



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 2017 – June 2017

Good News

246 US Climate Mayors commit to adopt, honor and uphold Paris Climate Agreement Goals. On June 1st, MNCAA (Mayors National Climate Action Agenda) published the following statement in response to President Trump's withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord:

"The President's denial of global warming is getting a cold reception from America's cities.

As 246 US Mayors representing 56 million Americans, we will adopt, honor, and uphold the commitments to the goals enshrined in the Paris Agreement. We will intensify efforts to meet each of our cities' current climate goals, push for new action to meet the 1.5 degrees Celsius target, and work together to create a 21st century clean energy economy.

We will continue to lead. We are increasing investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency. We will buy and create more demand for electric cars and trucks. We will increase our efforts to cut greenhouse gas emissions, create a clean energy economy, and stand for environmental justice. And if the President wants to break the promises made to our allies enshrined in the historic Paris Agreement, we'll build and strengthen relationships around the world to protect the planet from devastating climate risks.

The world cannot wait—and neither will we."

The signature of Mayor Martin J Walsh, City of Boston, MA, is second from the top.

Hawaii has become the first U.S. state to pass laws to carry out the Paris Climate Accord. On June 6, Hawaii Governor David Ige signed into law two bills designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions statewide and to improve soil health and promote carbon sequestration.

Hawaii is a member of the United States Climate Alliance, a bipartisan group of states committed to upholding the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change within their borders by achieving the U.S. goal of reducing carbon dioxide emissions 26-28 percent from 2005 levels by 2025 and meeting or exceeding the targets of the Federal Clean Power Plan.

The US Climate Alliance was formed on June 1, 2017, hours after President Trump announced his decision to withdraw the United States from the Paris Agreement.

As of June 7, 2017 twelve states and Puerto Rico have joined the alliance: California, New York, Washington, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, Oregon, Hawaii, Virginia, Minnesota and Delaware. Six other states and the Mayor of Washington, D.C. have pledged support for the Paris accord but not joined the US Climate Alliance (yet): Colorado, Maryland, Montana, North Carolina, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

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

You can view newsletters on line (where most links work) at <http://www.merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org/oldmins.hym>

Printed on recycled paper

Chelsea Manning freed after seven years in prison. On May 17th, U.S. Army whistleblower Chelsea Manning walked free from Fort Leavenworth prison in Kansas, after spending seven years behind bars - much of it in solitary confinement - for leaking more than 700,000 classified files and videos to WikiLeaks about U.S. foreign policy and war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan. Manning was sentenced to 35 years in prison in 2013 after she was convicted under the World War I-era Espionage Act. During her sentence, she has experienced extraordinary hardship as a person seeking transgender transition treatment while imprisoned by the U.S. military. She has fought for medical care, for transfer out of the men's prison, and has attempted suicide twice for which she was punished with more solitary confinement. She is the longest-held whistleblower in U.S. history.

Chelsea's supporters who campaigned relentlessly on her behalf grew into a worldwide campaign, petitioning President Barack Obama to grant clemency to Manning. With just two days remaining as president, Obama granted her commutation. Luckily, presidential pardons and commutations cannot be reversed, so on May 17 Chelsea Manning celebrated her first steps of freedom, tweeting a photo of her shoes as she walked out of jail.

New Hampshire faith leaders hold vigil to support immigrants. Hundreds of faith leaders and supporters came together for a vigil on June 6 outside the Immigration and Customs Enforcement office in Manchester, NH to support a group of more than 70 undocumented immigrants from Indonesia who had scheduled ICE check-ins. The New Sanctuary Coalition says all members of the group were allowed to check in and then return home to their families.

Major environmental victory at Seneca Lake, NY. In the middle of May, residents of Seneca Lake in New York state celebrated a major victory after Texas based company Crestwood Midstream announced it was nixing plans to expand a natural gas storage facility in abandoned salt caverns at Seneca Lake, a drinking water source for 100,000 people.

The project has faced years of sustained resistance from the local population. More than 650 teachers, health workers, faith leaders, scientists, military veterans and others have been arrested blockading construction and protesting the project during the years-long campaign. Following this victory, residents say they're still committed to fighting Crestwood's separate plans for a propane storage facility in the area. (ed. Seneca Lake is already famous for the Women's movement and abolitionists 150 years ago.)

'Mama's Bail Out Day' brings black moms home from jail for Mother's Day. For this year's Mother's Day, activists from Black Lives Matter, ColorOfChange, Southerners on New Ground, the Black Alliance for Just Immigration, and other racial justice groups banded together to raise bail money for incarcerated mothers. The movement is called **National Mama's Bail Out Day**.

Many incarcerated people in the US are not imprisoned because they have actually been convicted of a crime: They are locked up because they can't afford to pay bail. It comes as no surprise that a large percentage of those festering in jail while awaiting trial - very often for some small misdemeanor - are black women. And nearly 8 in 10 of them are mothers.

The effort took place in nearly 20 cities and raised nearly \$500,000 to bail out more than 50 black women in time for a Mother's Day celebration with their families. The organizers' website reads: *"In the tradition of our enslaved Black ancestors, who used their collective resources to purchase each other's freedom before slavery was abolished, until we abolish bail and mass incarceration, we're gonna free ourselves."*

Backers of Honduran dam withdraw funding. The international funders behind the hydroelectric dam opposed by murdered Honduran environmentalist, Berta Cáceres, are withdrawing from the project.

Three financial institutions had pledged loans worth \$44m for the Agua Zarca dam on the Gualcarque river, which is considered sacred by the Lenca people and which Cáceres campaigned against before her death. Her murder last year triggered international outrage and piled pressure on the international backers - Dutch bank FMO, Finnish finance company FinnFund and the Central American Bank of Economic Integration (Cabei) - to pull out of the project.

Black Lives Matter becomes the 2017 recipient of the Sydney Peace Foundation Prize. Australia's international prize for peace "recognizes the vital contributions of leading global peacemakers, creates a platform so that their voices are heard and supports their vital work for a fairer world. By sharing their remarkable stories of vision and courage, recipients remind us that a peaceful, equitable and just world is possible."

This year's Sydney Peace Foundation prize was given to Black Lives Matter *'For building a powerful movement for racial equality, courageously reigniting a global conversation around state violence and racism. And for harnessing the potential of new platforms and power of people to inspire a bold movement for change at a time when peace is threatened by growing inequality and injustice.'* The award cites leaders Patrisse Cullors, Alicia

Garza and Opal Tometi, who began organizing under the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter campaign in 2013, when white neighborhood watch vigilante George Zimmerman was acquitted in Florida of murdering unarmed African-American teenager Trayvon Martin.

Past Sydney Peace Foundation prize recipients include South Africa's Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Indian writer and activist Arundhati Roy, former Irish President Mary Robinson, Australian journalist John Pilger and Professor Noam Chomsky

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe receives the inaugural Henry A. Wallace award. The Wallace Global Fund awarded the inaugural Henry A. Wallace Award and a \$250,000 prize to the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe for its unyielding courage in the fight against the Dakota Access Pipeline, and its dedication to transitioning to renewable energy. In addition to the \$250,000 prize, the tribe will receive up to a \$1 million investment from the Wallace Global Fund to support its transition toward fossil fuel independence.

The Henry A. Wallace Award was established in 2017 by the Wallace Global Fund to lift up the extraordinary courage and will it takes to stand up to oppressive corporate and political power. Henry A. Wallace was a visionary and progressive advocate who served as the 33rd vice president of the U.S. under President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

The award was presented to Tribal Chairman David Archambault II at an award ceremony in New York on June 8th.

"Our foundation is guided by my grandfather's framing of a mighty struggle that continues to this day: protecting the interests of what he called the 'common man'—ordinary people—against the oppressive combination of corporate and governmental power. Democracy, he said, 'must put human beings first and dollars second' ," said Scott Wallace, co-chair of the Wallace Global Fund.

"This award in his honor is intended to recognize the type of extraordinary courage that ordinary people can summon to fight such abuses of power. No one represents such courage better than the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. And never has such courage been more essential to the health of our democracy than right now."

Brexit is weaker. As we go to press. Stay tuned

From MVPP

My favorite sign at the Women's March in January was, "Too much to put on one sign." The number of

serious issues is overwhelming, and the challenges to peace have grown more complicated. At Sunday's vigil a passing driver asked where we had been the last eight years. I routinely answered right here, since the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 (14 years). As he left, Boryana observed he had been talking about the eight years of the Obama administration as if we were that driver's enemy protesting in the age of Trump. We did witness for peace against Republican and Democrat reigns, and still need to. We get far fewer negative comments than we did in 2003, but our voice is still needed.

Some have left our group to wrestle with other issues or to move on with their lives. Many have left discouraged that we did not end the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, or others since then. We still have a role to play.

I went to some of the demonstrations in Boston, where I was excited to see big crowds of new friends. Boston's Science march and Climate march, with tens of thousands, were half as big as the Women's march. I was happy to joke "I didn't recognize any one," or "I didn't see you there." The May Day immigrant's march in Lawrence had at least 600. Rallies against Trump's bombing raids had small crowds of only a few hundred people. At the Planned Parenthood rally, I started observing a lack of peace messages.

One message we need to promote is that as more money goes towards war, less goes to preventing the misery that leads to war. We need to have a larger presence at these other rallies. We energetically support these other causes, but need to promote peace within them. Our signs and flags must be visible and numerous. We should contact their organizers to be sure some of the speakers address peace issues.

MVPP should carry on selling pins, bumper stickers and literature; lobbying our political leaders; and writing to all media.

MVPP needs your help at the Lowell Folk Festival, Hiroshima vigils and the Bread and Roses Festival. Come next week to our annual meeting to hear about how another organization, the Merrimack Valley Project, is effectively working for immigrants' rights.

-MVPP President Brian Quirk

Events 2017

At our annual **potluck**, Jan.6, we watched a video *We the People: The Market Basket Effect*. We brought Market Basket foods.

Some of us went to the Million Womens Marches in Boston and DC. WOW!

We did not have a monthly business meeting.

On Jan 31, we hosted a panel presentation about the **risks of nuclear war**. At least 80 people listened to and questioned three speakers.

-Harvard professor Elaine Scarry updated facts, and noted that the presence of nuclear arms undermines constitutional rights.

-Washington Post writer, Dan Zac, highlighted the continuing history of resisting nuclear weapons, especially by the third speaker.

-Sister Megan Rice reminisced about her protests and incarceration, and introduced the idea of civil obedience: that the law that takes care of everyone is what to obey.

March 27. The Walk for a New Spring advocated to make Massachusetts a Sanctuary State, to protect immigrants. We fed and hosted them.

See [Eagle Tribune article](#), [reprint on our website](#) and [press release](#)

When Trump bombed an air base in Syria, we joined a quick protest April 7at Boston Common.

In April, some of us added to the creative thousands at the Science rally and Climate rally. Boryana wore a map of the world, on fire. Those flames represent global warming, but many thought they were "sister marches." Could be...

The May Day Immigrants' rights march in Lawrence had at least 600 people, some from MVPP.

Tom Gale has released videos on youtube.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaCsRto7fujA2TxqaG_qA

The May Day immigrant march in Lawrence had at least 600 people, advocating that the local governments and state government not use local police forces to capture unregistered aliens. Pat sang and Brian walked.

Meeting Notes

We did not hold a monthly meeting in January but did have our potluck on Jan.6 and a presentation Jan. 31 (see Events 2017).

Annual Potluck. We watched a video about the 2014 "strike" at DeMoulas/Market Basket, and heard from Mass Peace Action about initiatives in Israel/Palestine.

February 28 Jonathan King and Peter Casey (Mass Peace Action) talked about peace group efforts at nuclear treaties. Peter Casey spoke about mobilizing a critical mass of people for swift reaction and the immorality of building up the nuclear arsenal. People can call state senators and reps, and go to hearings.

We had a follow up discussion about the recent presentation by Sr. Megan Rice, Dan Zak and Elaine Scarry. We began planning for the Walk for a New Spring, hosting the monks walking to encourage Massachusetts to be a sanctuary state.

March 13, over email, we voted to to cosponsor the 'Christening' Alert-Protest planned April 1at Bath Iron Works

March 27, in a short business meeting, while hosting the monks, we voted to To cosponsor C-10 Research and Education Foundation's efforts to prevent siting "interim Storage Facilities" without local approval

April 8, over email, we voted be listed as a co-sponsor of the WAT/VCNV/etc. 6-day fast which Mary Kate Small joined against US bombing in Yemen. (Mary Kate has been active on many other occasions since moving to Maine.)

April 25 We tabled a vote on showing the movie, *AWAKE, A Dream from Standing Rock*

We scheduled the annual meeting for June 16, 2017 at 6:30. (Later the location was changed to the Andover Unitarian congregation building at 6 Locke St.)

May 23 We appointed the nominating committee for next year's officers. At the annual meeting, we'll vote on next year's officers, hear the "Donations" report, and hear Rosemarie Buxton outline the Merrimack Valley Project's campaign for a sanctuary state.

We planned for the annual summer events.

Coming Events

June 16, 6:30 pm MVPP Annual Meeting

Andover Unitarian Congregation building
6 Locke St, Andover, MA 01810
Rosemary Buxton will update us on the Merrimack Valley Projects effective work to expand sanctuary to immigrants

July 22-23, Rolling Ridge Peace Conference

<http://www.rollingridge.org/registerforourprograms/events/2017-peace-conference/>

July 29, Saturday, Lowell Folk Festival. 12 to 6. MVPP table is near Boarding House Stage.

August 6, Sunday, Hiroshima Vigil Our usual Sunday noon vigil at Shawsheen Square (28 and 133) will have signs, and maybe a giant paper crane.

September 4, Monday, Bread and Roses Festival. Table.

September 9, Saturday, Andover Days Table.

Membership

To continue to receive this newsletter... We Invite You to Join /Rejoin Us
.(Unless 2017 appears on your label, your dues have expired. Please remember to renew.)

\$20.00 Individual

\$10.00 Student/Senior

\$30.00 Family

Circle One

\$50.00 Supporting

\$75.00 Sustaining

\$100.00 Peacemaker

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ E-Mail _____ Date _____

Return to
P.O. Box 573
North Andover, MA 01845

MVPP is registered with the IRS as a 501(c)(3) organization. Contributions to MVPP are tax deductible.

Check here if you prefer to receive your newsletter via e-mail.

Weekly Vigils

Andover: Sunday, noon-1 pm; Shawsheen Square, Junction of Routes 133 and 28; Lawrence Friends Meeting/ Shawsheen Peace Witness; Allan Sifferlen, 978-397-6432.

Andover: Thursday, 7:00-8:00 am; in front of Raytheon plant near Routes 133 and 93; Raytheon Peacemakers; Allan Sifferlen, 978-397-6432.

Gloucester: Saturday, noon-1 pm; Grant Circle.

Marblehead: Tuesday, 6:30-7:19pm in front of the high school and Community Center at the lights at the intersection of Humphrey-Pleasant and Lafayette Sts.; 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).

Merrimack Valley People For Peace
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<http://www.merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org/>

PEACE IS
PATRIOTIC

Come to our **Annual Meeting**
June 16 6:30 PM at Andover UU,
6 Locke St



The MVPP Newsletter is printed periodically and has a current distribution of 100. We are grateful for suggestions, comments, and help with publication

MVPP President: Brian Quirk. Vice President: Boryana Tacconi.

Newsletter contributors: Lou Bernieri, Arthur and Margaret Brien, Brian Quirk, and Boryana Tacconi,.

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

Every legislator knows one letter is worth a thousand votes.

President Barack Trump (202) 456-1414 comments
The White House (202) 456-1111 switchboard
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500
Contact: www.whitehouse.gov/contact/

Senator Elizabeth Warren (202) 224-4543
317 Hart Senate Office Building Washington DC 20510
Form: www.warren.senate.gov/?p=email_senator

Senator Edward J. Markey (202) 224-2742
218 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510
Form: www.markey.senate.gov/contact

Representative Seth Moulton (District 6)
1408 Longworth
House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515 21 Front Street
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Form: <https://moulton.house.gov/contact/>

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11 Kearney Square, 3rd floor (978) 459-0101
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A link to all in US legislature:
thomas.loc.gov/home/legbranch/legbranch.html

How Senators and Representatives voted:
Senate:
www.senate.gov/reference/common/faq/how_to_votes.htm
House: clerk.house.gov/evs/2004/index.asp

State Voting Information: Find your representatives at:
<http://wheredoivotema.com/bal/MyElectionInfo.aspx>