



# Merrimack Valley People For Peace

## Serving the communities of the Merrimack Valley

Merrimack Valley People for Peace, Inc. works for a sustainable future for all life on our planet. Our members commit themselves to the interrelated activities of education for peace and justice, the prevention of war, an end to arms sales, the abolition of nuclear weapons, and protection of the environment.

November-December 2005

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*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."*

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## GOOD NEWS

compiled with the help of Boryana Tacconi

**Congratulations to our friend and MVPP member, community and peace activist, Martina Cruz! On November 8, Martina won the race for a seat on the Lawrence, MA, School Committee, gathering 65 percent of the vote in the municipal elections.** She was elected in District B, which is home for nine schools, including Lawrence High School. Well known as an activist for poor and working class families, Martina had the endorsement of the Merrimack Valley Central Labor Council. She campaigned on the issues of bilingual education, keeping military recruiters out of the schools, and bringing transparency and accountability to the school administration. The Eagle-Tribune portrayed her as "*actively campaigning for many social issues, including campaigns against the privatization of Social Security, for the rights of temporary workers and against U. S. involvement in the war in Iraq.*" Martina's community leadership in Latinos United for Justice and her participation in Merrimack Valley People for Peace were part of her campaigning platform and her media features.

*"I will use my position to further educate and advocate against the use of our children as cannon fodder for the policies of the ultra-right and U.S. imperialist domination of the world", she said after the election. "We need to recruit children for well-paying peacetime jobs and college, not war."*

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**Also in the November 8th elections, San Francisco voters approved ballot measures to ban handguns in the city and to urge the public high schools and college campuses to keep out military recruiters.** The gun ban was backed by 58 percent of voters. It prohibits the manufacture and sale of all firearms and ammunition in the city and makes it illegal for residents to keep handguns in their homes or businesses. Exempt are law enforcement, security guards, and others who require weapons for work. Only two other major U.S. cities, Washington and Chicago, have implemented such sweeping handgun bans. A coalition led by the National Rifle Association has said it plans to challenge the prohibition in court.

Meanwhile, the military counter-recruitment initiative in San Francisco by the activist group known as College Not Combat won by a 60/40 margin. The measure opposes the presence of military recruiters at public high schools and colleges. It would not altogether ban the armed forces from seeking enlistees at city campuses, since that would put schools at risk of losing federal funding. But it encourages city officials and school administrations to disallow recruiters from schools and colleges and to create scholarships and training programs that would reduce the military's appeal to young people.

**Closer to home, there are new allies for openness and advocacy for the opt-out rights of high school students. Rhode Island Commissioner of Education, Peter McWalters, recently sent a letter to superintendents informing them of students' rights under "No Child Left Behind" and asking them to send to his office copies of their policies and opt-out forms.** The letter follows a summer survey by the ACLU, which found that school districts were not consistent in either telling students about their rights or providing a form for them to use to request that their information be withheld.

**The Bush administration has abandoned research into a nuclear "bunker buster" warhead that has been the focus of intense debate in Congress.** In the last days of October, Sen. Pete Domenici (R-N.M.) said that funding for the weapon had been dropped at the request of the Energy Department's National Nuclear Security Administration. "*This is a true victory for a more rational nuclear policy,*" said Stephen Young, a senior analyst for the Union of Concerned Scientists, a nonproliferation advocacy group. "*The proposed weapon, more than 70 times the size of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima, would have caused unparalleled collateral damage.*" According to a National Academy of Sciences panel, the bunker buster, an earth-penetrating nuclear device, could create from several thousands to 1 million casualties.

**MVPP Monthly Meeting – North Parish Church – Tuesday, January 24, 2006, 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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.*

**On November 22, Goldman Sachs Group, the major investment banking firm, announced a policy that details how its 24,000 employees should promote activities that protect forests and guard against climate change.** The firm, which counts paper companies, refineries, and car companies among its clients, said it would encourage clients to use more environment-friendly technologies. It committed itself to invest \$1 billion in projects that generate energy from sources other than oil and gas and strongly endorsed stringent federal regulations concerning greenhouse gas emissions and supporting the development of new technologies that lead to a less carbon-intensive economy. *"We don't have a lot more time to deal with climate change,"* said chairman Henry M Paulson Jr., who is also chairman of the Nature Conservancy and an outspoken environmentalist. *"We need the right balance between regulation and market-based approaches."* Other financial services firms have also recently adopted more enlightened environmental policies. This year, J. P. Morgan Chase has set out strict environmental policies for each part of its business. And Merrill Lynch now includes environmental issues in the due-diligence checklist used by its bankers before underwriting stock issues.

**The United Methodist Church Board of Church and Society, the social action committee of the church to which both President Bush and Vice President Cheney belong, passed resoundingly a resolution calling for U. S. withdrawal from Iraq with only two negative votes and one abstention.**

*"As people of faith, we raise our voice in protest against the tragedy of the unjust war in Iraq,"* says the statement. *"Thousands of lives have been lost and hundreds of billions of dollars wasted in a war the United States initiated and should never have fought... We grieve for all those whose lives have been lost or destroyed in this needless and avoidable tragedy. Military families have suffered undue hardship from prolonged troop rotations in Iraq and loss of loved ones. It is time to bring them home."* The board also issued a strong statement against torture and called for the creation of an independent, bipartisan commission to investigate detention and interrogation practices at Guantanamo and in Iraq and Afghanistan.

It remains to be seen if President Bush, who claims that God told him to go to war, will pay attention when God gives a different message to his church...

**Across the country, local opposition against the Iraq War is gaining significant momentum. It is clearly visible in the growing numbers of city councils, towns, and municipalities who are passing resolutions calling for U. S. withdrawal.** They usually call on the U. S. government *"to commence an orderly and rapid withdrawal of United States military personnel from Iraq,"* while also shipping non-military aid to Iraq's citizens and assisting in the rebuilding of the country. As of November 21, a total of 67 cities, including Berkeley (CA), Cambridge (MA), Chapel Hill (NC), Chicago, Gary (IN), Sacramento (CA), and a multitude of towns in Vermont, have passed such resolutions.

A resolution tool kit, "Cities for Peace – Bring the Troops Home," can be found at the web site of the D. C.-based Institute for Policy Studies ([www.ips-dc.org](http://www.ips-dc.org)). While cities alone cannot make foreign policy, *"We're at a fascinating tipping point,"* says IPS Director, John Cavanagh. He adds that he *"can imagine a majority within a year to 18 months that would vote to cut off the money for the war. That is a goal. There are different ways to end the war, but that's the one that feels clearest."*

**There is recent evidence of the ties that connect us all together--the solidarity even among total strangers! Follow the dots:** 1.) On December 2, a woman in Golden Valley, MN, reads a Gannett News Service article posted on [www.truthout.org](http://www.truthout.org); 2.) The article, about growing local opposition to the Iraq War around the country, gives her the link to the web site for United for Justice with Peace, [www.justicewith-peace.org](http://www.justicewith-peace.org). 3.) There she finds a link to MVPP's web site and our counter-recruitment packet "Think before You Enlist." 4.) She e-mails us and asks for a packet, which she will now receive in time to share with her group of women peace activists at their upcoming meeting. One last dot: It turns out her son lives in Andover, and she will be in town at Christmas. We plan to meet, at long last! She wants to vigil with us.

## Andover High Senior Leads Student Protest of Iraq War

compiled with the help of Becci Backman and Boryana Tacconi

On the morning of November 18, Katie Lundquist, 17, a senior at Andover High School, responded to a call to high school students across the U. S. by organizing and leading an anti-war demonstration in the courtyard directly outside her school. As participants in "National Stand Down Day," she and her peers were part of a country-wide move to walk out of classes to protest the Iraq War and send a message to military recruiters to stay out of their schools.

About 70 AHS students gathered for this solemn half-hour of reflection and song. They were joined by Katie's mother, Sherry Lundquist, some teachers, and seven MVPP members who came in response to Katie's invitation. During the day, a larger group of about 200 students in the high school signed a petition prepared by Katie to be sent to President Bush.

Katie read eloquently from her notes about the futility of continuing the war and the high military and civilian casualties. "*The war is pointless*", she remarked while everyone stood in a circle with joined hands. "*The killing, death and inhumanity the USA has conducted have brought shame, rage, sadness, despair and frustration to myself and people like yourselves who are not blind to the war.*" Pointing out the numerous lies given for the war and occupation, she also urged her peers to question the reasons for going to war and for continuing to support it. During a moment of silence, AHS teacher, Bill Kolbe, sang John Lennon's anthem, "Imagine."

Katie asked all to work to end this senseless war and pledged actively to do the same upon her graduation in 2006. Quoting Martin Luther King, Jr., she said, "*Nothing good ever comes from violence. We are all equal and must fight together for peace.*" MVPP looks forward to working with her and others at Andover High to echo her calls to end the U. S. occupation of Iraq and further the ever expanding consciousness that combat is never the means to resolve conflict.

*Editor's note: Katie has kindly submitted a personal statement about her active commitment to lead this recent student protest. We are pleased to print it below, especially during this season of hope, love, and peace:*

"For two years I have listened to the newspaper reports on the Bush administration and watched American soldiers go to Iraq to fight in the name of 'freedom'. Although I have always been opposed to any war, this war in particular has caused my anguish and frustration to rise as Bush has lied on several accounts about reasons for occupying Iraq.

"Why American soldiers have infiltrated the country is still unknown, after countless interrogations and allegations by American citizens as well as respected politicians. The reason no one has answered their questions is simply because there are no answers. There is no reason for the U. S. to be in Iraq, and the lies and inhumane treatment conducted by the government are embarrassing and disturbing.

"As discussions have arisen in my high school classes surrounding the war in Iraq, it was astonishing to learn how many of my fellow students either knew little about the war, or did not care to know, or supported the war because of the false pretenses the government issued. I respect opposing views; however, it distresses me when the facts presented are incorrect or comments are insulting to anti-war protestors. 'Tree hugger,' 'hippie,' and 'troublemaker' are only a few accusations I have been confronted with for making a stand for something I am truly passionate about and want to let the world know about.

"How can I stand by and watch over 2,000 soldiers die and about 30,000 civilians die for no reason? I knew I needed to do more than simply state my cause. I needed to let the school know this war is wrong and I will not give up the fight and follow the majority. I decided to look online and view some ideas for a type of anti-war protest. I came upon a national day called National Stand Down Day, and I immediately knew my school must participate in this day when many other schools across the U. S. would be conducting anti-war demonstrations. I needed to



AHS teacher, Bill Kolbe, leads singing of "Imagine" at November 18<sup>th</sup> demonstration. Katie Lundquist, protest leader, stands at far right with her mother, Sherry, by her side.

work quickly, since there was only a week to prepare. With the help of my teachers, Ruth Masters, Fred Hopkins, and Mr. Kolbe, a student-led anti-war walkout was organized. I consulted my principal to assure my actions would not harm the school or result in punishment for the students, and it was approved; however, I was told there was to be a limit of only 15 people to participate in the walkout.

“The night before the protest my nerves caught up with my racing mind, and I began to fear a small turnout, a bad speech, and disrespect from people in my school. As I started to make my posters to hold during the protest, my mother spoke to me about what I was doing. Her pride in my actions, confidence in me, and love for me consoled me. She told me what I was doing was so great and so important, and that she was so happy to have a daughter like me. Her words and kindness have helped me through the years, and without her I would never be the person I am today. It is not only my mother, but also my father and my brothers who have taught me to stand up for what I believe. As I continued to make my homemade PEACE signs that night with my brother, Alex, and my mother, Sherry, I reflected on my life and family. I wrote my speech that night with my heart and soul, pouring my emotions onto three note cards in hopes of convincing my fellow peace believers to end war and show them that even in high school we can make a difference. When I finished my speech, all I could think of was my loved ones and how different my life would be without them. Then I thought how unfair it was for a daughter to grow up with a father and mother like I have, while because of the war, children are growing up without any parents at all. I fell asleep content and deeply appreciative for my home and family, and mentally prepared myself for the protest the following day.

“I got up early and put on my ‘Make Love, Not War’ t-shirt and drove to the school to set up the desk to attract students coming into the school to sign the petition and/or sign up for the walkout. Within 40 minutes, I received about 150 signatures and about 40 people signed up for the walkout. Satisfied with the turnout and excited about the protest, I reported to my first block class and anxiously awaited the walkout.

“Finally, 10:00 rolled around, and a few friends and I went out to where the walkout was to take place and wrote peaceful expressions with chalk on the pavement. At 10:20, I took the time to look around and realized about 80 people had shown up for the protest. Amazed and excited, I instructed everyone to form a circle so the protest could begin. Soon thereafter, Mr. Kolbe began to play Imagine by John Lennon as the protestors listened to the song and thought of everyone who has died in the war. The energy was incredible--my friend April told me later she had never experienced a feeling like that. Everyone felt the positive energy put forth, and the love and support was overwhelming. The protest continued with my speech, which ended up with me not using my note cards and speaking from my heart. I closed the protest with everyone holding hands and saying one word of either a message of hope or a feeling they had at the time.

“The entire experience was amazing, and all the friends and support I had was so inspiring and energizing. I cannot thank everyone enough for supporting me and helping me bring a message of hope, love, and peace to the world. ONE LOVE, ONE HEART.”

--Katie Lundquist

## It's Conscience Time: Ratchet Up Accountability

commentary by Don Abbott

*“Has our conscience become a fossil, is all mercy gone?”*

Abraham Joshua Heschel posed this searing question in the mid-'60s as he challenged all Americans to consider if mercy, “the mother of humility,” were still alive as a demand in our lives. Speaking as only a prophet can, Heschel proclaimed that our integrity, indeed our humanity, was in deep decay because of the agonies and merciless killings we allowed to be perpetrated in our name in Southeast Asia. Then, he uttered the words that continue to judge our souls today: **“In a free society, some are guilty and all are responsible...”**

President Bush, the Congress, the military/corporate/religious/educational complex, the neo-con strategists, the complicit media--all of them defied reason, truth, mercy, human rights, and international law in the run-up to the Iraq War and throughout Iraq's ensuing military and economic occupation by the U. S. and its few allies. It is easy to cast stones. But after the 2004 “re-election” over a year ago, it became far harder to place the blame elsewhere, once “Bush's War” became “the Americans' War.”

But who is going to be held accountable? And who is going to do the accounting? The answer to both questions: **the people--** because a few of us are very guilty, and all of us are completely responsible. Heschel's judgement makes it clear: While the crimes of our elected officials must be prosecuted, the way forward begins first with us ordinary citizens. Ultimate authority and accountability rest nowhere but within ourselves.

That too is one of the key messages in the principles established by the war crimes tribunals of Nuremberg and Tokyo. Anyone is a potential criminal under international law if one knows about an illegal activity, has the opportunity to do something about it, and does not take “affirmative measures” to stop the enactment of the crime. Each of us is bound by this judgement.

The only way that the current administration may continue to stay its course with impunity is for us to allow it to do so. This disaster goes on because we let it go on. It is no longer the time for complicit silence, denial, compromise, or selective accountability. It is not just the time for public debate about if and how and when to withdraw from Iraq. It is time for accountability for our misrepresentation of truth, our abuse of power, and our violations of international law and global human rights.

It's conscience time. It is time to ratchet up accountability, beginning with ourselves and reaching to the very top of the power pyramid.

What can we as citizens do? How might we exercise, at this very moment, our ultimate authority? In the cover story of the November 14th issue of Nation magazine, Elizabeth de la Vega, a former federal prosecutor, provides three helpful suggestions, actions that can be called for simultaneously ([www.common-dreams.org/views05/1030-25.htm](http://www.common-dreams.org/views05/1030-25.htm)):

1. We “must insist that the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence complete Phase II of its investigation, which was to be an analysis of whether the administration manipulated or misrepresented prewar intelligence.”

2. We “need to convince Congress to demand that the Justice Department appoint a special prosecutor to investigate the administration’s deceptions about the war” (or ask that that Special Prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald’s authority “be expanded to include an investigation into whether the White House conspired to mislead the country into war”).

3. We “can no longer shrink from the prospect of impeachment.”

I commend the full article because the author lays out an accessible legal analysis, one that can encourage us to press our elected representatives to act. As she says, it is not a matter of politics; it is a fundamental question of law.

If we choose to let our consciences take a bye on this one, our humanity reaches an even deeper level of decay, and then, more than Heschel’s voice will echo around our debasement:

*“The worst crimes were dared by a few, willed by more and tolerated by all.”*

--Tacitus

*“Even the most powerful cannot rule without the cooperation of the ruled.”*

-- Mohandas Gandhi

## Urgent Action

### BU Bio Lab Bill Gutted in Committee

Update, November 21, 2005

The attempt to create a comprehensive state program to regulate high containment biological research labs for health and safety purposes is now in serious jeopardy. The Massachusetts Joint House/ Senate Committee on Environment, Natural Resources, and Agriculture has drafted a bill that effectively guts every major provision of the original bill, HB 1397, filed by Rep. Gloria Fox and co-sponsored by nearly three dozen other legislators.

As reported by Eve Lyman of Boston Mobilization, the “revised version” of the bill “takes out the moratorium on construction until regulations are in place, provides no enforcement mechanisms, no penalties if labs don’t follow guidelines, removes the Community Oversight Boards, gives BU a free pass by exempting any BSL4 facility that has been sited before the effective date of the regulations from the siting requirements, etc.”

MVPP members have been resolute backers of the original Fox bill. Following the public meeting last June 9, advocates for that bill’s provisions had been hopeful that their concerns would be heeded, especially since the co-chairs of the Joint Committee, Rep Frank Smizik of Brookline and Sen. Pam Resor of Worcester, were co-sponsors of the legislation. So the new, drastically gutted draft legislation came without warning.

While this “revised version” may have been a trial balloon to see whether people will notice and make noise, we cannot give the Joint Committee, its co-chairs, or House Speaker Sal Dimasi the benefit of the doubt.

### **Urgent action: MVPP members and readers are asked to place calls to:**

Their representatives: [www.mass.gov/legis/memmenuh.htm](http://www.mass.gov/legis/memmenuh.htm).

Rep. Frank Smizik: 617-722-2210.

Sen. Pam Resor: 617-722-1120.

House Speaker Sal DiMasi: 617-722-2500.

Members of the Joint Committee:

Sen. Stephen Brewer (Worcester, etc.): 617-722-1540

Sen. Robert Creedon (2nd. Plymouth & Bristol): 617-722-1200

Sen. Robert O’Leary (Cape and Islands): 617-722-1570

Sen. Marc Pacheco (First Plymouth and Bristol): 617-722-1551

Sen. Bruce Tarr (Essex and Middlesex): 617-722-1600

Rep. Susan Gifford (Wareham): 617-722-2090

Rep. Anne Gobi (Spencer): 617-722-2575

Rep. Denis Guyer (Dalton): 617-722-2400

Rep. Donald Humason (Westfield): 617-722-2460

Rep. Peter Kocot (Northampton): 617-722-722-2210

Rep. Stephen Kulik (Worthington): 617-722-2210

Rep. Matthew Patrick (Falmouth): 617-722-2090

Rep. Douglas Petersen (Marblehead): 617-722-2637

Rep. Michael Rush (Boston): 617-722-2210

Rep. William Straus (Mattapoisett): 617-722-2040

Please tell each of them:

a.) The draft legislation is wholly unacceptable.

b.) The final bill regarding such a biolab must call for serious safety enforcement mechanisms, independent oversight of the proposed facility, and consequences for violations.

c.) This is an issue that the people of Massachusetts care about and one that other states are watching carefully.

## Issues

**The Courage to Resist: Army Spc. Katherine Jashinski First Woman Conscientious Objector to Today’s War**  
[www.truthout.org/docs\\_2005/111705S.shtml](http://www.truthout.org/docs_2005/111705S.shtml)

*Editor’s note: A courageous young woman set the tone for this year’s School of the Americas Watch protest outside the gates of Fort Benning, GA. Army National Guard Specialist, Katherine Jashinski, a 22 year-old Army cook from Texas, publicly announced her opposition to war and refused deployment to the Middle East. We publish below the statement she read on November 17 as one more example of the “power of one.” The sound of her resolute voice asks each of us to heed the words of Jean-Paul Sartre: “Each word has an echo. So does each silence.”*

My name is Katherine Jashinski. I am a SPC in the Texas Army National Guard. I was born in Milwaukee, WI, and I am 22 years old. When I graduated high school I moved to Austin, TX to attend college. At age 19 I enlisted in the Guard as a cook because I wanted to experience military life. When I enlisted I believed that killing was immoral, but also that war was an inevitable part of life and therefore, an exception to the rule.

After enlisting I began the slow transformation into adulthood. Like many teenagers who leave their home for the first time, I went through a period of growth and soul searching. I encountered many new people and ideas that broadly expanded my narrow experiences. After reading essays by Bertrand Russell and traveling to the South Pacific and talking to people from all over

the world, my beliefs about humanity and its relation to war changed. I began to see a bigger picture of the world and I started to reevaluate everything that I had been taught about war as a child. I developed the belief that taking human life was wrong and war was no exception. I was then able to clarify who I am and what it is that I stand for.

The thing that I revere most in this world is life, and I will never take another person's life.

Just as others have faith in God, I have faith in humanity.

I have a deeply held belief that people must solve all conflicts through peaceful diplomacy and without the use of violence. Violence only begets more violence.

Because I believe so strongly in non-violence, I cannot perform any role in the military. Any person doing any job in the Army, contributes in some way to the planning, preparation or implementation of war.

For eighteen months, while my CO status was pending, I have honored my commitment to the Army and done everything that they asked of me. However, I was ordered to Ft. Benning last Sunday to complete weapons training in preparation to deploy for war.

Now I have come to the point where I am forced to choose between my legal obligation to the Army and my deepest moral values. I want to make it clear that I will not compromise my beliefs for any reason. I have a moral obligation not only to myself but to the world as a whole, and this is more important than any contract.

I have come to my beliefs through personal, intense, reflection and study. They are everything that I am and all that I stand for. After much thought and contemplation about the effect my decision will have on my future, my family, the possibility of prison, and the inevitable scorn and ridicule that I will face, I am completely resolute.

I will exercise my every legal right not pick up a weapon, and to participate in war effort. I am determined to be discharged as a CO, and while undergoing the appeals process; I will continue to follow orders that do not conflict with my conscience until my status has been resolved. I am prepared to accept the consequences of adhering to my beliefs.

What characterizes a conscientious objector is their willingness to face adversity and uphold their values at any cost. We do this not because it is easy or popular, but because we are unable to do otherwise. Thank you.

**How to Take Back the Country: End the War;**  
**A Statement by Dennis Kucinich, U. S. Representative**  
from Ohio  
[www.commondreams.org/views05/1102-24.htm](http://www.commondreams.org/views05/1102-24.htm)

Ending the war in Iraq is right for a lot of reasons. The war was unjustified, unnecessary and unprovoked. It is counterproductive, strengthening al-Qaeda and weakening the moral authority of the United States. It is deadly: Many Americans, and many, many more Iraqis, have been killed or injured as a result of the fighting. And it is costly: Well over \$250 billion in taxpayer funds have already been spent, with no end in sight.

It is also increasingly unpopular. For all these reasons, plus the increased spotlight that Hurricanes Katrina and Rita put on how much the war is draining resources desperately needed at home, Democrats should clearly call for the withdrawal of troops from Iraq. If Democrats do not make this the centerpiece of their campaign in 2006, they risk repeating recent history, in which they failed to recover seats in the House and Senate.

National Democratic leaders have already tried, and tried again, to ignore the war, and it didn't work politically. During the 2002 election cycle, when Democrats felt they had historical precedent on their side—the president's party always loses seats in the mid-term election—the Democratic leadership in Congress cut a deal with the president to bring the war resolution to a vote, and appeared with him in a Rose Garden ceremony. "Let no light show" between Democrats and President Bush on foreign policy was the leadership's strategy, and it yielded a historic result: For the first time since Franklin Roosevelt, a president increased his majorities in both houses of Congress during a recession.

Then, in 2004, with the president vulnerable on the war, the Democratic Party again sacrificed the opportunity to distinguish itself from Bush. Members avoided the issue of withdrawal from Iraq in the Party platform, omitted it from campaign speeches and deleted it from the national convention.

Why is it an unconscionable political blunder to sweep the war and occupation of Iraq under the rug? Because the war is one of the most potent political scandals of all time, and it has energized grassroots activity all over the country.

President Bush led the country into war based on false information, falsified threats and a fictitious estimate of the consequences. His war and the continuing occupation transformed Iraq into a training ground for jihadists who want to kill Americans, and a cause célèbre for stoking resentment in the Muslim world.

Bush's war and occupation squandered the abundant good will felt by the world for America after our 9/11 losses. He enriched his cronies at Halliburton and other private interests through the occupation. And he diverted our attention and abilities away from apprehending the masterminds of the 9/11 attack. Instead, we are mired in an occupation which has already cost over 2,000 American lives and the lives of tens of thousands of Iraqis.

The issue of the war clearly distinguishes what is wrong with Republican rule. Republicans in Congress won't extricate the United States from the quagmire the president has gotten us into. They have refused to investigate what role the White House played in manipulating pre-war intelligence. They refused to investigate the Downing Street memo. Democrats, on the other hand, mostly voted against the war: Two-thirds of House Democrats and half of Senate Democrats opposed the war in Iraq. Democrats can draw no clearer distinction with the president and the Republican Congress than over this war.

Every major poll confirms that the war is a loser for the president and his party. Consider one of the most prominent: The ABC/Washington Post poll, which has surveyed public opinion on the war regularly since March 2003. Responses to all pertinent key questions clearly show eroding support for the war. Support for the president's handling of Iraq has steadily fallen; belief that the war was worth fighting has fallen; belief that the number of U.S. casualties are an acceptable cost of the war has

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Return to  
P.O. Box 573  
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MVPP is registered with the IRS as a 501(c)(3) organization. Contributions to MVPP are tax deductible. **Membership renewals continue to arrive, but slowly. Members owe dues if mailing labels do not say "2006."** Last year, approximately one-third of our members joined/renewed at higher than the basic rate.

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steadily fallen; belief that the war has contributed to U.S. long-term security has steadily fallen, and support for keeping forces in Iraq has steadily fallen. There are no exceptions to this trend.

Right is on our side, and public opinion is trending our way. In 2006, Democrats must break from the past and run on the issue of quick withdrawal of all troops from Iraq. The stakes are high: Unless Democrats stand for ending the war in Iraq, this country will not leave Iraq, and Democrats their minority status in Washington, for a long time to come.

Of course, no party can win votes on the strength of one issue. Ending the war in Iraq must be at the centerpiece of a campaign that includes standing for national health care and preserving Social Security. This is the constellation of issues with which Democrats can take back the country.

### **Economic Inequality in America:**

#### **Apartheid in Any Language**

[www.commondreams.org/views05/1021-27.htm](http://www.commondreams.org/views05/1021-27.htm)

*Editor's note: The widening gulf between rich and poor in our country is a small reflection of unconscionable global injustices. Half of the world's population lives on less than \$2.00 per day, while 1.3 billion people struggle to survive on less than \$1.00 per day. The following statement by **Chuck Collins** (senior fellow at "United for a Fair Economy") and **Felice Yeskel** (co-director of "Class Action") asserts that the U. S. has systemized its own version of economic apartheid. Our democracy, such as it remains, can no longer tolerate such concentrations of wealth and power in a very small minority. Readers who find this article of interest are urged to read the new book by Collins and Yeskel, *Economic Apartheid in America: A Primer on Economic Inequality and Insecurity*.*

Fall is inequality season. Every autumn, as the leaves change color, we get a vivid new picture of the trends that pull us apart as a country.

This year is no different. But after almost three decades of incrementally widening disparities of wealth and income, it's worth noting that we've entered a new version of economic apartheid, American-style. Let's call it Inequality 2.0.

The United States is now the third most unequal industrialized society after Russia and Mexico. This is not a club we want to be part of. Russia is a recovering kleptocracy, with a post-Soviet

oligarchy enriched by looting. And Mexico, despite joining the rich-nations club of the Organization for Economic and Community Development, has some of the most glaring poverty in the hemisphere.

In 2004, after three years of economic recovery, the U.S. Census reports that poverty continues to grow, while the real median income for full-time workers has declined. Since 2001, when the economy hit bottom, the ranks of our nation's poor have grown by 4 million, and the number of people without health insurance has swelled by 4.6 million to over 45 million.

Income inequality is now near all-time highs, with over 50 percent of 2004 income going to the top fifth of households, and the biggest gains going to the top 5 percent and 1 percent of households. The average CEO now takes home a paycheck 431 times that of their average worker.

At the pinnacle of U.S. wealth, 2004 saw a dramatic increase in the number of billionaires. According to Forbes Magazine, there are now 374 U.S. billionaires. The growth in billionaires took a dramatic leap since the early 1980s, when the average net worth of the individuals on the Forbes 400 list was \$400 million. Today, the average net worth is \$2.8 billion. Wal-Mart's Walton family now has 771,287 times more than the median U.S. household.

Does inequality matter? One problem is that concentrations of wealth and power pose a danger to our democratic system. The corruption of politics by big money might explain why for the last five years the President and Congress have been more interested in repealing the federal estate tax, paid only by multi-millionaires, than on reinforcing levees along the Gulf Coast. Now, to pay for hurricane reconstruction and the war in Iraq, Congress is considering cuts in programs that help poor people, such as Medicaid and Food Stamps. They have not yet considered fairer ways of reducing the deficit by reversing special tax breaks for the rich, such as the recent cuts in capital gains and dividend taxes.

Inequality is non-partisan. The pace of inequality has grown steadily over three decades, under both Republican and Democratic administrations and Congresses. The Gini index, the global measure of inequality, grew as quickly under President Clinton as it has under President George W. Bush. Widening disparities in the U.S. are the result of three decades of bi-partisan public policies that have tilted the rules of the economy to

the benefit of major corporations and large asset owners at the expense of people whose security comes from a paycheck.

Public policies in trade, taxes, wages and social spending can make a difference in mitigating national and global trends toward prolonged inequality. But our priorities are moving in the wrong direction.

For example, the failure to raise the minimum wage from its 1997 level of \$5.15 an hour guarantees continued income stagnation for the working poor for years to come. The President and Congress's focus on tax cuts for the wealthy and their disinterest in government spending to expand equal opportunity sets the stage for Inequality Version 3.0.

We shouldn't tolerate this drift toward an economic apartheid society.

### **Awakening America – Before It Is Too Late**

by David Krieger, October 2005

[www.wagingpeace.org/articles/2005/10/00\\_krieger\\_awakening-america.htm](http://www.wagingpeace.org/articles/2005/10/00_krieger_awakening-america.htm)

America has been warned in every conceivable fashion that its nuclear weapons will bring it to a bad end. It was warned by scientists on its own atomic bomb project, even before it bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and it was warned by the destruction of those cities.

It was warned by Mahatma Gandhi that it was too early to see what nuclear weapons would do the soul of the attacking nation.

It was warned by Albert Einstein that we must change our modes of thinking or face “unparalleled catastrophe.”

It has been warned by Nobel Laureates, by generals and admirals, by small countries and large ones.

It was warned by Bertrand Russell, J. Robert Oppenheimer and Linus Pauling.

It was warned by the Cuban missile crisis, and by other near disasters.

It was warned by the survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki that human beings and nuclear weapons cannot co-exist.

It has been warned by religious leaders that nuclear weapons jeopardize creation.

It was warned by head of the US Strategic Command, General Lee Butler, that “we cannot at once keep sacred the miracle of existence and hold sacrosanct the capacity to destroy it.”

It was warned by the mayors of cities and by earnest citizen groups.

It was warned by drop drills, fall-out shelters and false alerts.

It has been warned and warned until the sirens should be screaming in the White House and in the halls of Congress.

But we live in a time of political leaders lacking a moral compass, of political leaders unable to change their thinking or to shed their hubris.

Since nuclear weapons are the most cowardly weapon ever created, we live in a time of leaders marked by a significant courage-deficit.

All signs suggest that we are headed toward disaster, toward a world in which America itself will be sacrificed at the altar of its hubris.

We have become too attached to our double standards, to a world of nuclear “haves” and “have-nots.”

We spend on nuclear weapons and their delivery systems what it would cost to feed the world's hungry, shelter the world's homeless, care for the world's sick and infirm, and educate the world's children.

In our comfortable reliance on our military might, we have failed to grasp that nuclear weapons are a far more powerful tool in the hands of the weak than in the hands of the strong.

We have failed to grasp that America cannot afford to again use nuclear weapons, but extremist groups are eager to obtain these weapons and use them against us.

We have failed to grasp that there is no defense against nuclear weapons, as we throw money into missile defenses like a helpless giant.

America's days are numbered before terrorists destroy our great cities with nuclear weapons.

Our cities, our economy and our pride will be destroyed together.

When this happens, America will bellow and flail, flames will shoot from its nostrils, and the survivors will wonder how America was brought so low.

Looking back, some will remember with dismay the many, many warnings. Others will say that it was karma.

This is a glimpse into our future, yet another warning. The worst has not yet happened.

It is not too late for America to wake up, to fulfill its obligations for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, and to lead the world to a nuclear weapons-free planet.

It is late, but it is not too late. America may still wake up, and if it does it will be because people like all of us have not given up on America or on a human future.

It will be because ordinary Americans do not have the courage-deficit that our leaders have so readily and consistently displayed.

It will be because the voices of the people rise up and demand change and because we become the leaders we have been waiting for.



# NEWS BRIEFS

- MVPP's annual Stone Soup Supper on November 22, attended by two dozen members and friends, raised more than \$300.00 for OXFAM. The evening program featured the DVD "The Doctor, the Deleted Uranium (DU), and the Dying Children." DU is an issue that will defy all official, scientific, military, and political attempts at denial, and this heartbreaking film helps expose some of the truth.
- Two MVPP members, Becci Backman and Don Abbott were invited on December 2 to speak at Merrimack College to two sections of Richard Hudak's sociology class on Conflict Resolution. They presented information on the global scope of movements for peace and justice, the effectiveness of non-violent struggle in resolving conflict, and the role of the military in the "peace movement" today.
- On December 3, at his Town Meeting in Concord, MA, Congressman Marty Meehan stated that he would join Representatives Barney Frank and Ed Markey of Massachusetts in becoming a co-sponsor of HR 2410. The bill, presented by Representative Jim McDermott of Washington in May 2005, calls for medical and scientific studies on the health and environmental impacts from the U.S. military's use of depleted uranium (DU) munitions.
- As this issue went to press, several hard-working MVPP members--led especially by Mary Todd, Jim Todd, Martina Cruz, and Dilenia Rodriguez--were finalizing plans for the visit to Lawrence of Former Staff Sergeant Camilo Mejia, the first Iraq War veteran imprisoned for refusing to return to Iraq. He was scheduled for two appearances in Lawrence on December 7, at the end of his 6-day speaking tour of Eastern Massachusetts--a speech in the afternoon at the Lawrence Library and another in the evening at Christ United Methodist Church.
- At last report, MVPP has so far distributed almost 200 counter-recruitment packets, "Think before You Enlist," reaching people in more than 20 states.

## Upcoming Events

compiled with the help of Sue Imhoff

**Sunday, December 11, 1:00 pm to 7:00 pm: "Israel/Palestine: Where Do We Go from Here?"** A teach-in and organizing conference, sponsored by UJP Israel-Palestine Task Force and the Harvard Society of Arab Students. Speakers: Dr. Allam Jarrar of the Palestinian Medical Relief Society and the Palestine National Initiative; Dr. Mazin Qumsiyeh, associate professor of genetics, Yale School of Medicine, and author of Sharing the Land of Canaan; Prof. Harvey Cox, professor of divinity, Harvard University; Rami Kaplan, former Israeli tank commander and author of Courage to Refuse; Paul Beran II, Middle East Center for Peace, Culture and Development, Northeastern University. Photographic exhibit by Esti Tsal "Bearing Witness on the West Bank," about Israeli women against the occupation and for human rights. Workshops include: activist campaigns, dele-

gations to Israel and Palestine, the Jewish Peace Movement in the U. S., Israel/Palestine and the U. S. Peace Movement. For additional information: [afmeyers@bu.edu](mailto:afmeyers@bu.edu). Boylston Hall, Harvard University (in Harvard Yard just off Mass. Ave. next to Widener Library).

**Monday, December 12, 12:00 noon: "A Public Forum on Torture."** Congressman Marty Meehan invites us to attend a major forum on a critical issue. Keynote address by Representative John Conyers, Jr. (D-MI). Rep. Meehan will then lead audience Q & A with a panel of distinguished national experts. For further information: Meehan's office: 978-459-0101. **Suffolk University, 120 Tremont Street, Boston.**

**Tuesday, December 13, 6:00 pm: "Tax Fairness," part of the Fall/Winter Workshop Series of United for a Fair Economy.** UFE's "Popular Economics Education" programs transform dry economic statistics into memorable learning experiences that connect with people's lives and lead them to action. Workshops encourage dialogue among participants and engage people in problem-solving activities that draw on participant's own experiences. Participants receive a packet of information with a resource list for further study and reflection. This interactive workshop offers a.) a frame for understanding the political and social agenda of current tax policies, b.) a review of where revenue comes from and how it is spent by the federal government, and c.) a vision of a what a "fair economy" might look like and the role taxation can play in a government that supports the common good, and d.) specific steps that we can take to build a fair taxation for all. Enrollment: 25. No fee. Dinner for a \$5 donation or bring your own. For additional information: [ckhackham@faireconomy.com](mailto:ckhackham@faireconomy.com) or 617-423-2148 x1010. **United for a Fair Economy, 29 Winter Street, second floor.** (N.B. The next in this series will be held at the same location on Tuesday, January 10, 2006, on the subject "Globalization in the 21st Century.")

**Wednesday, December 14, 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm: "Iraq: The Occupation and the Challenges Facing the Antiwar Movement."** Sponsored by MIT Thistle and the Stop the Wars Coalition. A panel discussion on the accomplishments and challenges facing the antiwar movement in the months and years ahead. Speakers include Chuck Turner, Boston City Councilman; Joseph Gerson, American Friends Service Committee; John Harris, Stop the Wars Coalition; Elisabeth Leonard, Code Pink, United for Justice with Peace; Keith Rosenthal, International Socialist Organization; and Hank Gonzalez, Socialist Alternative. Iraq is not a distant war. It is a nightmare haunting the conscience of millions and bereaving countless American and Iraqi families. As the death toll spirals and skepticism intensifies from coast to coast, the war makers in Washington face an avalanche of protest. For additional information: Brian at 617-947-8983 or [vinniechops@hotmail.com](mailto:vinniechops@hotmail.com). **MIT, Room: 4-270, Cambridge, MA.**

**Sunday, December 18: "Bearing Witness on the West Bank."** Photography Exhibit by a member of *Machsom Watch*, an Israeli women's organization dedicated to human rights. Discussion with Israeli photographer, Esti Tsal. Sponsored by Workmen's Circle Mideast Working Group and Visions of Peace with Justice in Israel/Palestine. For more information: [jonathangroup@comcast.net](mailto:jonathangroup@comcast.net). **Workmen's Circle at 1762 Beacon St, Brookline (Corey Rd stop Green C Line).**

**Sunday, January 1, 2006, 6:00 am to 6:00 pm: "Meditation for Peace Day."** Led by members of the Western Buddhist Order, this event is intended to generate a positive force of Lov-

ing Kindness and Peace for all beings through meditation practiced by a large group for a concentrated period of time. Each meditation session will begin on the hour, with a short walking meditation after each sit. At most sessions, participants are welcome to do a meditation of their choice, and guided meditations will take place at 8:00 am, 11:00 am, and 3:00 pm. Everyone is invited to stay for as long or short a time as they like. Lunch will be served from 12:00 noon to 1:00 pm. Breakfast foods and snacks will be available throughout the day. Donations gratefully accepted. For additional information: [www.aryaloka.org](http://www.aryaloka.org) or call 603-659-5456 or contact Sandra Bonin at [sbonin@earthlink.net](mailto:sbonin@earthlink.net). **Aryaloka Buddhist Center, Newmarket, NH.**

**Tuesday, January 3, 7:00 pm: “WTO Update--Report from Hong Kong; on Trade, Globalization and Militarism.** Sponsored by Seacoast Peace Response. Led by Arnie Alpert of the American Friends Service Committee. Fresh from the failure of the October Summit of the Americas to revive negotiations for the Free Trade Area of the Americas, the Bush Administration is now taking its “free trade” agenda back to the World Trade Organization, which will hold its sixth ministerial meeting in Hong Kong, Dec. 13-18. Alpert will be in Hong Kong where he will participate in civil society events outside the official summit, paying special attention to how the talks will affect human rights, including the right to water. He will also explore the connections between trade policy and global militarism. Prior to the WTO meeting, he will spend 5 days in southern China looking into the country’s rapid industrialization and the effects of economic changes on Chinese workers. He has been following the trends in corporate globalization for the past decade. He was in Seattle during the 1999 WTO meeting and in Cancun for the last ministerial in 2003. Free & open to the public. For more information: [info@seacoastpeaceresponse.org](mailto:info@seacoastpeaceresponse.org) or 603-749-9159. **South Church, 292 State St, Portsmouth, NH.**

**Friday, January 6, 6:30 pm: “Annual MVPP Pot Luck Supper.”** Come and enjoy our traditional sharing of food and friendship at the start of the New Year. A time to reflect on our personal priorities and our new initiatives for the year ahead. Friends and guests are most welcome to join us. We have invited members of the Selimiye Camil mosque in Methuen to share this meal and dialogue with us, as they did last year. Further information: Mary and Jim Todd, 978-687-7864.

**Saturday, January 21, 8:00 pm: “Pat Scanlon Concert--CD Release of “Blue State Liberal.”** Talented and popular singer-songwriter, Vietnam veteran, environmental activist, MVPP member and friend sings the rallying cry for unity among progressive liberals across the land. Admission: \$15.00. **Crossroads Coffeehouse, North Parish Church, 190 Academy Road, North Andover.**

**Friday January 27, 5:00 pm through Sunday, January 29, 2:00 pm: “People’s Music Winter Gathering 2006.”** The good people of The People’s Music Network for Songs of Freedom and Struggle (PMN), who held this gathering in Lawrence/Andover a few years ago, are back “in the neighborhood” (Amherst). Plenary sessions on military recruitment and globalization, Friday night concert at 7:00 pm featuring local and national performers (tickets \$15 in advance/\$20 at concert), workshops on Saturday and Sunday, Children’s Concert on Saturday at 1:30 pm, Round Robin on Saturday night, and Songs of the Spirit on Sunday morning. Further information: [www.peoplesmusic.org/](http://www.peoplesmusic.org/) or Diane Crowe at 413-548-9394 or Tom Neilson at 413-367-9742. **Amherst College, Amherst, MA—concerts at Johnson Chapel.**

## Books of Note

**Recommended Reads**, compiled by Don Abbott

**Dan Berger, Chesa Boudin, and Kenyon Farrow, editors:** Letters from Young Activists, Nation Books, 2005. The poignant, bold, diverse, risky, sometimes flawed, and often uplifting writings of a new generation of activists whose daily work is grounded and united in a vision of a world that is more just, racially, economically, environmentally, and socially. Preface by Bernadette Dohrn, who states that this book illuminates “the hope that activism and imagination can, as Susan Sontag wrote, ‘train, and exercise, our ability to weep for those who are not us or ours.’”

**Wendell Berry:** The Way of Ignorance, Shoemaker & Hoard, 2005. The latest and best collection of new essays by one of America’s foremost contemporary cultural critics. An essential companion to his Citizenship Papers and In the Presence of Fear, it resonates with Berry’s clear and coherent sensibility. An antidote to the dominant assumptions embedded in 21st century science, education, politics, religion, and economics. Far from a heavy philosophical treatise and much more profound, this volume tastes like a rare wine and sounds like a conversation from a wise neighborly elder who has invited us to sit for awhile and visit about what matters most in the human condition.

**Jeremy Brecher, Jill Cutler, and Brendan Smith, editors:** In the Name of Democracy. American War Crimes in Iraq and Beyond, Metropolitan Books, 2005. Required reading about American war crimes and their implications for democracy at home. An anthology that draws on a broad reach of commentary and documentation, it confronts head-on the question of American impunity--both the culpability of officials and the responsibility of ordinary citizens. Well-organized into sections on a.) evidence, b.) accountability and chain of command, c.) future considerations stemming from current policies, d.) perspectives on war crimes, e.) resisters, and f.) shared responsibility to halt these actions. A valuable resource for citizens daring to initiate and engage a public debate on one of our country’s entrenched taboo subjects.

**Harold Pinter:** Death etc., Grove Press, 2005. This small and tight volume gathers the most passionate, recent political writings and statements by the 2005 Nobel Laureate for literature. Always with an uncompromising bite in his prose, poetry and drama, Pinter refuses to sit on the sidelines of public debate about the fate of our global, human community. Here he invites us into the painful truths that must be confronted if atrocities are to be stopped and healing is to become at all possible.

**Kurt Vonnegut:** A Man without a Country, Seven Stories Press, 2005. Future generations may need time eternal to try to render Vonnegut sensible. Today, we ignore him at great peril. Still keeping on, but less strongly, as an octogenarian, he can be razor-sharp in his perceptions about the human condition, and hilariously funny to boot! Despair and comedy are inseparable twins in the Vonnegut literary family: “I wanted all things to seem to make sense, so we could all be happy, yes, instead of tense. And I made up lies, so they all fit nice, and I made this sad world a paradise.”

## Just a Day at the Shawsheen Vigil

by Don Abbott

Late in October, as a half dozen of us stand vigil in the circumference of the intersection of North Main and Lowell Streets, I notice that a car has parked off Main right beyond Woodworth Motors. Its driver crosses the street and approaches us.

A middle-aged Latina, she extends her hand and in a barely audible tone says, "I just want to thank you." She is weeping softly. And she will not release my hand. I lean toward her, my placard "We Don't Belong in Iraq" hanging between us from my neck.

Looking straight at my sign, she continues, "*My son is in Iraq, and I want him home too.*"

Then after pausing briefly, "*You people are always here as I drive by each Sunday. Each time, you all give me hope.*"

I learn her son's name...she hears from him infrequently...she doesn't know exactly where he is...he's due home in December...and she cringes every time she hears about another casualty in Iraq. She shares her name and address in Lawrence, which I promise to give to José so he can contact her. She squeezes my hand, thanks us once more, and quietly crosses the street to her car.

## POETRY

### A Day Like Any Other Day

by David Krieger

*"It was just a day like any other day.  
The only thing that made it significant  
was that the masses of the people joined in."  
-- Rosa Parks*

By not moving, you began a movement, like a cat stretching.  
Then suddenly alert.

By remaining seated, you stood for decency, though your knees  
Must have trembled.

By rejecting the law, you accepted a higher law, and knew  
Precisely what you were doing.

By praying silently, you spoke eloquently, in a language  
Ordinary people understood.

By closing your eyes, you opened ours, and we could see  
The path ahead.

By whispering No, you shouted Yes, in a voice so sweet and low  
That angels rushed in.

By holding your ground, you changed our course, and we were  
Never the same.

## Curbside Chatter

(*The pendulum continues to swing.*)

1.  
Back in March/April 2003, an acquaintance was clearly opposed to our regular Andover vigils. By the end of the next 24 months, there were signs of recognition, if not acceptance, of our point of view. On the Friday evening after Thanksgiving, he walked by again.

Vigiler: "Hello, neighbor."

Pedestrian: "I'm a convert. Give 'em hell!"

2.  
On a cold Saturday morning, post-Thanksgiving in front of Old Town Hall, a middle-aged man — a stranger — approaches us, pushing a wheelchair bearing an elderly, frail woman. He stops to shake hands.

Pedestrian, referring to the woman, who may have been his mother: "This was a different, harder town during Viet Nam. Yet, she stood out here to protest in 1964."

Vigiler, inclining toward the seated woman: "Then we stand on the shoulders of important people, don't we?"

The woman smiles broadly, and they move on.

## Reflections

Children, everybody, here's what to do during war:

In a time of destruction, create something.  
A poem.  
A parade.  
A community.  
A school. A vow.  
A moral principle.  
One peaceful moment.

--Maxine Hong Kingston

"Why should there not be a patient confidence  
in the ultimate power of the people?"

--Abraham Lincoln

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

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

**Join us Jan. 6  
for a potluck dinner!**  
see p. 10

PEACE IS  
PATRIOTIC

The MVPP Newsletter is printed monthly and has a current distribution of 200. We are grateful for suggestions, comments, and help with publication. (Unless 2006 appears on your label, your dues have expired. Please remember to renew.)  
MVPP President: Bobbie Goldman. Vice President: Becci Backman. Newsletter Editor: Don Abbott. Newsletter contributors: Becci Backman, Arthur and Margaret Brien, Bobbie Goldman, Sue Imhoff, Katie Lundquist, Brian Quirk, Boryana Tacconi, and Mary Todd.

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

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

### **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](mailto: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](mailto: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](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>