traditions. We must encourage our government leaders to act with charity and justice, and not violence, for all in our global village. Let religious leaders, laity and clergy, call for our country to act benevolently on the world scene.

Let us resist unproductive and counterproductive violent means to try to bring about peaceful results. A force more powerful to bring about human freedom and dignity world-wide is at our fingertips -- acting with charity and justice for all.

Rev. James G. Todd, Lawrence

How to reconcile all that is happening

Newburyport Daily News; published March 15, 2005

The more news, the more irreconcilable contradictions surface. George Bush repeatedly condemns and threatens Syria, yet readily uses Syria as a torture center in the practice of extraordinary rendition. This sinister practice is highlighted by the case of Maher Arar, an innocent Canadian traveler abducted by Ashcroft's Justice Department and shipped to Syria to be viciously tortured and imprisoned for over a year. Neither Syria nor Canada nor the U.S. ever found this father of two, whose life is now in ruins, to have any connection whatsoever with terrorism or any other criminal activity. However, whether a person who is abducted is innocent or guilty, the practice of extraordinary rendition is against national and international law, and every moral law. Nonetheless, the "defender of democracy" regularly strips prisoners of all rights and ships them overseas to be interrogated in such countries as Syria or Egypt.

George Bush also loudly complains about weapons sales to China. Meanwhile, China's Sinopec sells weapons and weapon materials (including chemicals) to nations such as Syria and Iran, obtaining access to oil and gas. Sinopec also sells shares on the New York Stock Exchange, eagerly bought up by Exxon-Mobil. Halliburton and Bechtel (remember them?) contract to help Sinopec build chemical plants, and Conoco Phillips assists in Sinopec's oil and gas exploration. They seem like one happy family, all sharing in the profits of the weapons trade. In addition, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency granted Sinopec \$429,000 to help market its goods, despite the fact that Sinopec is one of the 100 richest firms in the world.

Another mind-boggling contradiction regards American troop withdrawal from Iraq. We are told that as soon as Iraqis solve their security problems American troops will come home. How does that claim fit with the fact that the United States is building 14 (that's 14) permanent military bases on Iraqi soil? If not American troops, then who does the administration plan to have

occupy these bases? If someone can explain that, perhaps they can also explain why the bases are there in the first place and what the future holds.

There's not space here to mention the contradictions in nuclear weapons policy, or the actual conditions for women in Iraq compared to those before the invasion, or the many other chilling disconnections in the news.

Diana Philip, Newburyport

Upcoming Events

Compiled with the help of Sue Imhoff

“Waging War in God’s Name: Jewish, Islamic, and Christian Perspectives,” a three-evening interfaith lecture series at Hebrew College and Andover Newton Theological School, Herick Road, Newton Centre, MA; 7:30 pm on three Wednesdays: April 6, 13, and 20. First lecture: “Jewish Ethics, Modern Warfare and Terrorism” by Dr. Reuven Kimelman at Berenson Hall, Hebrew College. Second lecture: “Violence and the Sacred in Islam” by Colleen Keyes at Stoddard Hall, Andover Newton. Third lecture: “Christianity and Just War” by Dr. Harvey Cox at Stoddard Hall, Andover Newton. Sponsored by The Interreligious Center on Public Life, a joint venture of Hebrew College and Andover Newton Theological School. Admission: \$25 for the series or \$15 each at the door (\$10 each, prepaid). For registration and information: Leslie Schweitzer at 617-559-8798 or lschweitzer@hebrewcollege.edu.

AFSC Peace and Justice Conference, “Hope & Hard Work: Another America Is Possible,” Friday, April 8 (6:00 pm to 9:30 pm) and Saturday, April 9 (8:30 am to 6:00 pm) at Building 34, MIT, Vassar Street, Cambridge. A major, New England-wide conference to analyse, strategize, and organize the political and social resistance now called for. Features a keynote presentation by Phyllis Bennis, Fellow of the Institute of Policy Studies; panel presentations by Ken Oye, Professor of Political Science and Engineering Systems at MIT, and Nancy Murray, Director of Bill of Rights Education Project of Massachusetts ACLU, and Robert Borosage, Director of Campaign for America’s Future, and Jessica Walker-Beaumont, AFSC Trade and Debt Specialist; plus a diverse array of workshops and strategy sessions. Contact Joseph Gerson at (617) 661-6130 or at JGerson@afsc.org.

The Music for Peace Project 2005, April 8 through 10 at Stony Brook University (NY) and worldwide. An unprecedented effort, this project calls for 500 simultaneous concerts for peace by musicians worldwide over a three-day weekend. For more information, or to register your planned performance, visit <http://www.m4p.org>. Send e-mail to info@m4p.org for additional information.

A Conference for Educators, Activists, Researchers, and Students, Saturday, April 9 at Oyster River High School, 55 Coe Drive, Durham, NH; 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. Co-sponsored by the Race Unity/Diversity Club, Durham Youth for Peace, and The NH Heritage Project. Keynote by Dr. Marc Herold, UNH, Economics and Women’s Studies: “War as an ‘Edsel’: The Marketing and Consumption of Modern American Wars.” Workshops from 5 tracks: Creating Cultures of Peace, Environmental Peace, The Effects of Modern War, Personal Peace, Curriculum for Teaching Peace. The conference concludes with a panel dis-

ussion comprised of grassroots peace activists, such as Peaceful Tomorrows, Just Vision, Seacoast Peace Response and others. For information: morgankatherin@comcast.net or msalazar@cisunix.unh.edu.

Death & Taxes Resistance Festival, Saturday, April 9 at the IRS Building, Rte. 133, Andover (right off the Rte 133 exit from I-93); 12 noon. Resist government and corporate control over our tax dollars. Rally and dance from the IRS to Raytheon Headquarters. Bring puppets, costumes, instruments, and signs. Call (617) 338-9966 or e-mail administrative@massglobalaction.org.

“On the Border” – An Evening with Michel Warschawski , Monday, April 11 at Harvard Law School, Austin Hall, North Room; 7:30 pm. The noted Israeli author and anti-occupation activist is the founder of the Alternative Information Center (AIC) and has for decades sought to build alliances between Israelis and Palestinians in opposition to Israeli policies of occupation.

Noam Chomsky on “Corporations and Democracy” on Wednesday, April 13 at First Parish Church, Harvard Square; 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm. With music by Jill Stein and Ken Selcer, this evening is a Benefit for the Center for Democracy and the Constitution, Wednesday. Suggested donation: \$15 to \$25 or whatever one can afford.

Bill McKibben on “Updates from a Heating Planet: Stories and Strategies on Global Warming,” Thursday, April 14 at First Parish Unitarian Universalist, Lexington, 7 Harrington Road; 7:30 pm. The noted author and environmentalist will deliver the annual **Elizabeth Howe Lecture**.

“So You Want to Influence Your Representative,” Saturday, April 16 at Beacon Hill Friends House, 6 Chestnut St., Boston; 9:30 am to 3:00 pm. David Culp, veteran lobbyist for the Friends Committee on National Legislation will lead a nuts and bolts workshop on how to become an effective local lobbyist. The workshop will include tips on how to prepare for a lobby visit, what’s involved in getting an appointment, how to establish a relationship with Congressional staff, etc.

“Speaking Truth in Public Policy: A Quaker Perspective,” Sunday, April 17 at Beacon Hill Friends House, 6 Chestnut St., Boston; 1 pm. Joe Volk, Director of the Friends Committee on National Legislation will deliver the annual **Ernest & Esther Weed Lecture**.

“Reclaiming Our Democracy: Corporate Governance vs. We the People,” Sunday, April 17 at First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church, 75 The Great Road, Bedford, MA; 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm. A forum on how communities can restore democratic authority over corporations, revive grassroots democracy, and revoke the power of money and corporations to control government and civic society. Guest speakers: Ward Morehouse, human rights activist and author and co-founder and co-director of Program on Corporations, The Law and Democracy (POCLAD); and Adam Sacks, director of Center for Democracy & The Constitution (CDC), founded a year ago to promote rights-based organizing in Massachusetts.

Dr. Paul Farmer, Monday, April 18 at Kemper Auditorium, Phillips Academy, Chapel Avenue, Andover, MA; 7:00 pm. A

talk by the gifted and renowned physician and anthropologist, co-founder of Partners in Health in Haiti, the subject of the acclaimed book by Tracy Kidder, Mountains beyond Mountains, and himself the author of Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor. For further information: Don Abbott at 978-474-9253 or bdabbott@comcast.net.

“The International Court of Justice – A Vision for the Next Century and Its Role in the Nuclear Age,” Tuesday, April 19 at Suffolk University Law School; 5 pm.

Conference – “Hiroshima Nagasaki: Memories & Visions,” Friday, April 22 through Sunday, April 24 at Tufts University; Speakers include former World Court Vice President Christopher Weeramantry, Hiroshima and Nagasaki Hibakusha (A-bomb witness/survivors), and others.

For more information see:
<http://www.hiroshima-nagasaki2005.org>

Ralph Nader, “Citizen Action and Dissent in the Corporate State,” Friday, April 22 at Cochran Chapel, Phillips Academy, Andover, MA; 7:00 pm. A talk by the noted public interest activist, corporate critic, and former presidential candidate. Free and open to the public. For further information: Don Abbott at bdabbott@comcast.net or 978-474-9253.

Workshop Series: “White People Challenging Racism: Moving from Talk to Action,” Wednesdays April 27 - May 25, 12-2 pm and Tuesdays May 3 - May 31, 8-10 pm at Cambridge Center for Adult Education, 42 Brattle St., Harvard Square. Ever wondered: what can I do about a problem as big as racism? This workshop welcomes all and it focuses on while people's role in dismantling racism. Together we will draw up concrete plans for challenging racism in ourselves and in our communities. The day class (Wednesdays) is with Barbara Beckwith and Patrick Gabridge and the evening class (Tuesdays) is with Pamela Goldstein and Mark Schafer. Price: \$25, covers all 5 sessions and materials. Register at www.ccae.org or at 617-547-6789.

“Demystifying Human Rights: An Introductory Course for Educators,” Saturday, April 30 and Saturday May 14 at 58 Day Street, Davis Square, Somerville, MA. This 12-hour course will introduce high school teachers of history, government, or social studies, to the field of international human rights. Co-sponsored by Human Rights Education Associates (HREA) and Amnesty International's Northeast Regional Office. PDP credits are available. For more information: www.hrea.org/erc/Calendar/display.php?doc_id=2239.

National Disarmament Demonstration in Support of “Mayors for Peace Emergency Campaign to Ban Nuclear Weapons,” Sunday, May 1 in New York. A major march and rally preceding a month-long meeting at the United Nations to discuss the fate of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. People will be coming in from all over the world in great numbers to call on the U.S. and all the nuclear powers to end their nuclear hypocrisy. Call Bobbie Goldman for travel information at 978-66-9009. Further information: <http://www.abolitionnow.org>.

“Exception to the Rulers,” featuring Amy Goodman of Democracy Now! Tuesday, May 3 at South Church (UU), 292 State Street, Portsmouth, NH; 7:00 pm. Sponsored by Seacoast Peace Response, WSCA & Left Out. For more information: David Diamond at (603) 749-9159 or email at ddiam@tllc.net.

Global Exchange Delegation to Afghanistan, Sunday, July 10 to Tuesday, July 19. Tom Jackson will be leading a delegation to Afghanistan for Global Exchange. Global Exchange did logistics for Megan Bartlett (Ground Zero for Peace: First Responders Against War) when she went to Afghanistan in May 2004. Tom went along to film, and from that experience came “Worlds Apart”. For more information, contact Tom at joepublicfilms@yahoo.com. For a basic description of this delegation visit www.globalexchange.org. Spaces are already filling up for this trip, so make contact soon.

Books of Note

Recommended Reads, compiled by Don Abbott

David W. Orr: The Last Refuge, Patriotism, Politics, and the Environment in an Age of Terror, Island Press, 2004. A provocative set of 13 short essays that examine everything from the corrosive influence of money, to our mounting ecological and social problems, to the misuses of terrorism as a political issue, to the failure of the U.S. constitution to protect our grandchildren. An idealistic, spirited declaration of the imperative to mount nothing less than active and engaged citizenship in our time.

Todd Parr: The Peace Book, Little Brown and Company, “Megan Tingley Books, 2004. The author of more than 20 books for young children gives us an appealing way to introduce a difficult abstract concept. It describes peace as making new friends, giving shoes to someone who needs them, planting a new tree, learning another language, being who you are, and more...sure to spark discussion among the young of any age. A portion of the proceeds supports UNICEF.

Frances Fox Piven: The War at Home, the Domestic Costs of Bush's Militarism, The New Press, 2004. A preeminent social scientist looks squarely at the internal causes and consequences of U.S. imperial military adventures. As much as one can argue that the administration's military actions are about control of essential resources abroad, like oil, the Bush program extracts wealth from middle- and lower-class Americans, who become the domestic victims of our quest for global supremacy.

Marilyn Sewall, ed.: Cries of the Spirit, A Celebration of Women's Spirituality, Beacon Press, 1991. A rich and diverse sourcebook of poetry and prose, filled with women's voices (both familiar and relatively unknown) about matters central to their experience--from sexual intimacy and childbirth to caretaking, household rituals, and death. Healing visions and life-giving perspectives that emerge from the consciousness of women. A resource to use and treasure for public occasions and for moments of solitary contemplation.

Neil Wood: Tyranny in America, Capitalism and National Decay, Verso, 2004. Written by the late Professor Emeritus of Political Science at York University in Toronto, an “impassioned and impressionistic essay” rooted in the author's “deep concern over the pernicious effect of advanced capitalism upon the world.” A timely publication, given the current administration's stated commitment to rid the world of tyranny, that might cause American readers to “be brought down to earth and take stock of themselves and their country.”

Howard Zinn: Artists in Times of War, Seven Stories Press, 2003. The noted historian's new collection of four essays, three

of which are previously unpublished, each focusing on a different cultural manifestation of war resistance. One examines the inspirational role of the artist in the critique of power and the challenge to authority. Others, in turn, explore the example of Emma Goldman and anarchism, the use of film as a forum for resistance, and the role of grassroots pamphlet publishing.

Excerpt of Minutes MVPP Meeting: 3/22/05

(See our web site for the postings of full minutes:
<http://www.merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org/MinsMar05.doc>)
Don Abbott, Clerk

Discussion of Militarization and Recruitment of Youth: The balance of the meeting was devoted to a long discussion of how to resist the militarization of youth and to counter the pressure by military recruiters on young people in our region and especially in Lawrence. These issues are identified as high priorities for us right now and for UJP.

Bobbie introduced Noble Larson from Arlington UJP to inform us of the DVD project he has been working on, featuring two of the major forums during the recent tour of the Iraq Veterans Against the War: in Faneuil Hall on January 30th and in Watertown on February 4th. MVPP members who attended one or more events in this week-long tour have spoken of the extraordinary power of the witness and message of these courageous veterans.

Bobbie and Noble have been brainstorming how to maximize the use of the footage he has compiled, perhaps by producing as many as 1,000 copies for broad distribution to schools, community youth groups, churches, libraries, etc. They introduced the idea that MVPP might vote a strong sum of money to trigger financial support from other UJP chapters so that seed money could help Noble bring the project into action.

During the course of the discussion, there was broad conceptual agreement that the DVD project addresses an urgent issue of high priority and might be quite useful as an educational tool. Several questions and ideas were raised about message, audience, distribution, quality of production, method of production, length, staffing and educational follow-up. Among the most important concerns was how effective a tool would such a DVD be, especially for one of our key target audiences: youth in Lawrence.

We sensed that it would be best for as many people as possible to view the DVDs before we vote to approve financial support for the project. Bobbie offered to show them at her home this Friday evening, March 25, after the Death Penalty Vigil that several will be attending.

The motion was made and seconded that we vote \$100 (subsequently amended to \$200) for the production of the DVDs, contingent upon the approval of those who will view them this Friday and with the expectation that other UJP groups will offer financial support as well. The motion received affirmative votes from everyone with the exception of one member's nay vote.

We concluded with agreement that we need to meet directly with Lawrence residents to explore how we can be of use to them in

their efforts to support and educate their youth on these issues of militarization/recruitment. Ralph volunteered to contact Jose Balbuena and gauge his availability and interest in having such a meeting. A least nine of our members voiced their commitment to do their best to attend if their schedules permit.

Several people also expressed interest in receiving/giving training and education regarding counseling about conscientious objection.

Poetry / Thoughts

“Cello”
by Dorianne Laux

When a dead tree falls in a forest
it often falls into the arms
of a living tree. The dead,
thus embraced, rasp in wind,
slowly carving a niche
in the living branch, sheering away
the rough outer flesh, revealing
the pinkish, yellowish, feverish
inner bark. For years
the dead tree rubs it fallen body
against the living, building
its dead music, making its raw mark,
wearing the tough bough down,
moaning in wind, the deep
rosined bow sound of the living
shouldering the dead.

What actions are
most excellent?

To gladden the heart
of a human being.
To feed the hungry.
To help the afflicted.
To lighten the sorrow
of the sorrowful.
To remove the wrongs
of the injured.
That person is the
most beloved of God
who does most good
to God's creatures.

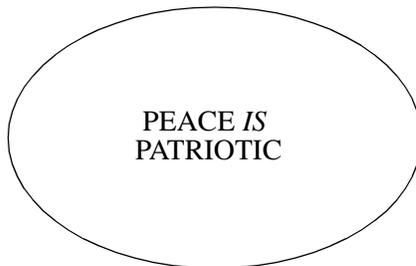
--Mohammed

A certain day became a presence to me;
there it was, confronting me—a sky, air, light:
a being. And before it started to descend
from the height of noon, it leaned over and struck my shoulder
as if with
the flat of a sword, granting me
honor and a task. The day's blow
rang out, metallic—or it was I, a bell awakened,
and what I heard was my whole self
saying and singing what it knew: I can.

--Denise Levertov

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

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



The MVPP Newsletter is printed monthly and has a current mailing of 160. We are grateful for suggestions, comments, and help with publication. (2005 on your mailing label indicates that your 2004-2005 dues have been paid up to May 31, 2005)
MVPP President: Bobbie Goldman Vice President: Katherine Robinson. Newsletter Editor: Don Abbott. Newsletter contributors: Becci Backman, Arthur and Margaret Brien, Bobbie Goldman, Barbara Haack, Sue Imhoff, Diana Philip, Brian Quirk, Mary Kate Small, Boryana Tacconi, Jim and Mary Todd.

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

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
617 565-8519 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: 202 226-0771
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>

How Senators and Representatives voted:

Senate: http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/legislative/a_three_sections_with_teasers/votes.htm
House: <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2004/index.asp>

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