



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 2017 – December 2017

Good News

Searching for Good news, Boryana found that Medea Benjamin of Code Pink had compiled a list. Here are the headlines. You can read the whole article at

<https://www.commondreams.org/views/2017/12/25/10-good-things-about-terrible-year> or at <https://zcomm.org/znetarticle/10-good-things-about-a-terrible-year/>

With so many good people feeling depressed, let's point to the positive things that happened, even in this really, really bad year.

1. #MeToo movement has empowered victims of sexual harassment and assault, and encouraged accountability.
2. The year has seen an explosion of grassroots organizing, protest, and activism
3. We're already seeing rebukes of Trump at the ballot box.
4. The first group of J20 protesters, people arrested in Washington DC on the day of Trump's inauguration, were found not guilty.
5. Chelsea Manning was released from prison after 7 years.
6. Cities and states have committed to positive climate initiatives, despite federal regression.
7. Trump's presidency has deepened the critical national conversation about racism and white supremacy.
8. This was the year the world said no to nuclear weapons.
9. ISIS no longer has a caliphate.
10. The global community stood up to Trump's stance on Jerusalem.

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

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

From MVPP

Letters

Dear Representative Mira and Senator Tarr:

After the hearing that took place July 18, 2017 in the Gardner Auditorium regarding the proposed legislation that would penalize supporters of the Palestinian-led Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement (BDS), I was convinced more than ever that this is the wrong way to go and should not be supported by the state. I mention two reasons out of many: (1) the bill would prevent Massachusetts from contracting with people or entities that supported a boycott of Israel in the past, (2) the bill is unconstitutional by interfering with the First Amendment right to boycott.

BDS is about Israel's denial of human rights for the Palestinians, people who have been denied access to their land, whose homes and olive groves have been demolished, who have been humiliated by a wall that makes it impossible for them to travel freely, who have been deprived from frequent power outages and lack of water. Apartheid, sanctioned by Israel, is what the Palestinians who live in the West Bank and in Gaza face every day.

Israel should acknowledge its use of apartheid; doing so, and helping the Palestinians live better lives would improve its relations with the world, erasing the stigma it now bears. The people of Israel, who themselves have suffered countless human rights abuses throughout history, deserve a better world opinion.

Barbara J Haack, West Newbury

Meeting Notes and

Recent Events July-December 2017.

July 26

The June annual meeting was summarized: Rosemarie Buxton from the Merrimack Valley Project spoke about lobbying for the Trust Act. MVPP Honored Jane Cadarette for her years of service to the organization and for the recent program in January. New officers were

elected by a vote to approve the nominating Committee report.

Secretary's report: We received a thank you from Sister Megan.

DECISIONS

-Lowell Folk Festival (Saturday, July 29)
Set-up has to be early because of Brian's other commitments. Brian, Kathie, Peter, and Boryana agreed to set up.

-Hiroshima Day (Sunday, August 6) Vigil
This will be held in Shawsheen Square, incorporated into the regular weekly vigil, since there is more traffic there and people are used to seeing us there. We will invite both UU churches

-Bread and Roses Festival (Monday, September 4)
Brian will not be here. Kathie will be the contact in case of bad weather.

-Andover Days (Saturday, September 9)
We will do this in partnership with First Parish Church of Andover. We voted to contribute \$40 toward the cost of the table. Kathie will help Boryana

-Host Screening of movie about Standing Rock
We postponed this to discuss at the September meeting for inclusion in the fall schedule

RECENT EVENTS

-The hearing at the State House on the Anti-Boycott bill (July 18). The hearing was jammed with approximately 3/4 of attendees being pro-Israel.

-Rolling Ridge Peace Conference (July 22-23)
Kathie reported. Mary, Jim and Julie Todd were there. The plenary speaker was Dr. Robert Jonas, director of the Empty Bell, a contemplative sanctuary in Northampton. He spoke of peace from a faith point of view and what various religions have to say about it. Kathie recommended The Empty Bell's website (<http://www.emptybell.org/>), which offers resources for learning about meditation and what it means to make peace with your past and future.

There were workshops on community organizing, integrating faith and political action, and churches

struggling with what is and isn't allowed as political activity.

-A Protest in Lawrence against Paul Ryan (July 21), took place at the New Balance factory. Ryan avoided the protesters by going in the back way. The protest was upbeat, with good signs covering a range of issues: health care, immigration, and tax reform. Barbara L'Italien spoke at the beginning. MVPP members Arthur and Marge Brien, Julie Todd, Pat Scanlon and Boryana Tacconi participated.

Solidarity Lowell (July 23)

Dee attended the monthly meeting of Solidarity Lowell, which included a demonstration of **Ranked Choice voting** (aka. instant run-off elections), which the organization Voter Choice Massachusetts would like to see instituted at the state level. Instead of voting for a single candidate, voters indicate their order of preference for candidates. If no candidate receives more than 50% of the votes, the candidate with the least amount of votes is dropped and the votes for that candidate are redistributed based on the second preference indicated on each ballot. This procedure is repeated until there is a clear winner of over 50% of the vote.

August 22

DECISIONS

-Bread and Roses Festival: (Monday, September 4) Setup will be at 11am. Boryana will retrieve items stored at Brian's house. Peter, Boryana, Michael and Dee will help with set-up. All except Michael will help to staff the table. Kathie will be the contact in case of bad weather. We made sure Peter had Kathie's number.

There is parking on Essex or Jackson Sts, on the Common, and on Garden Street across from the Common. There is a parking garage two blocks from the Common.

-Andover Day: Tables are provided. We will share a table with the AndoverUU congregation.

-Keep Space for Peace: Global Network's Keep Space for Peace week will be October 7-14. We agreed to combine with our vigil at Raytheon on Thursday, October 12, 7-8am.

DISCUSSION

We talked about government corruption, how much is actually publicly available: even on the DOD website, and yet still no one is held accountable and there is no furor over financial misdoings.

RECENT EVENTS

-Anti-hate/solidarity with Charlottesville events:

There were a number of vigils held in solidarity with Charlottesville anti-racists. August 13 in Westford approximately 50 people came together on the Common. Anyone who wanted could speak and a Holocaust survivor spoke very movingly. There was also a spontaneous vigil on the same evening in Andover.

A Stand Against Hate Rally in front of City Hall in Lowell on August 18 had over 50 attendees and got lots of positive response from passersby, one of whom joined the group. There were, alas, some counter voices. (There is supposedly a branch of the Daily Stormer in Lowell.)

August 19 was the big counterprotest in Boston, protesting a white supremacist rally (billed as a Free Speech Rally). Veterans for Peace assisted the police in protecting the white supremacists who were exercising their right to freedom of speech.

There was an Anti-hate rally in Shawsheen Square on August 19 that had approximately 200 attendees and garnered coverage in the Eagle-Tribune. There were "Hate Has No Home" fliers passed out which listed relevant local community organizations and faith-based groups. No opposing voices were heard.

It was agreed that it was good that we protested the display of hate that the white supremacists are thought to have intended.

There followed a discussion about how we are being divided by being played against each other: that the white supremacists actually have some concerns in common with the anti-hate crowd, that racism is one of the issues that is used to divide people so that the elites can maintain control. We heard about how it had been used by the British in Pakistan, where there were no serious problems between Hindus and Muslims until the British started playing them off against each other. When India and Pakistan were divided into separate countries, against the advice of Gandhi, 10 million people were relocated and over 1 million people were killed.

-Barbara's letter to the editor: Barbara had written a letter to the editor regarding the anti-boycott bill being considered in the state legislature. She attended the hearing on the bill. Some see a parallel in how Palestinians are treated with

how the US has treated Native Americans. –The letter is in this newsletter

September 26

UPCOMING EVENTS

Peter reminded us that Mass Peace Action is holding its annual Campaign Launch on October 1st in Cambridge.

According to an e-mail from John Schuchardt, an activist from Jeju Island (South Korea) is coming to the area at the end of October.

Could we invite him as a speaker to the MVPP October meeting? Brian will contact John. We would make sure to have a larger attendance than just a business meeting.

Stone Soup: We welcomed Jane Cadarette's idea to invite filmmaker and Veterans for Peace member David Rothauser to show his film

"Article 9 Coming to America" and talk about Article 9 in the Japanese Constitution and the struggle to keep it alive.

If he cannot come, we might show the documentary about Standing Rock. (Better to keep it for the January potluck.)

October 7th: St. Francis Celebration at the Agape Community, "Listening to Native Voices - Standing Rock is Everywhere" with many Native American speakers

October 8th: 32 Anniversary Celebration of the New England Peace Pagoda

October 12th: our weekly vigil at Raytheon is included in the international Keep Space for Peace week

RECENT EVENTS

International Day of Peace event at the Boston Common: MVPP was one of the sponsors. Boryana set up the table, and Brian played bagpipes. The theme included concerns about local gun violence.

October 24

REPORTS

Mass Peace Action annual meeting, October 1. Peter attended and reported on the need and means for recruiting young people.

Mary Kate Small walked part of the Maine Peace Walk and she wrote the following report:

"I participated one lovely afternoon on a walk from W. Bath to Brunswick. An older woman there looked familiar. I introduced myself... It was Liz McAlister, all the way from New York City, where she's been living since Jonah House - Baltimore's famed Catholic Worker.

Bruce Gagnon and friends were up to their usual good walk work. This year the focus was on the idea of converting Bath Iron Works products to non-violent ones. Fliers were distributed around Bath in hours of participant walking.

For Advent there will be Saturday 11:30AM vigils at Bath Iron Works organized by the Smiling Trees Disarmament Farm: calling for the end of General Dynamics manufacturing destroyers, and transformation to the creation of life affirming alternatives.

For more info: (207)763-4067.

I hope to join with Witness Against Torture's fast in DC in January at the time of the 16th anniversary of Guantanamo's prison for Muslims, decrying this place. More info available at: <http://www.witnessagainsttorture.com/>

Boryana attended the speech given by the Rev. W. D. Barber, leader of The Poor People's Campaign for Moral Revival, October 19 at Trinity Church, Boston.

Upcoming Events

Stone Soup Supper, November 21, with David Rothauser speaking - he is a play writer, filmmaker, teacher, and peace activist. Boryana will provide the stone! Brian and Peter will help set up. Bring a vegetable to add, and a check for Oxfam.

The annual MVPP donations committee (Kathie, Brian, Boryana, Barbara, and Wolfram) will meet December 5, 7:30 pm at Kathie's home, to decide on our donations for this year.

January Potluck, Friday, January 12 at 6:30 potluck followed by a program. A possibility is the movie on Standing Rock: "Awake". Another possibility is James Baldwin's "I am not your Negro". Boryana will preview them.

Recent Events after the October Meeting:

Armistice Day march and speeches, cold but inspiring.

Veterans for Peace awarded Pat Scanlon and Sev Bruyn (WWII veteran) the first annual "Racketeer for Peace" (aluding to War is a Racket).

60 People came to our Stone Soup Supper and viewed David Rothauser's film about Japan's Article 9.

On December 6., Brian, Pat and Boryana attended the Merrimack Interfaith Vigil to End Gun Violence hosted by the Chinmaya Maruti Hindu Temple in Andover.

Coming Events

January 12, Friday, 6:30 pm MVPP annual potluck.
Movie TBD. At the [North Parish Church](#)
190 Academy Rd.
North Andover.

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

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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.

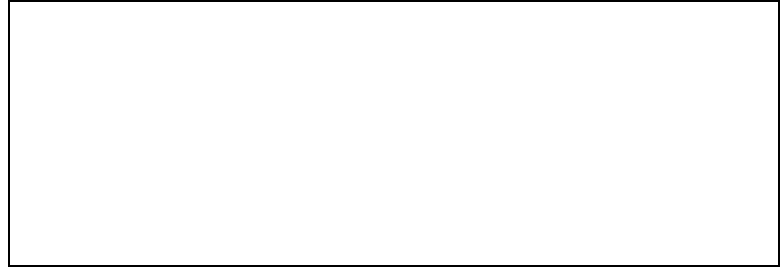
Rockport: Wednesday, noon-1 pm; First Congregational Church (silent for peace).

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

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

PEACE IS
PATRIOTIC



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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.

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

Senator Elizabeth Warren (202) 224-4543
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>