



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.

July 2016 – December 2016

Good News

Standing Rock Pipeline Project. The Standing Rock Sioux Nation and thousands of native and non-native allies won a remarkable victory on December 4. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers denied a permit for the pipeline owner, Energy Transfer Partners, to drill underneath the Missouri River, and declared that a full environmental-impact study would be launched. Grass-roots organizing, nonviolent direct action and leadership from front-line indigenous people succeeded in stopping the \$3.8 billion, 1,200-mile pipeline in its tracks - for now.

The decision came on the eve of the day when thousands of peaceful Water Protectors were threatened with forcible eviction by order of the North Dakota Gov. Dalrymple. At the same time, over 2,000 U.S. military veterans arrived at the camps to form a human shield around the protectors. Many peace, justice and environmental groups as well as churches have been joining the support for the Standing Rock Sioux in opposing the pipeline. On Sunday, December 4th, vigils in support of the Water Protectors were held nationwide. MVPP members held a vigil in Andover at the same time as the North Andover and Andover UU churches held an interfaith vigil at the North Parish church in North Andover.

Our own Hattie Nestel organized the delivery of 238 straw bales needed for insulating dwellings in the camp during the harsh North Dakota winter. Brayton Shanley of Agape Community in Hardwick, Tim Bullock of New England Peace Pagoda, Leverett (friends of MVPP and speakers at our events) and Nelia Sargent from NH drove the 26-foot rental truck to the Oceti Sakowin camp. Many of the protectors have decided to stay at the camp until the final decision to end the project, so this straw will be very useful.

This victory to protect Native sovereignty and every one's water may be temporary, especially given the appetites and disregard for environmental and human rights of the new administration. However, continuing legal and political pressure has a good chance of making it permanent.

<http://earthjustice.org/features/faq-standing-rock-litigation?gclid=CN2U4a75ldECFvtMDQodwZ0B6Q>

In latest news, a pair of major investors delayed a \$2 billion investment. Enbridge Energy Partners and Marathon Petroleum Corporation won't meet a previous deadline of December 31 to complete a sale and will have until March 31 to consider whether to walk away. Earlier, the largest bank in Norway, DNB, announced that it had sold its assets in the Dakota Pipeline after the delivery of 120,000 signatures gathered by Greenpeace Norway and others urging the bank and other financial institutions to pull finances for the project.

One form of pressure is to boycott the 17 banks (TD Bank, Wells Fargo, Citibank, to name just some) funding the Dakota pipeline. Here in Massachusetts, a spirited vigil, organized by our indomitable Hattie Nestel and friends, is held twice a week in front of the TD Bank in Greenfield. <http://wwlp.com/2016/12/27/weekly-vigil-being-held-outside-greenfield-td-bank-branch/>

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

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Textron. The Cambridge Quakers vigils at the Textron plant in Wilmington, MA had some effect. Mass Peace Action supported vigils by Rhode Island peace groups at Textron headquarters in RI this summer that got media coverage, especially after revelations about Saudi uses in Yemen. In September, The New York Times reported that Textron would stop making cluster munitions, noting that "the current political environment" made it hard to sell the weapons. We will continue the monthly vigils until production ceases, and may find a reason to continue after that time concerning other defense contracts.

Cluster bombs are where many small bombs are dropped together in a container which distributes them in focused areas. Some are still volatile after the battle and pose risks to civilians, especially children. "Textron sold the weapons to Saudi Arabia whose military uses them in the ongoing Saudi attack on Yemen which has displaced 3 million people and created a humanitarian disaster. The decision by the Rhode Island-based company, which has a large plant in Wilmington, Mass., follows a White House order in May to suspend the delivery of a Textron shipment of CBU-105 cluster bombs to the Saudis. The White House responded to documentation by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International of instances in which Saudi forces dropped CBU-105 bombs on multiple civilian locations in Yemen. All nine Massachusetts members of the House of Representatives voted in June to end cluster bomb sales to Saudi Arabia, but the measure narrowly failed to pass."

Truce in Colombia. After a referendum in October failed to establish a peace agreement, the elected government of Colombia did reach an agreement. Happening around the same time as our election, we didn't hear much about it.

The agreement did not have the provision that the Rebels would be guaranteed seats in Congress, to which many objected. Other changes were less friendly also. But the rebels, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) agreed to it. It is not the final peace, but a significant step toward it.

Speech

Armistice Day 2016, Faneuil Hall, Boston

The depressing Trump election forced me to think about how it happened that so many people would vote against their best interests of peace, justice and equality for all. Instead, they embraced destructive fantasy shaped by the American Empire and maintained by endless war.

Empires and war, benefit the greedy, their political allies and the commercial media. Empires need support of their

home population- the factory workers, the coal miners, plumbers, carpenters, the slaughter house workers. They are told they are special, part of an exceptional country that has a divine mission or manifest destiny to rule or at least exert a controlling influence over the world and its resources. This makes society think it OK for them to endure brutal back and spirit breaking work and this ethos encourages many of them to join professions of force - the agents of empires - the military. I was one of those agents in Vietnam.

Key to this process of spreading hyper nationalism is to present the "other" as a lesser human. This normalizes violence and war, through encouraging misogyny, and racism, homophobia, islamophobia, antisemitism, and, of course, the exploitation of the weak by the powerful, especially the poor and powerless, like our undocumented farm workers who feed us.

On this Armistice Day 2016, I want to acknowledge the discouraging political realities of today but also want to encourage us to transform these negatives into positive energy so we can push for change and not succumb to paralyzing anger.

Part of this transformation, according to a Tibetan Buddhist monk from the URI Center for Non-violence and Peace Studies where I volunteer, is compassion. That's the mantra for his public meditation sessions and that mantra is needed right now.

Let's have compassionate dialogue with our pro war politicians and civic leaders because we know they are missing a key element of quality human experience, their greed has replaced the life affirming qualities of empathy and compassion they were born with.

Let's have compassionate dialogue with the misguided voters who elected you know who. They are both oppressed by an ever diminishing standard of living yet complicit in keeping those in power who take away their sense of worth - and they are told to blame their misery on the less fortunate, the less powerful.

And finally, let's look in the mirror and be compassionate towards ourselves. Understand our past bad choices, recognize and understand and try to remedy our complicity with an oppressive system and work together on this Armistice Day to change this world into a peaceful, just, sustainable and compassionate planet.

Thank you.

Tom Conroy, Vietnam Veteran
Member, Veterans for Peace

Letters

Go to the NRC hearing

To the *Newburyport Daily News* June 19, 2016

As a citizen long concerned about the public health and safety hazards posed by the Seabrook nuclear power plant, I was appalled that the Daily News chose to publish an opinion piece written by a former member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, NRC, that promotes nuclear power while ignoring the hazards.

Next Tuesday the NRC will hold a public meeting in Hampton, NH when concerned citizens will be allowed to ask questions and raise concerns about the risks posed by the degradation of the concrete in the building containing the Seabrook nuclear reactor. The condition, known as ASR, is a plague of growing cracks that cannot be remedied. The NRC has already acknowledged that this concrete degradation is progressing at a rate faster than expected so that there is now "macro-cracking and building deformation."

As a former state representative for Amesbury, Newburyport and Salisbury, who fought to try protect the health and safety of people in the area and as someone with children and grand children living close to Seabrook, I am pleased that Rep. James Kelcourse and Senator Kathleen Ives O'Conner have called for the immediate shut down of the nuke.

For the sake of our children, I hope many concerned citizens will attend this important meeting with the NCR at the Best Western Inn 815 Lafayette Rd. Hampton, NH next Tuesday June 21st at 6:30 p.m.

Barbara Haack West Newbury

Standing Rock Question

To *The Lawrence Eagle Tribune* November 1, 2016

Why has no one mentioned the background of the Dakota pipeline news?

The following excerpt presents the Native American Perspective found on the website Truthout.org.

"So when you talk about Standing Rock, please begin by acknowledging that this pipeline was redirected from an area where it was most likely to impact the residents of Bismarck, North Dakota. When Bismarck's population -- which is over 90 percent white -- objected to the risks the pipeline posed to their drinking water, their concerns were accommodated, and the pipeline route was shifted into

treaty lands. Please inform people of these facts, and remind them that our people are still struggling to survive the violence of colonization on many fronts. People should not simply engage with stories related to our struggles when they see a concrete connection to their own issues -- or a jumping off point to discuss their own issues. Our friends, allies and accomplices should be fighting alongside us because they value our humanity and right to live, in addition to whatever else they believe in."

Why is there no news that the Bismarck, North Dakota population managed to have it's water protected but not the Native Americans?

Was it racism, money or pull that gave them the advantage?

Jane Cadarette, North Andover

Events 2016

June We joined vigils in Andover and Lawrence, mourning those killed in Orlando and supporting the rights of people of any sexual persuasion.

We said goodbye to Larry Peacock as he and Anne Broyles move back to the west coast to be near family.

July We attended a weekday vigil, led by Mass Peace Action, at Textron. There were about 30 people spread out two or three hundred feet and we got many supportive honks.

Celine Ibrahim, at the Rolling Ridge Peace Conference, gave a scholarly look at places where the Quran works to build peace.

We enjoyed the music and the contact with the many people who came to our table at the Lowell Folk Festival to talk and to pick up fliers, buttons and bumper stickers. Having Mass Peace Action next to us again was both pleasurable and empowering.

August Our Hiroshima vigil was quiet, and a photographer from the *Lawrence Eagle Tribune* posted a picture in his paper and the *Andover Townsman*.

September We participated in the Lawrence Bread and Roses Festival on Labor Day. We gave out literature, buttons and bumper stickers; had good conversations and enjoyed the music and the Bread and Puppet performance.

At Andover Day, we shared a table with Amnesty International, gave out materials and spoke to people. We had the Mass Peace Action antinuclear petition on the table and many signed, including State Senator Barbara L'Italien and Andover Selectman Paul Salafia.

October Some of us donated to Hattie Nestel's truck of hay sent to the Standing Rock occupation. Jane wrote a letter to the editor.

Our vigil in front of Raytheon on October 8th was included in the international list of events during the "Keep Space for Peace" week.

November The Veterans for Peace Armistice Day march had many white VFP flags and two MVPP flags. It was cold but we listened to many good speeches at Quincy Market.

Our annual Stone Soup Supper was well attended. We were happy to have as speaker our own Lou Bernieri! He told us a bit about the latest in the Andover Bread Loaf program and finished with a poetry workshop at which we all joyfully participated. As always at this event, we collected funds for Oxfam.

December We held a vigil for Standing Rock at the same time as a similar vigil at North Parish and others nationwide, on the Sunday before the Army was to evacuate the protectors. That night the Army Corps of Engineers denied the permit to build. This was partial, but a victory to protect Native sovereignty and every one's water.

Meeting Notes

June 2016 At our Annual Meeting, Scott Shaeffer-Duffy entertained and inspired, reflecting on his book, "*Nothing is Impossible*." We approved the slate of officers, pending a verification.

July We finalized the new officers for 2016-19 as Nikki Rosen, Jane Cadarette, Pat Scanlon, Mary Todd, and Jim Todd.

We made plans for summer events:

- Lowell Folk Festival, Saturday July 30
- Hiroshima Day, Saturday, August 6
- Bread and Roses Festival, Monday September 5 (Labor Day) on the Lawrence Common
- Andover Day, Saturday, September 10

August We did not meet, but manned tables at summer events.

September We discussed ways of attracting younger people.

We scheduled the Raytheon vigil of October 8 to focus on ideas of "Keeping Space for Peace."

We scheduled the Stone Soup Supper and considered choices for a program.

October Lou Bernieri would lead the program at the Stone Soup Supper.

The gift and January program committees will meet

The January program will include Sister Megan Rice, Elaine Scarry and Dan Zak discussing activism against nuclear arms.

November The Stone Soup Supper collected donations to Oxfam. Lou Bernieri lead us in a poetry workshop that illustrated youth programs he helps lead in Lawrence. It helped us think about how to bring peace at many levels.

December We don't meet in December.

Coming Events

MVPP Annual Potluck Supper

January 6, 2017 at 6:30. At North Parish.

After supper we'll watch a video about the Market Basket "strike," *We the People: The Market Basket Effect*.

3rd Sunday of every month, Quaker vigil at **Textron** at Wilmington, MA on Rt 129, 11:00 AM --12.

Tuesday, **January 31 7:30** St. Michael Parish Hall
196 Main St. North Andover, MA 01845
MVPP presents

THE ENEMY IS US: THE PERILS OF NUCLEAR ARMS

Sister Megan Rice - 85 yr. old Roman Catholic nun, who earned two years in prison for breaching the security perimeter of the largest uranium storage facility in the country. "Being an anti-nuclear activist satisfied my need to do what is just common sense,"

Dan Zak – Washington Post journalist and author of *Almighty: Courage, Resistance, and Existential Peril in the Nuclear Age*

Elaine Scarry – Harvard Professor author of a number of books relevant to war and nuclear weapons. Her latest: *Thermonuclear Monarchy: Choosing Between Democracy and Doom*

Membership

**To continue to receive this newsletter...We Invite You to Join /Rejoin Us
(Unless 2016 appears on your label, your dues have expired. Please remember to renew.)**

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\$50.00 Supporting

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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, 6:30-7:30 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
Annual Potluck Supper!
Jan. 6 6:30 PM at North Parish Church
See movie about Market Basket

The Perils of Nuclear Arms
Jan 31: at St Michael's Parish, N Andover .

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

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

Every legislator knows one letter is worth a thousand votes.

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Contact: www.whitehouse.gov/contact/

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317 Hart Senate Office Building Washington DC 20510
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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>