



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 2020 – June 2021

Good News

The **Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons** (TPNW) entered into force on 22 January 2021 as the first instrument of international humanitarian law to mitigate the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of using and testing nuclear weapons. By January 22, a total of 86 countries had signed the treaty.

For those nations that are party to it, the treaty prohibits the development, testing, production, stockpiling, stationing, transfer, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons, as well as assistance and encouragement to the prohibited activities. For nuclear armed states joining the treaty, it provides for a time-bound framework for negotiations leading to the verified and irreversible elimination of its nuclear weapons program.

So far none of the nuclear armed states have joined the TPNW. Still, it has been broadly welcomed as a significant milestone in the long and global effort to achieve a world free from nuclear weapons.

TC Energy Cancels Keystone XL Pipeline. The Canadian company TC Energy says it is canceling construction of the 1,200-mile Keystone XL pipeline, which would have carried over 800,000 barrels of oil each day from Canada's tar sands region across fragile ecosystems in the United States. The announcement came after the Biden administration revoked a key permit for Keystone XL in January, and follows years of Indigenous-led resistance against the project.

Meanwhile, **protests continue against construction of the Enbridge Line 3 pipeline.** In Minnesota 179 people have been arrested and charged with trespassing after a mass civil disobedience action on June 7. Water protectors are camped out at the headwaters of the Mississippi River, and they need reinforcements all summer long.

Reprieve for Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The Biden administration is suspending oil and gas leases in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge that were issued in the final weeks of the Trump administration. The Interior Department said the Trump leasing program wasn't properly reviewed for its environmental impacts. **However**, the move comes a week after the administration defended a massive oil and gas project in northern Alaska known as the "Willow Master Project." Environmental and Indigenous groups are suing the government in an attempt to stop the multibillion-dollar deal with Alaska's largest crude oil producer ConocoPhillips, which was approved last year by the Trump administration.

<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>

Washington State's Most Populous County Bans Use of Facial Recognition Technology. A groundbreaking proposal to ban government use of facial recognition software was passed on June 1 by the King County, WA, council by a unanimous vote of 9-0. "The use of facial recognition technology by government agencies poses distinct threats to our residents, including potential misidentification, bias, and the erosion of our civil liberties", said the legislation's prime sponsor, Councilmember Jeanne Kohl-Welles. King County, home to 2.3 million people in and around Seattle, becomes the first county and one of the largest jurisdictions in the United States to pass such a ban.

Melanie Stansbury has won the **Special Election for a NM House Seat.** In New Mexico, Democratic state Representative Melanie Stansbury defeated Republican state Senator Mark Moores in a special election to fill the seat left vacant by Interior Secretary Deb Haaland. Stansbury has backed progressive policies including Medicare for All and the Green New Deal.

In May, **The Massachusetts House of Representatives rejected** an amendment to the state budget bill which would have Massachusetts adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Association (IHRA) definition of antisemitism, a definition that equates criticism of Israel with antisemitism.

With only two days to respond before the amendment was considered, Jewish Voice for Peace-Boston, Massachusetts Peace Action, the Alliance for Water Justice in Palestine, and the Unitarian-Universalists for Justice in the Middle East mobilized quickly. Over 400 people wrote to the Chair of the House Ways and Means Committee, and to their own state representative and senator. In the end, the amendment was removed by the Ways and Means committee, effectively killing it.

Death penalty abolished in Virginia. In March, Virginia became the 23rd state to abolish the death penalty and the first Southern state to repeal the death penalty since the US Supreme Court reinstated the punishment in 1976. The new law, set to go into effect in July, comes as a major shift for Virginia, which has put to death more people in its history than any other state.

Meeting Notes

June 19, 2020 Annual Meeting

For our annual meeting, on Zoom, we had a speaker from Japan, Professor Donna McInnes, who spoke about Self Compassion, how to care for our sanity as we continue to oppose war. We should forgive and care for ourselves and others and stay focused on what we can do.

We acknowledged the death of member Peter Cameron.



Peter Cameron 2014 (photo: Jane Cadarette)

We reviewed the completed year, and elected new officers.

The board voted on line, June 24, to not endorse the petition by "Pivot for Peace" about Twitter censoring their account about China, but, without our help, the account was later reopened.

The board voted online to be listed in an alert regarding Israeli annexation.

. . . We did not meet in **July**.

August 25, 2020

We decided against endorsing a death with dignity movement, because it was outside of our mission statement, and we don't all agree on the issues.

We voted to sign an apology to Japan for nuclear bombing, requested by Nonviolence International.

September 22, 2020

We voted to dedicate our Thursday Raytheon vigil to the annual Keep Space for Peace vigil.

Phil recommended a video, about Raytheon arming the Saudis in Yemen,

We noted the Saturday, September 26 Mass Peace Action vigils, calling to eliminate nuclear weapons. We would have signs at the Andover Indivisible BLM demonstration that day.

October 27, 2020

We decided to send emails to fund raise for Oxfam, instead of meeting for a Stone Soup Supper.

Barbara Haack and Phil Noyce informed the attendees about the recent historic milestone of Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty entering into force after Honduras formally joined 49 other states in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. **On January 22, 2021, the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons will enter into force.** The US has not signed it, so we should advocate that we do sign.

Barbara Haack strongly recommended that MVPP should make it its focus issue.

November 24, 2020

International Day of Action on Yemen will be held on January 25, 2021. MVPP will hold a vigil at Raytheon on that day at 7:00 am MVPP plans to sign the Joint Statement “World Says No to War on Yemen” and join the long list of organizations opposed to US (Saudi) war on Yemen.

The **Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty** will become effective on January 22, 2021. Phil Noyce suggested that a banner about the Treaty be prepared and displayed at planned vigils at Raytheon

Masood informed the attendees about the 13th annual **Convention for Palestine in the US** organized by AMP (American Muslims for Palestine), the on-line convention to be held Nov. 27-29, 2020. The convention will focus on Palestinians and the others suffering oppression and will be addressed by congresswoman Betty McCollum, political commentator Phyllis Bennis and many other scholars.

. . . We did not meet in **December**. The Donations Committee met and treasurer Kathy Robinson sent donations.

January 26, 2021

We did not feel optimistic about prospects of reduced military spending by the new administration. The struggle for reducing spending on weapons of mass destruction and increasing spending for needs of the people, such as healthcare, must continue.

We agreed to renew meeting with US Representatives Seth Moulton and Lori Trahan; and supporting Senators Elizabeth Warren & Ed Markey.

Kathie Robinson reported receipt of additional copies of Frances Crowe’s book. A few copies of the book are being circulated among, and enjoyed, by the members already.

February 23, 2021

Sunny Robinson is trying to arrange a meeting, next week, with Seth Moulton’s new senior foreign policy advisor Schulyer Moore, who has replaced Christy Wagner, in Moulton office. Barbara Haack and Masood Sheikh plan to attend on behalf of MVPP.

MVPP members in CD3 plan to approach Lori Trahan and urge her to sign on the “No First Nuclear Strike” bill introduced by Senator Ed Markey.

Allan Sifferlin informed the attendees that State Senator Pat Jehlen and Representative Nika Elugardo have filed bills in the state legislature calling for divestment of the Massachusetts Pension Plan from companies selling weapons to Saudi Arabia.

We remembered Marguerite Brien, who died February 14, 2021.

<https://www.breenfuneralhome.com/obituaries/Marguerite-Brien/>



Marguerite Brien

March 23, 2021

Kathie Robinson reported about payment of ‘rent’ though we were not meeting in the building.

We heard reports from meetings with US Representatives Seth Moulton and Lori Trahan.

April 27, 2021

As an addition to the agenda, Dee Halzack brought up the Petition to Demand Congress add checks and balances to our nuclear system and enact No First Use. It is being endorsed by a coalition of organizations. Brian offered to send the petition out to the board so we could vote to endorse it.

We discussed a follow-up to the meeting with Rep. Lori Trahan's Chief of Staff. MVPP will send a thank you letter and we will call again within six months.

We voted to support the seven peace and justice bills filed in MA State Legislature in January and February 2021. MAPA and the Massachusetts Peace and Justice Network have partnered with progressive legislators to develop those bills. They address a range of issues, including nuclear weapons, the war in Yemen, Pentagon spending vs. a Moral Budget, divestment from weapons manufacturers, corruption, and lack of transparency.

Boryana reported on the Mass Peace Action (MAPA) annual meeting on April 24.

Phil Noyce read all the new signs that he is making and planning to make for the weekly Raytheon vigil.

May 25, 2021

Dee will ask members of Lowell's 350 group to speak about their activities concerning climate change at our annual meeting.

The nominating Committee will prepare to update our officers list for the annual meeting.

We approved sending \$200, plus individual's gifts, to help in Gaza, through the Catholic Medical Mission Board

Events 2020

June 2020

Members attended Black Lives Matter demonstrations in Andover, Methuen and Lawrence and other towns.

Masood and Phil attended the Mass Peace Action on-line conference, June 18 concerning US aid contributing to Israel's planned annexation on the occupied West Bank.

July 2020

Some attended Black Lives Matter vigils on Saturdays at 10, organized by Andover Area Solidarity Group.

Individuals attended Zoom meetings and signed internet petitions.

August 2020

We had twenty people at our vigil for Hiroshima, including sisters from Pax Christi, Veterans For Peace, and Mass Peace Action.

Some attended Black Lives Matter vigils on Saturdays

September 2020

Some, especially Boryana, wrote post cards to encourage voting and absentee voting in Southern states.

Some attended Black Lives Matter vigils on Saturdays

Masood Sheikh informed the participants about his participation in AMP's (American Muslims for Palestine) Advocacy for Palestinians Week. The advocacy week was held September 14 -18 in collaboration with more than a dozen other peace and justice groups, including Jewish Voice for Peace, and was attended by 800 people from diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds from 42 states. The plenary session was addressed by six members of the US House of Representatives. The participants from MA held discussions with staff of Senators Elizabeth Warren and Ed Markey.

October 2020

Some attended Black Lives Matter vigils on Saturdays

We dedicated our Oct 8 Raytheon vigil to Keep Space for Peace.

November 2020

Brian attended the VFP Armistice Day stand out at Boston Common.

Five members attended Mass Peace Action's Zoom meeting November 22.

January 2021

On Friday, January 22, 2021 MVPP members held a vigil at Raytheon to celebrate the historic milestone of Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty entering into force. The vigil was joined by John Schuchardt and others from *The House of Peace*.

On Monday, January 25, 2021 MVPP members participated in *International Day of Action on Yemen* against the war on Yemen by holding a vigil at Raytheon.

Boryana Tacconi attended the Massachusetts Peace Action conference on January 23, 2021. This Conference pointed out that even though the Coronavirus has devastated the economy, it has not had any braking effect on the presidential and congressional push for spending more of our tax dollars on military and nuclear weapons development programs. The conference was focused on finding ways to continue to collaborate and cooperate in the development of a social movement strong enough to reverse the new nuclear arms race

Speeches are on youtube at:

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=Massachusetts+Peace+Action+conference+January+23+2021

February 2021

President Biden reduced arms sales to Yemen.

March 2021

Barbara Haack and Masood Sheikh met with Seth Moulton's new senior foreign policy advisor Schuyler Moore on March 8, 2021. Sunny Robinson, who had arranged the meeting through MAPA, did express the group's concerns about peace, justice, and military budget, but response from Ms. Moore indicated that Moulton's only focus was 'National Security.'

We met with Congresswoman Lori Trahan's staffer Mark McDevitt. Dee Halzak set up the meeting. Well prepared briefs were presented by Kathy Robinson (Our Ideals), Allan Sifferlen (HR 669, Restricting First Use of Nuclear

Weapons Act of 2021), Phil Noyce (A military veteran's view), and Dee Halzak (Money better spent on Public Health). Mr. McDevitt shared that Congresswoman Trahan's plans very much align with ours. He also stated that Ms. Trahan was also working on restoring authority to declare war back to Congress.

We held our weekly vigil at Raytheon with a St. Patrick's Day theme, including a frozen bagpiper.

Some of us joined demonstrations supporting Asians, after the murders in Atlanta, GA.

April 2021

MVPP members participated at the annual Vigil to Abolish the Death Penalty, held in Reading on Good Friday.

May 2021

Mary Kate organized a zoom meeting with Arthur Brien, now at his daughter's house. We were happy to see each other.

Brian, Boryana, and Pat were at the Veterans for Peace Memorial service on the Boston Common.

Coming Events

MVPP Annual Meeting, On-line June 18, 2021 at 7 PM.
Hear about Lowell's work on climate change.
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5051947184?pwd=WWtPamJatWGpqTzJJS25WNGxHbXIOQT09>

Our website posts events:
<http://www.merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org/events.htm>

Mass Peace Action Events:
<http://masspeaceaction.org/events/>

Join Zoom Meetings 4th Tuesdays at 7:30 pm
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5051947184?pwd=WWtPamJatWGpqTzJJS25WNGxHbXIOQT09>
Meeting ID: 505 194 7184
Passcode: NoWar1985 (if needed)
Mobile phone: 1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

Or email to get invited: brian@quirk.ws

Membership

To continue to receive this newsletter...We Invite You to Join /Rejoin Us
.(Unless 2021 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 and Monthly 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; Paul Paulsen (978) 462-7894

Reading: 2nd Saturday/each month, 11 am-noon; Reading Square; Reading People for Peace; Larry Piper, vigils@ReadingPeace.org

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/>

Annual Meeting June 18 see inside

PEACE IS
PATRIOTIC



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MVPP President: Brian Quirk. Vice President: Masood Sheikh

Newsletter contributors: Barbara Haack, Dee Halzack, 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 Joseph Biden (202) 456-1414 switchboard
The White House (202) 456-1111 comments
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
(202) 225-8020 Salem, MA 01970
fax (202) 225-5915 (978) 531-1669 fax (978) 224-2270
Form: <https://moulton.house.gov/contact/>

Representative Lori Trahan (District 3)
1616 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC
20515 202-225-3411
15 Union St, Suite 401, Lawrence, MA 01840
978 459-0101
11 Kearney Square, 3rd floor
Lowell, MA 01852 978 459-0101 fax: 978-459-1907
Haverhill Citizens Center 10 Welcome Street
492 Main Street Acton, MA 01720 (978) 263-1951
Contact: <https://trahan.house.gov/contact/>

A link to all in US legislature:
thomas.loc.gov/home/legbranch/legbranch.html

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

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

State Bills
<http://www.mass.gov/legis/hbillsrch.htm>