



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 2021 – November 2021

Good News

House passes amendment to end US complicity in Saudi bombing of Yemen. On 23 September the U.S. House approved an amendment to the annual defense bill that would cut off the U.S. weapons and logistical support for the Saudi-led war and blockade on Yemen. The amendment, introduced by Rep. Ro Khanna (D-Calif) and Sen. Bernie Sanders passed by a 219-207 vote. Speaking on the House floor, Rep. Khanna said his amendment “would end all U.S. logistical support and transfer of spare parts for Saudi warplanes that are bombing Yemen, that are bombing schools, that are killing children, that are bombing civilians in the largest humanitarian crisis around the world.”

The vote was welcomed by anti-war and progressive groups, several of whom however continue to advocate for broader changes to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). “While we support Khanna’s amendment, we do not support the NDAA as a whole without a significant cut to the Pentagon budget,” wrote CodePink. “Regardless, the amendment remains a strong message to the Biden administration that Yemen can’t wait.”

2021 Right Livelihood winners are climate and justice activists across the Globe. The winners of the Right Livelihood Award, also known as the “Alternative Nobel Prize” for 2021 are: “Unis’to’ten” land defender **Freda Huson** from Canada “for her fearless dedication to reclaiming her people’s culture and defending their land against disastrous pipeline projects”; **Marthe Wandou**, Cameroonian peace activist fighting against sexual violence and promoting women’s and children’s rights; Russian environmental leader **Vladimir Slivyak**, who has taken on the coal and nuclear industries; and the organization **Legal Initiative for Forest and Environment**, or **LIFE**, which empowers communities in India to protect their resources in the pursuit of environmental democracy.

Federal protections for three national monuments restored. In a hard-won victory for Indigenous Peoples and environmental groups on October 8, the Biden administration restored federal protections for three national monuments that were drastically rolled back by the previous administration to allow for commercial exploitation and extraction. The monuments are Bears Ears, Grand Staircase-Escalante in Utah and the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts off the coast of New England. Over 3.2 million acres will come back under federal protection in Utah alone.

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

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

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The first-ever presidential proclamation of Indigenous Peoples' Day was issued by President Biden on October 8, 2021, lending the most significant boost yet to efforts to refocus the federal holiday celebrating Christopher Columbus toward an appreciation of Native peoples. While Native Americans have campaigned for years for local and national days in recognition of the country's indigenous people, the proclamation appeared to catch many by surprise.

"For generations, Federal policies systematically sought to assimilate and displace Native people and eradicate Native cultures," Biden wrote in the Indigenous Peoples' Day proclamation, thus finding an elegant way to describe genocide. "Today, we recognize Indigenous peoples' resilience and strength as well as the immeasurable positive impact that they have made on every aspect of American society."

Amen to that! Now if the administration would shut down the Dakota Access Pipeline which has been transporting toxic crude oil near the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's reservation since 2017 and operating illegally since March 25, 2020... or stop the Enbridge Tar Sands pipeline (known as Line 3) in Minnesota which will carry 760,000 barrels of tar sands oil per day through untouched wetlands and the treaty territory of Anishinaabe people... to mention just those two.

This year Massachusetts had the biggest Indigenous Peoples' Day so far. Here in Massachusetts many events were held all over the state, including land acknowledgments, dancing, speeches, sharing of food and art. The annual march from Park Street Station was reported to have been double the size of last year's. It led to the waterfront park still known as "Columbus Waterfront Park" although the statue of Columbus is gone.

Labor News: 30,000 Kaiser healthcare workers win tentative contract. Unions representing more than 30,000 Kaiser Permanente healthcare workers on the West Coast and Hawaii called off a planned strike on November 15 after winning a tentative contract that raises wages and sets limits on nurse-to-patient ratios.

More labor news from Chicago, Buffalo, and the Pacific Northwest. In Chicago, tortilla manufacturer El Milagro announced on October 28 that it is ending its 7-days workweek and will begin giving employees Sundays off starting November. The announcement came amid worker walkouts and protests denouncing low pay, staff shortages and workplace abuse.

In Buffalo, New York, Starbucks workers have won a significant victory against the coffee chain giant after the National Labor Relations Board ruled three separate Buffalo stores can hold elections on whether to form a union. If successful, the three coffee shops would be the first unionized Starbucks stores in the country.

Workers at five branches of the Pacific Northwest restaurant chain Burgerville have become the country's first fast food employees to successfully unionize. The tentative agreement with Burgerville includes expanded sick leave, vacation benefits, paid parental leave and a reliable three-month schedule.

Australian climate activists disrupt operations at world's largest coal port for eleven straight days. Climate activists in Australia have disrupted rail shipments into the Port of Newcastle for an eleventh consecutive day in a nonviolent direct action aimed at halting exports from the world's largest coal port. Some of the activists have locked their bodies to rail cars and railroad tracks, others suspended themselves on platforms or giant tripods in the path of trains or from massive pieces of machinery, halting operations in the coal port. At least 19 people have been arrested on charges that could put them in prison for up to 25 years.

Veterans for Peace Reclaim Armistice Day as a day dedicated to world peace. On November 11 Veterans for Peace chapters and members across the U.S. and abroad once again took the lead to reclaiming Armistice Day as a "day dedicated to the cause of world peace as it was celebrated at the end of World War I and hereafter – until in 1954 the name of the holiday was changed to Veteran's Day.

Meeting Notes

Friday June 18, 2021 Annual Meeting on Zoom.

Video is available at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o3G3Gs9p7NM>

Stephen Malagodi gave a presentation about War and Climate Change. A resident of Lowell, he belongs to *350 Mass*, which, is a part of *350.org*, a national organization focused on Climate Change and Energy Policy. He showed a strong correlation between the world wars, the control of oil supply and the global warming. A 30-minute question and answer session followed his short presentation. Mr. Malagodi shared names and contacts of many local activist groups.

The slate of 2021-2024 MVPP Officers and Directors was announced and is as follows.

President:	Brian Quirk
Vice-President:	Masood Sheikh
Treasurer:	Kathy Robinson
Clerk:	Boryana Tacconi, Masood Sheikh
Corresponding secty:	Barbara Haack
Newsletter	Brian Quirk, Boryana Tacconi

Board of Directors

2019-2022	2020-2023	2021-2024
Pat Scanlon	Lou Bernieri	Allan Sifferlen
Phil Noyce	Ruth Canonico	Janice Sifferlen
Mary Todd	Peter Casey	Michael Bleiweiss
Mary Kate Small	Barbara Haack	Kathy Magardo
Bobbie Goldman	Dee Halzack	Wolfram Neff

Tuesday, July 27, 2021.

Brian Quirk reported that Ed Meagher, son of the former president of MVPP, moved the hosting of our website, and his own, from Bluehost to his own server at his house. The site is public but temporarily difficult to edit.

Veterans for Peace started this campaign over 8 years ago to challenge the overt celebration of militarism and redirect the November 11th celebrations to highlight moments when the world came together to work towards peace and the common good. Their message is being heard by more and more people and gaining popularity! This year again, VPF chapters hosted many virtual actions and in-person events. The Armistice Day 2021 Recap can be found at the VPF website www.veteransforpeace.org. It contains a treasure trove of uplifting information: the full photo album of VPF events across the country, recordings of events, reports from local chapter actions, links to articles, podcasts, radio shows, videos, OpEds, Letters to the Editor and more.

Members of the Smedley Butler Chapter and supporters gathered at Park Street in Boston on this unusually mild and sunny day with a sound system, speakers and poets. At 11:11, our own Pat Scanlon rang a bell 11 times to celebrate Armistice Day as a day of Peace the way it was in 1918. We heard many good speakers and poets, including an unforgettable poem by VPF member David Rothausen.



Vigil for Hiroshima Day: Boryana Tacconi has obtained permission for the planned vigil in front of the Old Town Hall – Andover 7:00 pm on August 6, 2021.

Bread & Roses – Participation in the annual event was discussed but no decision was made because the event had not been finalized yet.

Treasurer, Katherine Robinson reminded all about payment of their membership dues.

MVPP members have recently signed a letter to Senator Ed Markey to urge him to work to further reduce U.S. participation in the war against Yemen.

The attendees discussed imminent dominance of Afghanistan by the Taliban after withdrawal of the US troops. All shared deep concern about the expected dire situation for the Afghani women under Taliban. Special concern was expressed for the Taliban's hostility to girls' education. Masood Sheikh informed us that the Taliban's hostility toward girls' education was utterly against the teachings of the prophet Muhammad, who is reported to have said, "Seeking of knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim man and every Muslim woman."

Tuesday, August 24

Before the start of the formal meeting, June-Ruth Canonico asked the attendees to pray for her friend, Kathy Callagy. Kathy, who is 73- years old, is currently in the Cardiac Unit at Mass General Hospital and has been suffering from a series of infections after bypass surgery.

MVPP will participate in the Bread & Roses event. The event will be held at Campagnone Park, Lawrence from 11:00 am to 6:00 pm on Labor Day (September 6, 2021). Brian, Boryana, and Allan and Janice Sifferlen have volunteered their services to set up the MVPP station. All MVPP members are encouraged to visit and spend some time at the MVPP tent.

The vigil at Raytheon on Thursday, October 7, 2021, from 7:00am to 8:00 am is planned as a part of "Keep Space for Peace Week".

Brian informed the attendees that honorarium for the Annual Meeting speaker has been approved via e-mail.

He also informed us that the MVPP members have voted (via e-mail) to endorse state legislation to have Massachusetts encourage negotiations to control and reduce nuclear weapons.

Tuesday September 28

Treasurer, Katherine Robinson, reported that currently MVPP account was healthy and that the MVPP tent at the Bread & Roses Festival had sold a lot of message buttons and stickers. She also reported that Donna McInnis - Professor of Peace Studies in Japan, the guest speaker at the last year's annual meeting, had not cashed her honorarium check, and, therefore, the honorarium amount would be credited to MVPP's account. The Catholic Workers in Worcester made a generous donation in memory of Marguerite Brien.

Brian Quirk reported that the MVPP website was active but its content has not been updated. There will be a newsletter by November.

The attendees expressed preference for continued use of Zoom for on-line meetings until the Covid-19 situation improves to allow in-person attendance. The attendees hoped that this may be possible for MVPP's Stone Soup gathering in November. Stay tuned!

It was suggested that some folks from the International Institute be invited and ways of helping them in settling Afghan refugees be actively explored and pursued.

It was noted that January 2021 Potluck Dinner was canceled due to Covid-19. All hoped to hold it in January 2022. The decision was postponed until November 2021.

There was a lot of discussion about MVPP's focus and priorities for the next year. Vigils and Advocacy for Peace are to remain among the top priorities and must manifest in our active opposition to wars and crippling sanctions that mainly hurt the most vulnerable. Education to counter the prevailing plethora of misinformation is a vital necessity. MVPP must also work with other active groups to help Afghan refugees.

Tuesday, October 26

Brian Quirk reported that the MVPP website was active, and he is now able to edit its contents.
<https://www.merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org/>

MVPP's Stone Soup event will be held from 7-9 pm on November 23, 2021. In person attendance for the event was desired by many and was hotly debated. However, in view of continued Covid-19 concerns, the attendees unanimously

agreed to hold the event on-line (Zoom meeting). Brian Quirk will contact the International Institute for a speaker for the event. It was suggested that folks from the International Institute be invited and ways of helping them in settling Afghan refugees be actively explored and pursued. MVPP will solicit donations for the refugees. We will also collect money for Oxfam as we always do for Stone Soup.

January 2022 Potluck Dinner has been canceled.

Kathie Robinson informed the attendees that MVPP's status as a 501-C 3 organization has lapsed and that its reinstatement would be time consuming and expensive. All agreed that the reinstatement was not worth the effort and expense because its lack would not deter MVPP from its normal activities.

The Donations Committee (Barbara Haack, Brian Quirk, Kathie Robinson) will meet on-line to coordinate their activities.

Events 2021

July 2021

Brian and Boryana helped Indivisible Andover send post cards to Maine voters.

Some of us met with State Sen. Barry Finegold's office concerning a Massachusetts Saudi Divestment bill.

August 2121

Vigil for Hiroshima Day was held at 7:00 pm on August 6, 2021 in front of the Old Town Hall, Andover.

Boryana participated in Indivisible Andover's vigils for Voting Rights on Saturdays (10:00 – 11:00 am).

September 2021

MVPP participated in the Bread and Roses Festival in Lawrence on Labor Day. Our table sold pins, bumper stickers, and literature, and we talked with many.

Phil Noyce participated in a presentation of Mass Peace Action/Jewish Voice for Peace to petition Senator Elizabeth Warren. Phil also took part in the Mass Peace Action protest against Raytheon's sponsorship of the Run to Home Base at Fenway on September 25.

October 2021

Keep Space for Peace Vigil was at Raytheon at 7:00-8:00 am on October 7, 2021

November 2021

VFP Armistice Day commemoration at Park St Station, Boston. November 11, 2021
See David Rothausser's speech. (It may not work if you are not on facebook).

<https://www.facebook.com/nategold/videos/563668284696562>

Coming Events

MVPP's Stone Soup event will be held from 7-9 pm on November 23, 2021 on Zoom at

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5051947184?pwd=WWtPamJaWGpqTzJJS25WNGxHbXIOQT09>

Meeting ID: 505 194 7184

Passcode: NoWar1985 (if passcode needed)

Mobile phone: 1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

Join Zoom Meetings 4th Tuesdays at 7:30 pm
at this same link

This year again, MVPP is entering a tree in the Methuen Festival of Trees (11/19 - 12/4). The theme of the tree is Gnomes for Peace. It is decorated with gnomes sporting peace buttons, holding peace flags, feeding peace doves and much more.



Our website posts events:

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

Mass Peace Action Events:

<http://masspeaceaction.org/events/>

IN MEMORIAM



Sr. Megan Rice S.H.C.J. (January 31, 1930 - October 10, 2021)

Catholic nun, scientist, educator, peace activist and crusader against nuclear weapons, Sister Megan Rice has been a force for good all through her long life. She worked as a teacher in the U.S., Nigeria and Ghana. From the 1980s on she has participated in protests against a variety of American military actions, nuclear weapons installations and military sites: the Nevada Test Site, the Creech Air Force Base, the US Army School of the Americas (SOA), the Vandenberg Air Force Base where she protested the launch of a test Minuteman III Intercontinental Ballistic missile. She has been arrested about 40 times for acts of civil disobedience and served two six-month prison sentences resulting from trespasses while protesting the SOA.

On July 28, 2012, Sister Megan Rice (age 82) and two fellow activists, Michael Walli and Gregory Boertje-Obed, all three of them members of the Plowshares Movement, entered the Y-12 National Security Complex in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, a Highly Enriched Uranium Materials facility. They spray-painted slogans like "The fruit of justice is peace" and splashed blood against the walls of the complex's newest storage building. Nuclear weapons experts called this action "the biggest security breach in the history of the nation's atomic complex." Actually, the three activists were totally amazed that they got through three barbed wire fences without being stopped, which showed that the facility was much less heavily guarded than expected. The break-in triggered congressional hearings, upended a government contract worth billions of dollars and prompted internal investigations by the Energy Department's National Nuclear Security Administration. The three Plowshare activists even

got thanks from a congressman for pointing out some problems in the security.

The three activists faced long prison sentences ("No-o problem!", said Sister Megan in a videotaped interview at the time, "I met such wonderful people in prison!") which were overturned by an appeals court, so that Sr. Megan was released in 2015. She continued her activism through marches, vigils, prayers, visits to classrooms and meetings with peace and justice groups throughout the country.

In January 2017 MVPP organized and hosted an event at which Sister Megan Rice was the main speaker. We are very lucky to have met her in person, spent some time with her and listened to her inspiring and witty words.

Obituaries often end with the words "Rest in peace", but it is somehow difficult to imagine Sister Megan Rice blissfully relaxing in heaven while there are nuclear weapons on Earth and so much work for peace and justice to be done. If we can hope for any help from beyond, she certainly is going to be among the helpers.

Sister Megan Rice, Presente!

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 no longer 501(c)(3) organization.

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).

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

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

PEACE IS
PATRIOTIC



The MVPP Newsletter is printed periodically and has a current distribution of 70. We are grateful for suggestions, comments, and help with publication

MVPP President: Brian Quirk. Vice President: Masood Sheikh
Newsletter contributors: 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>