



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.

January - February 2007

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

Boryana Tacconi

Anti-war protesters filled the National Mall and the streets of Washington D.C. on Saturday, January 27th in one of the largest protests since the invasion of Iraq began. The organizers, United for Peace and Justice estimated about 500,000 participants. Vintage workers for peace and first-time protesters, veterans and military families, lawmakers, peace groups and celebrities joined their voices and the energy of their presence to urge Congress and President Bush to bring the troops home now. Demonstrations in support of the Washington event were held in communities all around the country with bigger rallies in San Francisco, Los Angeles and Sacramento. The Washington demonstration began with an energizing rally on the National Mall.

Unlike any other previous rally in the last four years, it was lead in by spiritual leaders of different faiths, brought together by the Network of Spiritual Progressives. An impressive sequence of speakers electrified the steadily growing crowd: Rabbi Michael Lerner; Representatives Maxine Waters, Dennis Kucinich, John Conyers and Lynn Woolsey; Veteran Garrett Reppenhagen (Iraq Veterans Against the War); Salt Lake City Mayor Rocky Anderson; Carlos Arredondo (Gold Star Families for Peace); Navy Seaman Jonathan Hutto (co-founder of the Appeal for Redress); Bob Watada (father of 1st. Lt. Ehren Watada, whose trial for refusing deployment to Iraq was scheduled for the next week); David Cline (Veterans for Peace); actresses Jane Fonda and Susan Sarandon; actors Sean Penn and Tim Robbins; Col. Ann Wright and many others. The message of the day was strong and clear – it is time for Congress to stand up to Bush and end this war. The call for impeachment was heard several times from the stage, enthusiastically picked up by the demonstrators and expressed by many of the signs they were carrying.

Hundreds of thousands of people then marched around the Capitol, covering a very large area and completing a full circle: by the time the front of the march came back to the starting point, the last marchers were just leaving the rally site. As far as we know, this is the first time ever that any protest has surrounded the Capitol.

Several MVPP members flew down, drove or took the bus to this historic protest and came back home exhausted but very happy to have been part of it.

See a photo show at www.flickr.com/groups/44246010@N00/pool/show (over 2,500 photos capturing the mood of the day, many inspiring faces - some of which might be familiar! - and a great amount of priceless signs!

On Monday, January 29th, at least 1,000 people brought that energy and determination into the offices of representatives from 47 states. They demanded that Congress use its power to end the war and occupation in Iraq, to bring the troops home and take care of them when they come back, and to make restitution for the destruction of Iraq. This was one of the largest lobby days in

decades. The lobbyists are encouraging everyone to join them by calling their members of Congress and telling them that the delegations have spoken in their names too.

Among the thousands participants in the January 27th protest was also **Anne Chay from Andover, who recently appeared on the front page of the Eagle-Tribune. The headline "Soldier's Mom Speaks Out" leads to a couple of great photos and an extensive article,** featuring Anne as the courageous mother of a son serving in Baghdad and as a vocal member of Military Families Speak Out. According to the Eagle Tribune (and as we all have seen it during the last years) Anne Chay is not alone in breaking the taboo to publicly criticize a war your own son is fighting in. MFSO co-founder Nancy Lessin is quoted saying that about 300 new families joined MFSO's over 3,000 strong membership since President Bush announced his plans to send 21,500 more troops to Iraq. The article was reprinted in the on-line news edition "Common Dreams" the very same day of its appearance in the Eagle-Tribune.

MVPP members know Anne from two MVPP-sponsored vigils in the beginning of January in which she and her daughters Sally and Stephanie took part. She is also working together with the

MVPP Monthly Meeting – First United Methodist Church North Andover – Tuesday, February 27, – 7:30 PM .
<http://www.merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org/> *Printed on recycled paper*

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.

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

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

Newburyport: Sunday, noon-1 pm; Market Square; 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).

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

Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Andover on the Peace and Justice Film Series. We are proud of her active efforts to stop the war and look forward to seeing her often among us.

14-year-old Annie Arnzen from North Andover speaks in front of church congregations and fellow students about her experience in Africa. She sells self-made jewelry as a fundraiser for expanding the orphanage where she volunteered.

What started with a week of volunteering in an orphanage for children of AIDS victims in Botswana looks like it could turn into a long-term expanding mission, touching many lives in different parts of the world.

After Annie visited the UU Church in Andover, the Rev. Ralph Galen pledged to ask UU Mass Action, a state coalition of Unitarian Universalist congregations, to take up the cause. He hopes that eventually the effort could attract the attention of the UU Global AIDS coalition, which consists of about 50 groups across the country dedicated to the fight with AIDS.

Annie's effort and dedication was covered in the January 18 [Boston Globe](#) : "Week in Botswana Sparks Global Mission."

"I had come to Botswana to try and help SOS Orphanage and make an impact on a few children's lives," she said, "But already they were helping me see what was truly important in life."

January 11th, the fifth anniversary of the first detainees being brought to Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, was marked by protests around the world against the notorious detainment center. The International Day to Shut Down Guantanamo was organized by Amnesty International with the participation of other human rights groups. In Cuba, a 15-member U.S. delegation including Cindy Sheehan, Medea Benjamin, Jodie Evans, Colonel Ann Wright, constitutional lawyers and family members of detainees, led a march of about fifty people to the military barrier surrounding the prison. In London, over 400 people dressed in orange jumpsuits rallied in front of the U.S. embassy. Protests were held in Madrid, Berlin, Budapest, and Melbourne. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon joined the calls to shut down the prison. In Washington D.C., hundreds of people gathered outside the federal courthouse. "Guantanamo has brought shame to our nation," Larry Cox, executive director of Amnesty International, told the crowd from a lectern entwined with barbed wire. Close to one hundred protesters were later arrested inside the courthouse after raising signs with slogans including "Stop Torture" and "Close Down Guantanamo".

Protests and vigils were held in many cities across the U.S. In Andover, the local chapter of Amnesty International organized a candlelight vigil on front of Old Town Hall, which was joined by several MVPP members.

Daniel Ellsberg, whose whistleblowing helped end the Vietnam War, and who ever since has stayed in the forefront of the peace movement, was one of the three recipients of the 2006 **Right Livelihood Awards** "for putting peace and truth first, at considerable personal risk, and dedicating his life to inspiring others to follow his example." Presented annually in December in the Swedish Parliament, the Right Livelihood Awards (often referred to as 'Alternative Nobel Prizes') were introduced "to honor and support those offering practical and exemplary answers to the most urgent challenges facing us today".

Ellsberg shared the award with **Ruth Manorama**, named India's, most effective organizer and advocate for Dalit women belonging to the 'scheduled castes' (or so-called 'untouchables') and with the **Festival Internacional de Poesia de Medellin in Colombia**, a unique poetry festival which has helped build peace in one of the most violent cities of the world. The Honorary Award was given to **Chico Whitaker Ferreira** for his life-long dedicated work for social justice that has strengthened democracy in Brazil and helped give birth to the World Social Forum, showing that 'another world is possible'.

U.S. trucking industry leaders and fleet owners are drawn by fuel cost pressure, pollution problems and promising technology to making and operating hybrid vehicles. New York, Chicago, Houston and other big cities want hybrid garbage trucks as soon as truck makers can build them. And the Environmental Protection Agency is promoting garbage trucks as ideal platforms for hybrid technologies, working best on vehicles that stop and go frequently.

Delivery vans and shuttle buses will soon be in production, according to the nonprofit group CALSTART, which brings together hybrid truck makers and potential customers.

Fleet owners that are testing hybrid trucks include the U.S. Postal Service, the two biggest private fleets: UPS and FedEx, and many public utilities.

Protest music was high on the list of nominations for the 49th annual Grammy Awards. Twelve acts were nominated for work commenting on the Iraq war, President Bush's policies, Hurricane Katrina and terrorism's global shadow.

Hurray for the Dixie Chicks, winners of five awards – what a sweet vindication after the long-term ostracism by the country music establishment, the death threats and the plummeted sales that followed the group's anti-Bush comments on the eve of the Iraq invasion! The Chicks won the record and song of the year award for the no-regret anthem "Not Ready To Make Nice" in which lead singer Natalie Maines confronts those who assailed her for criticizing the president: "It's too late to make it right, I probably wouldn't if I could... 'Cause I'm mad as hell!"

John Mayer received the male pop performance award for "Waiting on the World to Change": "Now if we had the power to bring our neighbors home from war / They would have never missed a Christmas, no more ribbons on their door."

Nominees included Bob Dylan for "Modern Times", Bruce Springsteen for "We Shall Overcome: The Seeger Sessions", Neil Young for "Living With War" and three spoken-word albums in which Al Franken, Bill Maher and Lewis Black skewer Bush, Congress, the GOP, the mainstream media and more.

Neil Portnow, president of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, calls songs about war, politics and social concerns "part of what the creative community does best, which is to reflect the feelings, emotions and opinions of million of people through music."

Letters

about Israel/Palestine:

In October, the group, 'Wheels of Justice' was invited to speak at Andover High School. After objections from a few parents and groups the invitation was debated until finally a way was found to allow them to speak January 5, as long as an opposing group could be heard. The opposing group turned out to be the David Project who spoke the following week. Wheels of Justice said that the State of Israel is unfair to Palestinians and that peaceful efforts are being made to fight injustice. The David Project argued that there is good reason to be afraid of Palestinians and groups speaking for Palestinians. Now the Andover School Committee is designing stricter rules about who can speak.

The following letters to editors, many from MVPP members, reflect the details and thoughts of how to make the situation better for Israelis and Palestinians, and for citizens in the US. You can find more in articles in the Lawrence Eagle Tribune, the Andover Townsman, and the Boston Globe around the dates of 11/6, 12/7, 12/10/06, 1/6, and 1/8/, 1/16, 2/1/07.

Responsible freedom of speech

Kerry A. Costello to the Lawrence Eagle Tribune, 11/22/06

I have observed the exercise of free speech under the first amendment in its full glory on the pages of this and other newspapers with regard to the Wheels of Justice program. I am struck by the need to blame, cast aspersions on the good character of others, label those who disagree with the writer as "extremists," or other professionals lacking good judgment who seek only to

indoctrinate, rather than teach, all presented under the guise of this precious right.

The irony of this interpretation is not lost on those of us who teach and are students of history. Without the first amendment and academic freedom, you do indeed descend into indoctrination by the government, often in concert with religious leaders. Ad hominem attacks will only pass for civil discourse if we allow them to be defined in that matter and don't exercise our civil rights.

It is within this context that I write to express my umbrage on behalf of my colleagues who teach and are students of history as social studies teachers at Andover High School. One of them is named primarily because he is the president of the union, which had absolutely nothing to do with his role as a social studies teacher. This was not an Andover Education Association sanctioned event. It was planned and researched by the six teachers who, under the Principles of Effective Teaching, "Presents information recognizing multiple points of view; encourages students to assess the accuracy of information presented. The reference being that it must be directly related to the curriculum taught."

The insinuation that my six colleagues used a personal political agenda or allowed themselves to be browbeaten by one among them as the basis for inviting the group is a baseless charge not substantiated by facts. To those who have been so quick to pontificate and pass judgment on their character and professional credentials, I offer this quote from Ghandi (who was deemed by some to be an "extremist" in his time in history), "I like your Christ. I do not like your Christians. They are so unlike your Christ."

We can agree to disagree about the comfort level of those who choose not to hear viewpoints that don't reflect their own view of the world, but to do so by impugning the reputation of the members of the Andover High School social studies department is wrong.

Kerry A. Costello
Boston
Andover High School psychologist

Eagle Tribune Editor's note: Costello is the first vice president of the Andover Education Association, but said he does not speak for the AEA on this issue.

Media impartiality

Mark Lipman to The Lawrence Eagle Tribune, 1/4/07

Dear Mr. Johnson,

A few months back we shared words over the impartiality of the media. To quote you directly:

"Lectures about the "courage" and "foresight" to print opposing views ring hollow, as does your upbraiding me for a "disservice to your readership and community." Consistent readers of The Eagle-Tribune's editorial pages know that we regularly publish letters offering opposing views. That is the very purpose of the editorial and op-ed pages."

With all due respect, I do not write today to open up old wounds, but to make a clear example of how biased the media - all media - is when it comes to views that ring against the government's dictated status quo.

Two recent articles that The Lawrence Eagle-Tribune published - "Protests, injunction threatened against pro-Palestine speakers," by Colin Steele, which ran on your FRONT PAGE and "Wheels of Justice offers extremism, not education," by Andrew Tarsy, the title of which merely underlines the reigning prejudice, are clear examples of my point.

May I point out to you that the latter article was blatant pro-Israel propaganda, but there are no cries of outrage from your paper on that. Where have I ever read, "The right of Palestine to exist is not up for debate?" I may tell you with certainty no where. But the opposite is printed by you and every other paper around this country on almost a daily basis. Is that what you call balanced journalism? How can a back page op-ed ever compete with that type of constant brainwashing?

The simple fact is that Israel does use terrorism and Nazi tactics in order to suppress opposition. The truth is the truth is the truth and it is about time it gets reported. Before you not so loosely link groups dedicated to social justice, with groups predetermined to be terrorist organizations, such as Hamas and Hezbollah, why don't you ask yourself why two Israeli spies were captured in Lebanon in the first place? Maybe you will find that it was merely to give Israel an excuse to bomb Lebanon.

And before you go and label me as an anti-Israel extremist, which I'm sure Mr. Tarsy would, please look at my last name - it is Lipman - I am Jewish and I have the right to say Israel is wrong, just like as an American I have the right to say that America is wrong for what it has done to Iraq.

So maybe, just maybe, when you print that "Some people are going to take what they learned from (the Wheels of Justice) and spread those ideas around," it could be a good thing.

In all sincerity,

Mark Lipman

Sad about heckling

Rev. Ralph Galen to The Andover Townsman, 1/9/07
Dear Andover Citizens,

The late Rabbi Michael Robinson, lastly of Temple Shomrei Torah in Santa Rosa, CA, friend of a good friend, returned from his service in World War II a pacifist. He had decided, as his wife Ruth said, "Nobody was going to tell him who to hate or who not to hate." Once a member of the rabbi's congregation called him "pro-Palestinian". Rabbi Robinson said, "I'm not pro-Palestinian. I'm not pro-Israeli. I am pro-humanity."

I will not be pitted against anyone. I believe we should all strive to be pro-humanity and hate no one. The only enemies I recognize are the greed, ignorance and hatred that like disease plague us all. What is required is to build up our immune systems by practicing generosity, wisdom and compassion. There was such hatred at last Friday at the Wheels of Justice presentation. I felt the fear and aggression. I strove to face my own fear and tame my own anger. I figure that's all anyone can ask for.

I consider myself to be a friend of Mazin Qumsiyeh and the other Wheels presenters. If there were lies and propaganda, no one would like to know what they were more than me. I don't think they're perfect. They do speak courageously and honestly from their experience. I learn much from them and their commit-

ment to fairness and justice. The groups they meet and work with in the Middle East are comprised of the widest diversity of religions and views. There are Jewish and Muslim, Israeli and Arab peace workers in all these groups. In over 200 speaking engagements they had never encountered anything like last Friday.

What happened last Friday was deplorable. Someone told a peaceful audience member, "You should die." When a woman heard that Wheels presenter Joe Carr's friend had been fatally shot she audibly wished him the same. People tried to shout down the presenters. The speakers didn't react and asked the audience to ignore the hecklers. It was clear that there were people present who believed only that their particular ethnic or religious group's view should be heard. I had the impression that young people had been encouraged to be provocative and disdain dialogue. When I mentioned the death wishes to one young man he said it was free speech. Those who raised him and care for him should have taught him instead that this is violent language.

I am saddened. I am disappointed. Starting with the religious leaders of Andover we need to censure this hateful behavior and create the conditions for true dialogue. As Principal Peter Anderson admirably said, if we can't have civility in the high school library, how can we expect it halfway around the world? It is shameful the way he was badgered and I am glad he decided to proceed with the talk. In fact, many people, adults and youth, listened. The next round of speakers was to present another view of peace making in the Middle East. This time I'm afraid Principal Anderson may have been snookered. I challenge anyone to explain how the David Project meets the criteria of presenting a balanced and reasonable view of the situation in the Middle East. But I am willing to guarantee this: should we who disagree attend, we'll behave like adults.

If religion means anything, it is a way to transcend narrow and sectarian views and reach for the ultimate goal of all spiritual seekers, that is to see the oneness of human life, to be pro-humanity, and thereby true peacemakers.

I don't have all the answers. I apologize if I seem holier than thou. My goal is to be a little better than I was yesterday. With your help and in the spirit of true dialogue I may yet get there. With love and warmth,
Rev. Ralph Galen

If we can't listen here, how can there be peace there?

Brian McCall and Colleen Cummings, Andover HS students to The Andover Townsman, 1/11/07

As students who have gone through the Andover public school system, and as members of the Andover community, we were appalled at the behavior of some of the people in the crowd at the public "Wheels of Justice" presentation last Friday. We went to the presentation to try and learn more about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, instead of walking out of the program with a better understanding of the issue, we left with the knowledge that the word respect does not mean much to many people.

In elementary school, respect is the No. 1 thing the teachers try to instill in children's heads. It appears that after people leave such an environment, the lesson is quickly erased from their minds. The people who are technically our elders were contradicting the lessons they taught us themselves on decorum.

We were outraged at the massive amount of people who were intent on preventing the hearing of the side Wheels of Justice had to present. The pro-Palestinian side is a change of pace from the opinion that is predominantly expressed in the media. In our high school careers, we have learned to hear both sides of the story before passing judgment; Friday night we were prevented from doing so because of a majority who believed hearing an opposing viewpoint would "brainwash" us as youth.

As young adults nearing the age of voting (and having surpassed that age, in some cases), the fact that the information we consume is biased and unbalanced is disconcerting. The one advantage of attending this presentation was the student interest it sparked. Students are now motivated to learn more about this issue before forming an opinion.

We now understand why this conflict has gone on for so long without any peaceful resolutions. If a group of people thousands of miles away from the conflict cannot even start to listen to the opposing arguments, how can we expect there to be peace?

We are glad to see that the majority of students in attendance acted peacefully and respectfully. This gives us hope for the future of our country and our world. We just wish that our parents' generation had the same open minds that this school system has taught us to have.

Brian McCall
4 Langley Lane
Colleen Cummings
36 Boston Road

Middle East debate raises town above cabanagate

Jamie D'Innocenzo to The Andover Townsman, 1/11/07

As I spent Friday Jan. 5 at my home I was glad to see the ground did not shake, there was no clap of thunder or bonfire and the Wheels of Justice evidently rolled in and out of Andover without absconding any of our youth. I am glad that the educational administration is not afraid to stop that which it feels may be harmful and, even more importantly, can change positions and move forward when necessary.

I always supported the Wheels of Justice visit to Andover. Denying them smacked a little too loudly of book burning to me. Every good citizen who ever burned a book did so in the name of protecting our children. I applaud my brother-in-law, Len D'Innocenzo, who spoke out early and in print against allowing the Wheels of Justice to speak at the school. I acknowledge Pam Lebowitz for her civic involvement and her social conscience, which she so openly and publicly defended. The best thing that came to town with the Wheels of Justice was discussion. I have gone toe-to-toe with friends, neighbors and relatives and the best part is, at the end of the day, we kissed goodbye and parted friends just like always.

I have two children at Andover High School and neither is enrolled in any of the classes to which the speakers were invited. But both of them now know who the Wheels of Justice are, and by listening to and watching the public discussion, my one-on-one discussions and our dinner table discussions, they are better educated.

Even if you believe the Wheels of Justice are the devils incarnate, I say, "Bring 'em on!" There is no better place I would like my children to meet the devil than within the safe confines of

AHS. Watching my children drive away in a car with no adult scares the heck out of me. The thought of dropping them off to live at a college or university 100 or 200 or 2,000 miles away from home sends me to bed with a bad case of the vapors. But I want my children to drive and I want my children to make their way in the world and if they do not learn to look the devil in the eye and recognize him for what he is, they will not survive.

Both my children are fully capable of thinking and are at the age where they must learn to judge things for themselves. I do not believe there is any greater conflict today than that which resides in the Middle East. It is complicated, complex, and long standing battle. Men and women have been fighting for home and faith since they have had home and faith. But no peace was ever achieved through ignorance. Students like my children (God help us!) are the future leaders who must find the resolution to conflicts like those we face today. If they were not allowed to face the most radical viewpoints head on, within an educational environment, where would you have this education take place?

Thanks again to the teachers who brought the group to the town, the administration that allowed them to speak, and the friends, neighbors, relatives and civic leaders who raised us from the sleepy upper middle class white-bread community whose biggest debate revolved around a pool cabana to a civic-minded civil right-debating group of intellectuals ready to protect our children from the devil and resolve a 2000 year conflict in the process.

Jamie D'Innocenzo
Ballardvale Road

Adults modeled disrespectful behavior for students

Thea Shapiro to The Andover Townsman, 1/11/07

I was appalled by the behavior of the adults in the audience at the Wheels of Justice presentation. Some adults (not all of them from Andover) were heckling the speakers to the point where Principal Peter Anerson was forced to stop the presentation. It was incredibly disrespectful.

I thought the information the group presented was important. We, as a society, almost never see the Palestinian civilian side of life. I know first-hand how hard life is on the West Bank. One may consider their presentation to be propaganda, but it is no more propaganda than the information we get in the media. It is simply the other side of the story.

I think high school students are smart enough to listen to people who give them the other side of a story and put it together with what they have learned in the classroom, at home, and in the media, and make reasonable decisions. I am surprised by the parents in this community. Maybe their children will grow up not to agree with them, but it won't be because they were exposed to a group that shared information with them that they have never seen before.

I applaud Anderson for having the chutzpah to reinvoke a group whose presence was opposed by a vocal minority in this community. It was a good lesson for all of us. We modeled how adults work our differences, at least in this town. It is up to each of us to decide if what we modeled was how we want our children to behave.

Thea Shapiro
93 Haverhill St.

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

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Return to _____ MVPP is registered with the IRS as a 501(c)(3) organization. Contributions to MVPP are tax P.O. Box 573 deductible. Last year, approximately one-third of our members joined/renewed at higher than the basic rate. **Check here [] if you prefer to receive your newsletter via e-mail.**

Francis Testimonial

Bob O'Leary to the AndoverTownsmen, 1/11/07

I am outraged at the smear attacks printed in the Townsman about Dr. Ron Francis, a terrific teacher at Andover High School.

I am a resident and have students in the schools. Francis teaches many important and advanced courses. One of my sons truly enjoyed his electrical engineering class, one of the few courses of its kind in Massachusetts. The course was very demanding and required a teacher with the kinds of applied and theoretical knowledge possessed by Francis. Such a course requires extensive lab, classroom time and after-school consultation. My son told me he never knew Francis had any views on the Middle East until he heard about the letters in the Townsman.

I believe Francis is an asset to Andover and one of the many reasons I am proud to send my children to the high school. Also in my opinion, the printing of letters that contain personal information on Francis, such as the town in which he lives, is a shameful practice. What he does at home and where he lives is none of our business.

Bob O'Leary
7 Stephens Circle

...resolve conflict rather than win points

Ralph Galen to the Andover Townsman, 2/9/07
Dear Friends,

It is sometimes not easy to know what is really true. Wisdom is even harder to come by. Knowing who I really am takes a great deal of effort because of the emotions involved. I've come to realize, and maybe those who know me will agree, that I am the kind of person who can be easily hurt, but it is nearly impossible to insult me. It hurts me that the recent public conversations about Israel and Palestine have generated so much more heat than light. I know it must hurt all of us that innocents are needlessly suffering and dying.

The larger picture includes a view to how we can prevent the Balkanization of Iraq and the near complete destabilization of the Middle East, turning it into a giant gas pump with military bases and Gazas spread throughout.

The larger picture is how to use our resources wisely so that everyone in America and throughout this earth community we share has their basic needs met: food, family, home, school,

health, medicine, art, spiritual development. We each and all have the same basic simple requirements.

Religious institutions do their great charity work, and this addresses the symptoms, the bleeding, and must be done. Our schools teach some of the intellectual basics needed to succeed. But we are falling short on achieving a united approach to curing and preventing the causes of our problems, chief among them war, hunger, and racism.

Maybe I'm not smart enough to be insulted. And maybe I can't be offended because I truly believe that the impulse to hurt another comes from one's own fear and hurt. I don't want to add to that.

I will continue to educate myself and associate with people who are trying to resolve conflict rather than win points.

The recent passionate disagreements have been an incentive for some of us to form an Israel-Palestine task group out of the Merrimack Valley People for Peace. I am sure that with your help we will be able to continue the public conversation for the greater good of all.

With love and warmth,
Rev. Ralph Galen
41 Lowell Street, Andover MA

about Nuclear Power:

Ten days after this letter was published, "seven women shut down Vermont Yankee for nearly an hour until Vernon, Brattleboro, and Vermont state police cut them free with a bolt cutter. State and local police then arrested the seven, who were charged by Brattleboro police with trespass and disorderly conduct". The writer and our member Hattie Nestel were arrested.

Entergy's 'green' strategy

Marcia Gagliardi to the Brattleboro Reformer, 1/13/07

Many of our readers noticed the full-page ad that Entergy, owners of the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant, took out in Tuesday's Reformer.

The ad, which touted nuclear power as being "green," also appeared in other newspapers around Vermont. It seemed to be timed to coincide with the start of the Legislature's consideration of the effects of climate change and what can be done to reduce

the production of carbon dioxide and other gases that contribute to global warming.

The nuclear power industry has jumped into the climate change debate and is touting nuclear power as an environmentally friendly energy source. Certainly, in the search for alternatives to the carbon-based fuels such as coal, oil and natural gas that produce much of our nation's electricity, nuclear power appears to be a clean and safe alternative.

Nuclear power is clean, if you overlook the fact that radioactivity is released in every phase of the nuclear production cycle from the mining of the uranium through the spent fuel that no one has figured out what to do with. Factor in the amount of carbon-based fuel used for uranium mining, fuel fabrication, reactor construction and waste storage, and nuclear power is closer to natural gas in terms of greenhouse gas emissions.

And nuclear power is safe, if you overlook the potential for meltdowns, malfunctions and terrorist attacks, as well as the potential for more nuclear weapons from the increased production of fissile materials from reactors.

Leaving aside those two obvious flaws in the nuclear industry's sales pitch, nuclear power is not is cheap.

Despite more than \$150 billion in federal subsidies over the past 60 years -- about 30 times more than renewable energy sources such as wind or solar -- electricity generated by nuclear energy is substantially more expensive.

Without government subsidies, building a nuclear reactor is prohibitively expensive. That's why companies like Entergy are trying to squeeze every last bit out of facilities such as Vermont Yankee. Entergy can make a profit off VY only because others have paid the upfront costs of building the reactor years ago.

The other knock against nuclear power is that it addresses a small part of the energy problem. Driving our cars and heating and cooling our homes are the two biggest sources of greenhouse gases. Nuclear reactors produce only electricity, and, electricity production, according to the International Energy Agency, amounts to about 39 percent of the world's total greenhouse gas emissions.

The Rocky Mountain Institute estimates that the cost of building a new nuclear reactor in the United States would be between \$2 billion and \$5 billion. If that same amount of money was devoted to insulating drafty buildings, installing energy-efficient lighting and appliances in homes and offices or buying low-emission cars and trucks, it would reduce carbon fuel consumption seven times more than the single nuclear reactor.

Or, to multiply the cost-benefit ratio further; according to a recent study by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, it would take 300 new nuclear reactors in the United States and at least 1,500 worldwide (there are only 440 worldwide now) to make any kind of significant impact on greenhouse emissions. That would mean building a new nuclear plant every six months for the next 60 years.

In short, not only is nuclear power not clean and green, it is economically impractical -- even with the massive government subsidies the industry receives. A truly clean and green solution to global warming will mean greater investment in energy conser-

vation and alternative energy sources such as wind, hydro and solar. That is the direction the world should be headed in.

Marcia Gagliardi
Athol, MA 01331

Recent Events

SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS PROTEST: NOVEMBER 17-19, 2006

To begin with: even Arthur Brien, a many times protester at the SOA, was overpowered. For me, the first-timer, the experience was both shaking and uplifting beyond all expectations.

About 22,000 people from across the Americas gathered outside the gates of Ft. Benning, Georgia to demand the closure of the military training school that is synonymous with torture and repression for millions around the world. The demonstration was the largest yet in the 17 years since the protest has been held. There was an overwhelming amount of people in their teens and twenties!

A six hour rally with electrifying music and speakers on Saturday; a deeply moving mass attended by thousands; workshops, gatherings, training sessions; and the culmination on Sunday with a symbolic funeral procession led by torture survivors from Latin America, SOA Watch founder, Father Roy Bourgeois and other human rights activists.

The school narrowly averted closure earlier in the year when a bill to cut its funding lost in Congress by only 15 votes. In the mid-term elections 34 Representatives who opposed the bill lost their seats. So, there was optimism in the air and many speakers expressed the hope that next year we would come together not only to mourn the victims, but to celebrate the closure of the SOA once and forever.

Boryana Tacconi

Jan 3 MVPP sponsored a candlelight vigil in Andover to commemorate the deaths of 3,000 American soldiers in Iraq and over 650,000 Iraqi civilians. It was a part of the nationwide vigil coordinated by the AFSC. About 50 participants came, including a Military Families Speak Out mother whose son is now in Baghdad. We read aloud the names of the 45 fallen soldiers from Massachusetts along with the names of killed Iraqi children. Together with the feeling of deep sadness, there was strong determination to work for ending the war. The prayers led by Jim Todd, Masood Sheikh and Ralph Galen as well as the music by Brian Quirk and Pat Scanlon expanded the dimensions and the meaning of the event.

Jan 5- Three members of the Wheels of Justice were finally invited to speak at Andover High School. We cancelled our annual potluck dinner to attend. Many MVPP members were present. We were prepared to take part in civil discussion, but the principal stopped the question and answer session after part of the audience was rude and out of control. Becci Backman had attended a classroom session during the day as a League of Women Voters observer, and reported that those sessions went smoothly.

MVPP went to Lawrence Tech Jan 10 for counter-recruitment activity. Jim Todd, Mary Todd, Pat Scanlon, Henry Misserville, and Becci Backman participated and all felt that the day was very successful.

The David Project came to Andover High School Jan 10, during the day (Becci Backman was again a League of Women Voters observer) and for an evening forum. This very conservative group was selected to counterbalance the Wheels of Justice with another view. Again, many MVPP members were present.

MVPP sponsored two special vigils Jan 11 in response to a number of national organizations calling for a vigil on this day: one together with Amnesty International to commemorate the **fifth anniversary of the Guantanamo Bay detention center**, to demand its closing, and another to protest Bush's proposed **surge of troops**. The two vigils were supposed to be held separately, but actually merged into one 2-hours long presence in the street, since all 30+ participants felt strongly about both issues. Several MVPP members took part in the vigil.

MVPP all-day retreat Jan 13 was very successful, and looked at our priorities for the next year, and possible strategies.

MVPP member Hattie Nestle and six other "women shut down Vermont Yankee for nearly an hour Jan 23, until Vernon, Brattleboro, and Vermont state police cut them free with a bolt cutter. State and local police then arrested the seven, who were charged by Brattleboro police with trespass and disorderly conduct".

An overnight bus left from Dascomb Road in Tewksbury Jan 26, 27, bound for the big protest in Washington. A number of MVPP folks attended Saturday's historic march. Some members drove on their own or flew down to Washington.

Jan 27: Over 100 activists, including three MVPP members, attended a rally in front of **Marty Meehan's office in Lowell** to show solidarity with the protest in Washington. See picture of Jim Todd holding his sign.

Panel Discussion on the Middle East: Getting Past the Blame Game. Jan 21 - Feb 11, four Sunday mornings At St. James Episcopal Church in Groveland, speakers representing Palestine, Israel and Christians talked peacefully about their different perspectives, answered audience questions, and worshipped together.

Coming Events

Sue Imhoff

Tuesday, Feb 13, 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM RE-IMAGINING THE PURPOSES OF EDUCATION IN OUR TIME A lecture by David Hansen, Professor and Director of the Philosophy and Education Program, Teachers College, Columbia; with Commentary by Ann Diller, Professor of Education and Director of Doctoral Studies at the University of New Hampshire. The world is getting smaller and more complex; communications technology is bringing people into closer contact with diverse cultures and societies, but is also inundating people with a flood of information. Political, economic, environmental, and other challenges confront humanity everywhere. What kind of education can best assist people to respond compassionately and intel-

ligently to the dramatic changes we face today? David Hansen, editor of "Ethical Visions of Education: Philosophies in Practice", will explore this question and offer wisdom from some of the 20th century's most creative and educational thinkers, including Paulo Freire, Maria Montessori, John Dewey, etc. Free and open to the Public; No registration required. Seating is first come, first served reception at 6:00 PM For directions; visit www.brc21.org/who_dir.html. Other Contact Information: 617/491-1090. **Boston Research Center, 396 Harvard St., Cambridge near Harvard Square**

Wednesday, Feb. 14, at 7 pm, New Hampshire Carbon Challenge with Denise Blaha and Julia Dundorf. At Dover Friends Meeting, 141 Central Ave., Dover, NH. Part of **Create a Peaceful world by Sustaining Our Future**, a multimedia discussion series which explores building community and sustaining the earth's resources through sessions on renewable / non renewable energy and economic and financial issues. Sponsored by the Peace and Social Concerns Committee of Dover Friends Meeting, Seacoast Peace Response, Seacoast Alliance for Democracy, Clean Water Action. Free and open to the public. Resources: Plan 2B by Lester Brown, American Theocracy by Kevin Phillips, Escaping the Matrix by Richard Moore, The Coming Collapse of the Dollar and How to Profit from It by James Turk and John Rubino, available at RiverRun Books, Portsmouth. So You Want to Make a Difference: Advocacy is the Key by Nancy Amidei. For more information contact Phyllis Killam Abell at pkillamabell@comcast.net or phone 590-1934.

Friday, Feb. 16, at 6:30, What's' Happening to Our Winter - Climate Change and the Seacoast. St. John's Stewardship of the Earth Committee invites you to a ground-breaking forum on the local effects of Climate Change. Come and learn about how global warming will affect us right here on the Seacoast. Hear the results of the just-released Northeast Climate Impacts Assessment report and how it will effect our backyards, forests and coastline. Learn more about what you can do to reduce global warming in Maine and NH. At St. John's Episcopal Church, Parish Hall, downtown Portsmouth. Free and open to the public. For more information contact Sarah Brown at 207-438-9160 or at kitteryact@gwi.net.

Friday February 16, 7:30 PM. PEACE AND JUSTICE FILM SERIES at the Andover UU Congregation, 6 LOCKE STREET, ANDOVER: **THE GROUND TRUTH** 978.475.4454

Saturday, Feb 17, OUT OF BALANCE: EXXONMOBIL'S IMPACT ON CLIMATE CHANGE "Out of Balance" shows the influence of the largest company in the world has on governments, the media and citizens and what can be done about global warning. While the Earth's climate is pushed further out of balance by the increasing use of fossil fuels, Exxon Mobil continues to assert undue influence around the world - making record profits while ignoring climate science for which there has been overwhelming consensus for over 19 years. Send email to suren@fairjobs.org for additional information. Other Contact Information: 617/968-0880. Encuentro5, 33 Harrison Ave, 5th Floor, Chinatown, Boston MA, 02111. May also be shown Feb 25.

Saturday, Feb 17, 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM LOYAL TO THE SKY BY MARISSA HANDLER, reading and book signing " In this vivid mix of personal reportage, Marisa Handler combines a fascinating inside look at the burgeoning global justice movement with the story of her own coming of age. I have come to believe, she writes, that everyone of us is an activist." For read-

ers interested in liberal political activism in this new century, including the war protests in 2003, the FTAA in Miami, and protests during the Republican National Convention in New York, this is a must-read, a deeply intelligent, absorbing call to action. Books will be on sale at the event. Send email to 45mtauburn@gmail.com for additional information. Other Contact Information: 617/492-5599. **Democracy Center, 45 Auburn St., Cambridge (Harvard Square)**

Sunday, Feb. 18, at 7:00 pm, Timothy Wirth, President, United Nations Foundation will speak on "Global Warming, Climate Change, and Sustainability" in the Academy Building at Phillips Exeter Academy. Presented by We The People and Phillips Exeter Academy. We the People is a series of free public lectures sponsored by the Congregational, Episcopal, and Unitarian churches of Exeter. For more information contact Herb Moyer at hmoyer@gwi.net.

Mondays, Feb. 19 -->, at 6:30 pm, Come to help plan the 3/24 Rally and March to Commemorate the 4th anniversary of the US bombing of Iraq. **The planning group meets every Monday at 6:30 PM at Encuentro 5, 33 Harrison Ave (5th flr), Boston/Chinatown.** There will many opportunities for endorsing Peace and Justice groups to get their info and messages out; Organizers: Stop the Wars Coalition www.stophthewars.org. To help organize contact, Suren Moodliar, suren@fairjobs.org or suren@freetrade.com or call (617) 482-3090,

Saturday, March 3, from 9 am to 3:30 pm, The Regional Consultation, planning the US Social Forum, will now be held on Saturday, March 3rd at Encuentro5, 33 Harrison Ave, 5th Fl, Boston, MA, 02111. For more information, please email Suren Moodliar at suren@fairjobs.org or Susie Husted, susie_husted@yahoo.com

Walk for a New Spring will be in the area Reclaiming the Ground of Peace.

3/4: Chelmsford, Lowell, N. Andover, Wilmington (Textron), Andover

3/5 Andover Raytheon, Lawrence, Haverhill

3/6 Haverhill, Amesbury, Newburyport

The Buddhist monks from Leveret will be here again on their sixth annual walk to Boston. www.westernmassafsc.org/calendar/walkforanewspring.doc.

Friday, March 9, from 7 to 9 pm, Discussion of Jimmy Carter's new book Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid at Second Run Bookstore, 7 Commercial Alley, Portsmouth, NH. Sponsored by The Palestinian Education Network and Seacoast Peace Response. Space is limited; for more info or to reserve a space please call Sandra Yarne at 207-439-9567.

Mar 16 - Mar 21 Interfaith Walk for Climate Rescue - Northampton to Boston For more information, visit www.climatewalk.org/route.htm. Send email to walk@religiouswitness.org for additional information. Other Contact Information: Denise Frizzell - 508-397-4056. Northampton to Boston

Sunday March 19th will mark the **4th anniversary of the U.S. military assault on Iraq** and the beginning of what has turned into one of this nation's longest military engagements. Four years of war and occupation; four years of death and destruction; four years of a war that never should have happened.

United for Peace and Justice is calling for a massive outpouring of opposition to the war in locally based, decentralized actions throughout the U.S. from Saturday, March 17th, through Monday, March 19th....including a march on the Pentagon on Saturday, March 17th.

Saturday, March 24, 12:00 PM. New England March Against the War, to Commemorate the 4th anniversary of the US bombing of Iraq. STOP THE WAR/ BRING THE TROOPS HOME/DEFUND THE WARS. Tents for displays and discussion will be around the Common. There will be music, talks, and entertainment from a series of stage presentations, followed by a march through Boston. **BOSTON COMMON** <-- See Feb. 19 about organizing

Saturday, April 14, National Day of Climate Action organized by Bill McKibben's organization, Step It Up 2007. Rallies and events across the country. So far, over 300 events are planned in 39 states. More info at stepitup2007.org/

Please note: Many events listed here are not sponsored by Merrimack Valley People for Peace, and are not necessarily endorsed by MVPP, but are advertised here for your information.

In Memoriam

Rev. Robert F. Drinan, S.J.
1920 - 2007

Former US Congressman, internationally known human-rights advocate, steadfast worker for peace and justice.

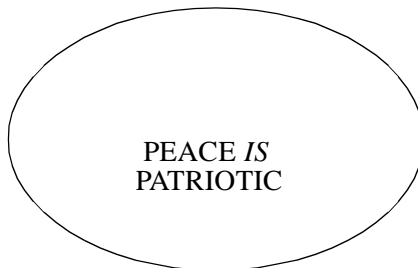
Molly Ivins
1944 - 2007

"Keep fighting for freedom and justice, beloveds, but don't forget to have fun doin' it. Lord, let your laughter ring forth. Be outrageous, ridicule the fraidy-cats, rejoice in all the oddities that freedom can produce."

Roger Wiehe
A friend of MVPP

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

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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
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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>

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120 Cannon House Office Building
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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>

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>