

**November 25** Join MVPP at the North Parish Church for our annual **"Stone-soup Supper"** at 6:30 to share a simple meal of soup and bread. Becci Backman will provide the soup base; please bring vegetarian items to add to the soup, or some bread. Thanksgiving is a traditional time of reflection about the hungry people in the world, and of giving. Instead of a more substantial meal, we collect an offering to contribute to OXFAM. After a brief business meeting at 7:30, **Jane Bernhardt**, a 3rd generation portrait

artist, performer, and peace activist, will share with us her exhibit of portraits, narratives, and poetry of Hibakusha, the Survivors of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, from her trip to Hiroshima last August. Greta Bro and company will provide live music.



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## 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, economic diversification, and protection of the environment.

**NOVEMBER 2003**

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*Merrimack Valley People for Peace joins the United Nations and Peacemakers around the world in proclaiming the years 2001-2010 to be the "International Decade for the Culture of Peace."*

## GOOD NEWS

**Victory for International law and nonviolence** DU protesters found "not guilty" of trespass at weapons assembler. On October 17, a six-person jury in Hennepin County, Minnesota, declared that International Law can trump the local private property/no trespass law. At the height of the recent war against Iraq, on April 2, 2003, 28 Minnesotans "crossed the line," entering the world headquarters property of Alliant TechSystems Corporation in Edina with the express purpose of conducting a "citizens weapons inspection."

They carried demanding access to the books and records of Alliant TechSystems Corporation (ATK) to

see if they had completed any studies on the medical and environmental effects of the depleted uranium munitions they produce.

The defendants contended that there is significant evidence that the depleted uranium penetrator munitions produced by ATK containing U-238, a radioactive substance with a half-life of 4.5 billion years, is a prime sus-

pect in rising rates of cancer and birth defects among residents of southern Iraq and US troops who served in the first Gulf War.

At the October 17 trial was all 28 were found not guilty. Using provisions from the U.S. Constitution and International Human-

### *Please Support Us*

At this time of year, many of our members support their favorite charities with a gift. The Merrimack Valley People for Peace is a non-profit 501 c(3) educational organization. As such, all donations are tax deductible. Please support our work for peace with a charitable gift this holiday season! (See Membership form on page 7 for mailing instructions.)

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**MVPP Stone Soup Dinner - North Parish Church - Tuesday, November 25, 6:30 PM**

*Printed on recycled paper*

tarian Law, the defendants successfully argued that the “manufacture, sale, stockpiling, as well as the use of weapons containing this radioactive waste (depleted uranium) is illegal.”

The U.S. Constitution declares that International Treaties signed by the government become “the supreme law of the land.” The Hague and Geneva Conventions and its protocols and subsequent treaties are clear that weapons which cannot discriminate between civilian and military or combatants are prohibited from not only use but also from manufacture and sale. The Nuremberg Tribunals were the vehicle victorious Allied countries used to judge and punish German military, political, and corporate leaders for war crimes, crimes against peace, and crimes against humanity after WWII. The Nuremberg Principles were incorporated into the Charter of the United Nations, a treaty which in now “supreme law” in the U.S. when it ratified it. The 7th Principle declares that “complicity with a Crime Against Humanity or a War Crime” is a crime under International Law. Because of the increasing evidence mounting about the indiscriminate nature of this weapon, the defendants argued they were compelled to act. Go to [www.nukewatch.com](http://www.nukewatch.com) for more information.

### **Nonviolent Peaceforce receives Peace Award**

The Nonviolent Peaceforce, an international organization building a trained civilian “peace army, received the Josep Vidal i Llecha Association’s Memorial por la Paz for 2003 on October 3, 2003. Since 1985, the award has been given to persons, groups, and initiatives dedicated to the promotion of peace, disarmament and ecology. The citation to the Nonviolent Peaceforce reads “For the future hope of creating a peace force, capable of intervention at large scale in pacific resolution of conflicts, without increasing the spiral of violence.” Delegates from all over the world chose Sri Lanka as the site of the Non-

violent Peaceforce’s pilot project, hoping to apply proven, workable methods of accompaniment of peace and human rights leaders, international presence in vulnerable areas and monitoring of human rights.

**John Tierney continues to shine** in the House of Representatives. He was one of the few who voted against the President’s decision to invade Iraq preemptively and unilaterally. He again addressed the House October 16, this time to argue against the \$87 billion Iraq fund; instead he voted for the Democratic alternative of reconstruction loans from the World Bank and a roll back of tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans to June 2001 levels.

Keep Tierney on a roll by thanking him for his good work.

**Former Vice President Al Gore** continues to speak out against the Bush policies, calling for the repeal of the Patriot Act. “It makes no more sense to launch an assault on our civil liberties as the best way to get at terrorists than it did to launch an invasion of Iraq as the best way to get at Osama bin Laden.”

MoveOn.org and the American Constitution Society sponsored the event.

### **Vigils at Dawn**

For many years MVPP members Arthur Brien and Mary Kate Small have protested every Tuesday at the entrance to the Raytheon facility on Lowell Street in Andover. They have been “present” with their signs on cold snowy Tuesdays as well as on hot, humid ones, but what is most remarkable is that they are there with their signs (*Good People/Bad Product* is a favorite sign) when the cars start arriving for the first shift, between 5:45-6:45 in the morning. Asked what motivates her, Mary Kate responded, “By the Arthur Briens of this world.” For Arthur, it’s a religious commitment. Once in a great while, they are greeted with a thumbs up; once a driver had a “Thank you” sign on the passenger side window.

Signs: Washington DC  
October 15 Peace march

**Disarm us before  
we hurt ourselves**

**Bush lied,  
thousands died**

On the wall surrounding  
the Washington monument

**I love my country but I think it’s time we  
started seeing other people**

**No one is sure exactly how old the human race is,  
but everyone agrees it’s old enough to know better**

**If we had wanted Bush as commander in chief, we  
would have elected him**

## MVPP Founder Alison Ceplikas

We are sad to report that Alison Ceplikas, co-founder of North Andover People For Peace, the predecessor of MVPP, died November 8 after a long battle with cancer. Born January 8, 1918, she devoted her life to making the world a better, more ethical place, and was a wonderful role model for peacemakers. We will miss her.

Alison founded the North Another People for Peace when she became concerned that North Andover churches were not doing enough to address the threat of nuclear annihilation. Her goal was to work ecumenically through North Andover's communities of faith. After the group formed, it was decided that the focus should be expanded to include education and advocacy to the general public and within local schools. Alison made contacts within the North Andover school system and worked with the administration to implement peace education and conflict resolution training. Under Alison's presidency North Andover People for Peace grew from a handful of members to include several dozen. We incorporated and applied for its non-profit status.

We further expanded our focus to include environmental advocacy. Under Alison's presidency, we held some of our most creative education programs, including bringing Benjamin Spock to Phillips Academy, holding a debate on Star Wars with the president of Raytheon, and performing a play about the absurdity of the nuclear weapons race with the North Parish Church Christian Education program. After stepping down from the presidency in the late 1980's, Alison remained an active member and corresponding secretary of MVPP throughout the 1990's. When she moved to New Hampshire, Alison joined her sister Lois in volunteering in the Peace Action state office.

Mass Peace Action honored Alison with the 1995 Peace Award "for her stalwart, long-time work for peace and social justice and for the inspiration she provides to her friends and coworkers at the grassroots."



These two committed people are joined every second Tuesday of the month by a dedicated group of people from the Catholic Worker House in Worcester, and the Haley House in Boston; it was, in fact, the group from Catholic Worker House who initiated the weekly Raytheon vigil in 1998, and it is only recently that car problems have forced them to reduce their trips Andover.

These intrepid people not only vigil at Raytheon; they vigil at other places that manufacture parts for weapons of mass destruction, and when the time is right they participate in actions, some are arrested, and some have spent time in jail. They also participate in the SOA (School of the Americas) action in Georgia every November (see coming events section). Scott Shaeffer-Duffy was arrested there, spending three months in jail last winter. We asked him to explain why there is a need to protest the Andover Raytheon plant. The following summarizes his comments.

Raytheon Peacemakers is a volunteer group formed six years ago that has sponsored periodic acts of nonvio-

lent civil disobedience. It is committed to disarming Raytheon and helping convert it to peaceful production and constructive jobs. Raytheon Peacemakers has cooperated with activists in Tucson, Arizona and Derry, Northern Ireland, who are protesting at other Raytheon plants.

The group was formed following publication of a Raytheon executive's boasts in an article in the Boston Globe that any new war in Iraq would be a boon for the company. True enough. Raytheon manufactures the Cruise, Harpoon, and Patriot missiles. It also manufactures a depleted uranium Gattling gun called the Phalanx. The company contributes parts for the Trident and other nuclear submarines. It is the nation's second largest military contractor. The company is also the major contractor for cluster bombs and various gravity bombs. Raytheon also receives \$39.4 million from the Bush administration to maintain a 100-person team in Iraq to destroy any weapons of mass destruction found there. The contract was recently doubled although no weapons

have been found and Raytheon has done nothing. This is not unlike the continued Raytheon contract for the Patriot missile, which belatedly was determined a complete failure during the first Gulf War as well as a less reliable weapon in the latest conflict. The only confirmed "hit" for the Patriot was a British jet, which was shot down killing its entire crew. The US government is now in conflict with the British government over liability even though the British are our allies in Iraq.

The Raytheon Peacemakers oppose the weapons work of Raytheon because of the immense human suffering those weapons cause and because of the tremendous diversion of human talent and resources from real human needs.

## DU Conference in Berlaar

*By Gretel Munroe, Grassroots Actions for Peace, Concord, MA*

As a member of Grassroots Actions for Peace, affiliated with the Military Toxics Project, I attended a conference in Berlaar, Belgium, Oct. 10-12, on the issue of depleted uranium (DU) munitions. I traveled with several other members of the Military Toxics Project, a group that advocates and supports mostly low-income communities impacted by military waste dumps.

The focus of the conference was the establishment of a coalition to ban DU weapons. Participants represent-

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- 1) CET & Conservation Services Group, Inc. 800-689-7957 [www.GreenerWattsNewEngland.com](http://www.GreenerWattsNewEngland.com)
- 2) Community Energy 866-WIND-123 [www.CommunityEnergy.biz](http://www.CommunityEnergy.biz)
- 3) Mass Energy Consumers Alliance 800-287-3950 [www.massenergy.com](http://www.massenergy.com)
- 4) Sterling Planet 866-Go- Green [www.sterlingplanet.com](http://www.sterlingplanet.com)

### Action Update

#### Westover Air Force Base March 22, 2003

Fifty-three of the 66 people arrested March 22 at Westover in a preplanned action have had their charges dropped. The remaining 13 defendants were arrested for disturbing the peace and blocking the entrance by kneeling and praying on the road. Of the 13, six will be tried November 20 and will defend themselves in Chicopee. Meanwhile, the National Lawyers Guild is questioning the ordinance under which they were arrested and the judge is taking this under advisement, with a decision expected mid-December. The six are MVPP members or friends: Hattie Nestle, Brayton and Suzanne Shanley, Brothers Tim and Toby, Sherril Hogan. Additionally, MVPP member John Schuchardt (and possibly his wife, Carrie) faces a trial Jan. 21. He is charged with resisting arrest.

ing 12 organizations came from eight countries: Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Japan, Malta, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Presenter Stanislas Brabant talked about the Land Mines Treaty as a possible model for a DU campaign. Heide Schoeder, a scientist from the University of Bremen, discussed research on 16 Gulf and Balkan wars veterans exposed to DU: chromosomes in lymphocytes from venous samples showed a five-fold increase in certain chromosomal aberrations over expected. Dr. Kazashi, Director of NO DU Hiroshima Project told how 6,000 Japanese from all over Japan had come together to form the words, *NO WAR-NO DU!*, which photographed from the air became part of a half-page ad in the New York Times March 24, 2003.

Dan Bishop agreed to do a compendium of abstracts complete with citations on DU, along with an introduction regarding need. (Dan Bishop, member of IDUST, International Depleted Uranium Study Team, spoke at the MVPP September meeting. He also showed us the disturbing video "The Invisible War: Depleted Uranium and the Politics of Radiation.") He and I with several others will write a 20-35 page booklet on environmental effects of DU, health effects, consumer uses of DU and cleanup. Several goals of the Political Advocacy Group were to pass the McDermott Bill (for study and cleanup

of DU) in the U.S. Congress and to compile a list of doctors who have been to Iraq. The other working groups were Education and Outreach (they are creating a web site for the coalition) and Fundraising.

A press release of the new International Coalition to Ban Uranium weapons was issued on October 13, calling for a ban on the manufacture, testing, sale, and export of DU weapons as well as clean-up of contaminated areas and compensation and medical assistance for the victims. A press conference was held at the offices of the Christian Labor Union (Confederation des Syndicats Chretiens) in Brussels. The union joined the coalition, bringing 1.7 million members into the coalition.

A German lawyer with IALANA (International Association for Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms), a new Coalition member, hopes to have a working draft of a treaty to ban DU weapons finished within 6 months. The treaty will eventually go to the UN, first to the Disarmament Committee and then to the General Assembly.

### Honoring Veterans

*(MVPP member Brian Quirk's letter to the Eagle Tribune appeared on Veteran's Day, November 11)*

To the Editor:

As one who vigils for peace, I honor all veterans who risked their lives to protect the country we all love. Whether or not we agree with war, I respect veterans and the sacrifices they made to protect our country. I am concerned for soldiers exposed to depleted uranium, who may suffer from gulf war syndrome.

A soldier must follow orders, or the military would not be effective, so we voters, not in the armed forces, must seek the truth. When facts suggest the armed forces are used for any reason other than defense of our country, we must object. More than a right to object, we have a duty to protect the men and women currently serving in the Middle East in an ongoing occupation. There is little support from the world community, and special interest groups are profiting.

I want to stop sending young men and women to questionable wars, and to seek fair treatment for those who have chosen to serve. Veterans are not always treated fairly by our government. In 1932, 20,000 veterans marched to Washington DC, demanding early redemption of bonus certificates. The US Army dispersed this "Bonus Army," killing three and injuring a thousand. Following WWII, the GI Bill helped both veterans and

## EVENTS

**December 2, 7:00 PM** Rogers Center, Merrimack College, North Andover, MA. Legendary Social Critic Noam Chomsky – with more than 70 books to his credit and an inexhaustible supply of articles and speeches, Chomsky's stature has grown without the help of the mainstream media. A frequent critic of the corporate and government controlled major media, Chomsky seeks to engage Americans in real dialogue around complicated topics. Unique among the world's political commentators, Chomsky ranks with Marx, Shakespeare and the Bible as one of the 10 most quoted sources in the humanities – and is the only living writer among them. Co-sponsored by MVPP. Tickets are \$7.00 (and selling quickly) at the Rogers Center box office (M-F 10-4), or call the Mass Anti-Corporate Clearinghouse 978-683-3967, e-mail [info@stopcorporatecontrol.org](mailto:info@stopcorporatecontrol.org).

**January 23, 2004** Pete Seeger and other members of the People's Music Network for Songs of Freedom and Struggle (PMN) will perform at the Cochran Chapel, Phillips Academy, Andover, along with local artists. MVPP is proud to cosponsor the event. For more information call 978-474-0606.

**January 24-25, 2004** PMN (People's Music Network for Songs of Freedom and Struggle) will hold its Winter Gathering at the Lawrence Senior Center. All are welcome to register for workshops and other events. For registration information please contact [marykatespeace@yahoo.com](mailto:marykatespeace@yahoo.com).

our country, but those benefits have been continually eroded. Last spring, Congress proposed reducing funding of the Veterans' Administration hospitals. The American Legion says Bush's 2004 request "comes \$1.9 billion short of maintaining an inadequate status quo."

We owe it to all who serve to question the conduct of this war. Veterans and active duty soldiers are speaking out. Please visit these web sites: Military Families Speak Out [www.mfso.org](http://www.mfso.org), Vietnam Veterans Against the War [www.vvaw.org](http://www.vvaw.org), Veterans Against the Iraq War [www.vaaw.org/vet/index.php](http://www.vaaw.org/vet/index.php), [www.veteransforcommonsense.org](http://www.veteransforcommonsense.org), [www.veteransforpeace.org](http://www.veteransforpeace.org),

# Weekly Vigils

**Lawrence**, Saturday, 12-1:30 p.m., Broadway and Essex St., Lawrence Peace Coalition.

**Raytheon**, Route 133, Andover. Tuesday, 5:45-6:45 a.m.

**Reading**, second Saturday of the month, 11-12, Reading Square, Reading People for Peace.

**Andover**, Sunday, Noon-1, Shawsheen Square, Routes 133 and 28.

**Andover**, Mon, Wed, Fri, 7-8 p.m., Sat, 10:00-noon, Old Town Hall, Main St., Lou Bernieri 978-475-6847

MVPP is selling brightly colored peace flags from Italy! The flags are flying to great curiosity and interest at weekly vigils in Andover, Lawrence, Reading and Wilmington. The price is \$10.00 plus any voluntary contribution for MVPP. Contact Bobbie at [bg@comcast.net](mailto:bg@comcast.net) to learn how you, too, can be proud owner of a peace flag!



Photo by Fred Hyder

Shawsheen Square on a Sunday Afternoon

## Minutes MVPP - October 28, 2003

**Attendance** Don Abbott, Becci Backman, Lou Bernieri, Arthur Brien, Jane Cadarette, Peter Cameron, Michael Frishman, Angela Galen, Ralph Galen, Bobbie Goldman, Barbara Haack, Fred Hyder, Karen Kline, Janice Koch, Brian Quirk, Kathie Robinson, Dilenia Rodriguez, Mary Kate Small, Jane Thiefels, Jim Todd, and Mary Todd.

**Treasurer's Report** Peter reported a current balance of \$2,950.79, thanks to recent paid memberships and sales of peace items (sales average \$60-\$70/week, according to Becci).

**Membership** Becci reported a total of 91 fully paid memberships. She then led a brief discussion about options for an MVPP pin. The group asked for more research on design, cost and production before considering a decision at the next meeting. While nothing new has transpired regarding youth chapters, we are developing contacts at Andover High School, Merrimack College, and Central Catholic High School. Kathie Robinson circulated a get-well card for Allison Ceplikas, past president and founding member, and she reported that Lois Fisher would welcome visitors.

**Program and events** Plans for the Stone Soup Dinner are firming up for November 25 at 6:30 PM. Barbara, Becci, Dilenia, and Arthur are volunteering with logistics. Guest speaker will be Jane Bernhardt, who will share from her experiences with Hiroshima survivors. Plans for the annual January Potluck will be set at our November meeting. Don will check with the church office for available dates.

Don reported that several of us participated in the morning service at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Andover on Sunday, October 26, at the invitation of minister (and MVPP member) Ralph Galen. Ralph had scripted a "reenactment" of the regular Andover vigil, which we performed, replete with sidewalk banter and passerby comments, followed by dialogue with the congregation. Everyone found the experience to be worthwhile. We thanked Ralph for his leadership on this and for the hospitality of his congregation.

Don shared the main recommendations from an October 19 meeting of the "working group" for program planning, hosted by Jim and Mary and attended by Henry, Boryana, and Don. Five ideas were identified as priorities for the group to consider as this year unfolds: 1) We should consider sponsoring a teach-in on a topic such as "U.S. Imperialism: America's Quest for Global Dominance," perhaps with a prominent keynote speaker such as Howard Zinn. 2) We should devote concentrated and continuing efforts to be as strategic as possible during the 2004 political campaigns; e.g. fliers, newspaper ads, forums, etc. targeted to specific issues and critical questions of importance to peace and social justice work. This

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MVPP is registered with the IRS as a non-profit organization  
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indicates that your membership is paid through May 2004.

would put our organization's stamp on the urgent need for voters to wake up, pay attention, be informed and thoughtful, and VOTE. 3) We should consider building links with and engage religious leaders, clergy and lay, in the Merrimack Valley. 4) We might consider sponsoring intergenerational celebrations – a dance or an evening featuring music and art. 5) We might feature special events/vigils in Old Town Hall Square for some upcoming dates of importance, e.g. Veterans' Day, Pearl Harbor Day, Martin Luther King Day, and First Anniversary of the Iraq Invasion on March 19. (No program was planned for Veterans' Day. Members preferred to witness in this instance through special vigil signs and/or letters to the editors of local newspapers.)

**Publicity** Mary and Jane C. reported on two database initiatives underway: one for regional newspapers – contact names, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, deadlines, calendars of events, etc. and the other for regional churches. Becci, Arthur, Ralph, and Don offered to make calls to help gather information, and Kathie volunteered to check at Andover Library.

With the holiday commercial season approaching and growing concern about war toys, Mary Todd volunteered to develop a piece on the subject for local newspapers and church bulletins.

There was divided opinion about developing letters to the editor about the upcoming Election Day, although everyone agreed on the critical nature of the 2004 election year.

**Miscellaneous** 1) We voted to send \$100 to the Tony Van der Meer Defense Fund. 2) Fred offered some of his recent photos of Andover vigils for the newsletter and the website. 3) Lou will attend the November 23 UJP brunch meeting. Jane T. and Karen may be able to attend too. 4) As a co-sponsor of the December 2 evening featuring Noam Chomsky at 7 PM at the Rogers Center, Merrimack College, we shall man a table about

MVPP at the event. 5) Jane C. shared information about two important items: a.) the meeting of the U.N. Association of New England on November 5 at the Boxford Town Library and b.) how to register letters to the editor re. the treatment of nuns imprisoned for their nuclear protest action. 6) Mary Kate was pleased to announce that the January 23, 2004 concert featuring Pete Seeger, sponsored by the People's Music Network for Songs of Freedom and Struggle, will take place at Cochran Chapel at Phillips Academy. We agreed to be co-sponsors of this concert.

Program offered by special guests The second half of the evening featured presentations by and discussion with our two special guests from Massachusetts Peace Action: Shelagh Foreman and Janet Niver. They shared very valuable information about their "Campaign for a New Foreign Policy," a major response to the so-called Bush Doctrine that undergirds current and projected use of American power throughout the world. Peace Action promotes three strategically different alternative routes to real security: a) support for human rights and democracy throughout the world, b) reduction of the threat from weapons of mass destruction, including the reduction and eventual elimination of our nuclear stockpile, c) cooperation with the international community, including respect for all treaties and international law. Shelagh and Janet informed us of ways to build grassroots support for this campaign, including the "Pledge for a New Foreign Policy," and urged us to sign on. They reported on efforts underway to influence those who will draft the Democratic Party Platform. Congressman Tierney backs it. Several of us plan to approach Congressman Meehan to gain his support. We urge all members also to become engaged in the "Campaign for a New Foreign Policy". See: [www.MassPeaceAction.org](http://www.MassPeaceAction.org).

*Respectfully submitted, Don Abbott, Secretary*

**Merrimack Valley People for Peace**

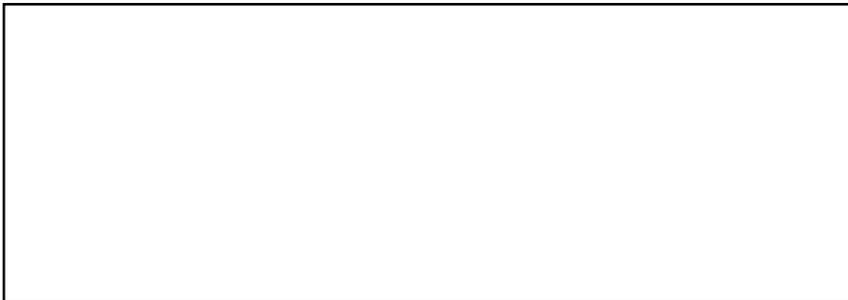
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**PEACE IS  
PATRIOTIC!**

*Stone Soup!*  
6:30 PM  
Nov 25  
See page 1



The MVPP Newsletter is printed monthly and has a current mailing of 120. We are grateful for suggestions, comments and help with publication. ("2004" on your mailing label indicates that your 2003-2004 dues have been paid.)

**MVPP President: Bobbie Goldman Vice President: Katherine Robinson**

Newsletter Editors: Barbara Haack, Michael Frishman, Bobbie Goldman, Lou Bernieri, Arthur & Marguerite Brien

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