



The Newsletter of the Richmond Peace Education Center

May/June 2004

This special edition of rpecNEWS provides a description of the structure, activities and finances of the Richmond Peace Education Center as it has developed in 2004. Our purpose is to describe for our members and all who might be interested, who we are, what we try to do and how we are organized and financed.

Most of the writing has been done by members of the Newsletter Committee, usually with input from the individuals most directly involved in the activities. The primary focus is on the past year or two, although we have provided historical background where that seemed appropriate. We hope you find this useful and interesting. Comments are always welcomed by Bill Gerow, Newsletter Editor (mbgerow@comcast.net).

Reflections from the Executive Director

Ken Willis

Whenever and wherever I speak about the work of the Richmond Peace Education Center, folks respond in amazement and typically ask what the connection is between the many diverse issues RPEC seeks to address; war & peace, the death penalty, youth violence, domestic violence (violence at seemingly every level of contemporary society), living wages, affordable housing, local, national, and international governmental policy, restorative justice, fair trade, racism, sexism, human/civil rights, diversity acceptance & appreciation, etc. Since joining the RPEC staff as Executive Director in 1999, I have consistently given one answer: RPEC is not trying to be all things to all people; as an organization we focus on these various issues through primarily one lens, that of teaching the necessary skills for nonviolent conflict resolution. I have come to see that all of our programs, public events, and workshops grow out of this approach. A comment by Richmond Police Chief, Andre Parker, following a recent night of violence in the city reaffirmed my belief in the validity and relevance of this realization. When asked by a reporter what he saw as a major cause of the rising tide of violence in Richmond, Col. Parker responded by saying, "What we have in Richmond is a large number of people who don't know how to resolve conflict peacefully." I think he's right and I'm glad that he voiced this opinion publicly.

While RPEC continues its work in opposing the war in Iraq through involvement in weekly protest rallies in downtown Richmond, informative newsletter articles, public forums, and coalitions with other groups, we have not lost sight of the other areas of concern listed above. Our Interracial Dialogue series will resume on Tuesday, June 1 with a discussion of the history/merits/implications of *Brown v Board of Education* and the Massive Resistance movement to be led by Viola Baskerville and Ken Woodley, Editor of the Farmville Herald (see calendar page for details). This event will be followed by the John McCutcheon concert on June 25th, the announcement of the 2004 Peace Essay Contest in September, and exciting new plans now in the works for fall's Annual Meeting and Fundraising Auction. And, just last month, the Richmond Youth Peace Project (RYPP), a major new initiative to focus on youth violence was launched by the RPEC Program Committee under the direction of board member Ram

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rpec NEWS

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Message from the RPEC Board Chair

Dear Friends,

Thank you. RPEC has pulled out of a dangerous financial situation because you, the members, came together in our time of need and provided the funding necessary to keep the organization running. For that I, and the rest of the board of directors, thank you sincerely. However, we cannot sit back and relax. The situation is tenuous and the board has chosen to continue the austerity budget until we feel we have returned to a safe monetary state. Please remember that your membership fee does not supplant the donations that our fundraising committee asks for during the year and at our annual fundraising events.

And what does all this fundraising get you? RPEC has many ongoing and one-time peace and social justice events that it coordinates and participates in throughout the year. Please consider attending one or more of the upcoming events (check the calendar at the back of this issue) and see what your money brings to the community.

Finally, in the near future an ad-hoc committee of the board will be reviewing our mission statement to determine if we can more effectively focus our time and energies. If you would like to help determine the future of the organization feel free to contact the executive director Ken Willis, myself, or any of the other board members with your thoughts.

Yours truly,
Noah Scalin, Board Chair
noahs@alrdesign.com

Purpose

At the Richmond Peace Education Center, we believe that people working together can bring about positive social change, making our world more just and peaceful. The foundation of this change lies in a fuller understanding of the world we live in, a clearer vision of creative alternatives, and the courage and patience to work for a secure and just world. Such work helps to build a world comfortable with diversity, where the inevitable conflicts are resolved fairly and without violence, and where all have what they need in order to live a full and satisfying life.

The Richmond Peace Education Center is working to build this world by:

- helping people see the connections between injustice in its many forms and the violence so prevalent in our neighborhoods and our world;
- promoting non-violent means of conflict resolution;
- contributing to a better understanding of the consequences of public policy;
- encouraging people to become involved in groups taking action on issues of justice and peace in our world;
- supporting the work of such groups.

In these efforts we are committed to educational approaches that promote cooperation, stimulate creative thinking, and encourage people to develop their own opinions and act on their beliefs.



The Structure



RPEC Board and Committees

The Richmond Peace Education Center functions through the work of its staff (currently a full time Director and a half time Office Manager), a Board of Directors, and four working committees. These are described below.

Board of Directors

As a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization the Richmond Peace Education Center is required by law to have a board of directors. Functioning in conjunction with the executive director, this group plays an important role in the operation of the organization. The board's primary responsibilities are financial and fiduciary (upholding the public's trust). The board sets policy (which is implemented by staff or volunteers) and ensures that the organization has the funds necessary to carry out its goals. The board reviews the mission statement and the Executive Director on a regular basis, both of which are in the process of happening currently. Board members are also required to participate in the various committees that are part of RPEC's daily functioning, however they act as volunteers and not board members when working in this capacity. Board members serve 3-year terms, which are staggered to keep the membership at a steady level and also to maintain a sense of continuity. Currently the board, which has 10 members, is at half of its potential capacity.

2004 Board of Directors

Ram Bhagat
Liz Canfield, Secretary
Megan Field
Paul Fleisher, Vice Chair
Mim Golub-Scalin
Tyla Matteson
Wendy Northup
Christopher Patterson, Treasurer
Jane Rosecrans
Noah Scalin, Chair

Programs Committee

The Richmond Peace Education Center's Programs Committee is responsible for developing, maintaining, and expanding all of the programs of the center. This includes overseeing the Richmond Youth Peace Project and our conflict resolution programs, organizing presentations and events like our recent Peace Weekend and the Safe & Free Coalition forum, and arranging our annual peace essay contest.

Committee members include Ram Bhagat, Liz Canfield, Megan Field, Tyla Matteson, Jane Rosecrans, Jason Guard, Ken Willis, and the Chair, Christopher Patterson. We usually meet one Thursday a month at 3:30 p.m. at the RPEC office. The Programs Committee is the most crucial RPEC committee and needs as many volunteers and organizers as possible, so if you are interested in getting involved (even if our Thursday meeting times do not work for you), please contact Christopher Patterson at 303-2204 or slough@waste.org.

Newsletter Committee

The Newsletter Committee functions as the editorial board for the RPEC newsletter, deciding on what topics to cover and finding people to write the articles, or articles from other sources. Most often, members of the committee do the writing. We welcome input from our readers, including suggested topics, articles, letters to the editor, etc. We meet during the day on weekdays in preparation for each issue, currently six times per year.

Bill Gerow is the volunteer editor, a position he has held since March of 1999. Prior to that, Jane Hare, a member of staff had filled that position. Other members of the committee are listed on page 2. If you would like to join this committee or have comments or suggestions, contact the committee chair, John Gallini (272-8141, gallinjb@aol.com)

Before 2003, the Program Committee had responsibility for the newsletter. The split into two committees has facilitated the involvement of more RPEC members and led to a rejuvenation of the programs sponsored by RPEC.

Fundraising Committee

The Fundraising Committee is charged with developing a comprehensive plan to provide funding for RPEC. This would include our major events, the

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Spring Concert and the Annual Dinner and Auction, as well as a multitude of other activities, such as workdays at Diversity Thrift, garden parties and similar events, benefit concerts, the printer cartridge recycling program, yard sales, etc. We also maintain and seek to expand the number of organizations (mainly churches) who provide financial support. And we decide how to approach our individual members, who provide the bulk of our support. We are currently planning a campaign to call members whom we have not heard from in the past year or so. Committee members work as volunteers at a number of these activities.

Committee members include Paul Fleisher (Chair), Ann Chase, Julian Ferras, John Gallini, Wendy Northup, Vivian Sullivan and Ken Willis. We meet on weekdays, about once a month, at 5:30 PM at the Richmond Education Association office on East Broad St. If you would like to join this committee or have comments or suggestions, contact Paul Fleisher (795-5326, pfleishe@infi.net).

Membership Committee

The membership committee is chaired by Mim Golub Scalin and currently is in need of members. We have not set up a regular schedule of meetings but that will be established this summer.

The committee is charged with increasing the membership of

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Newsletter

Where do the articles that appear in rpecNEWS come from? Well, they come from a number of sources.

Members of the Newsletter committee are frequent writers, Steve Colecchi, John Gallini, Sue Frankel-Streit, Ken Willis, Dave Depp, Judith FaGalde Bennett, Cathy Woodson, and Ben Blevins.

Board members also contribute, Paul Fleisher, Tyla Matteson, Jane Rosecrans, and Noah Scalin.

Local contributors include Tom Cleary, Larry Syverson and Bill Frankel-Streit.

Local and statewide organizations provide articles pertaining to their interests, such as the Norfolk Catholic Worker, Hanover Citizens for Peace, PeaceNotWar, Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy, Charlottesville Center for Peace and Justice, Virginians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty, and Hampton Roads Network for Nonviolence.

The essays of the 1st place winners of RPEC's Annual Peace Essay Contest are published each year, Kendra Moses, Susie Brock, Charis Deadwyler, and Suzanne Leah from 2003.

Articles by nationally known authors are excerpted with permission from organizations' websites, newspapers and magazines, such as Leah Wells from Common Dreams, Wendell Berry from the Orion Society website, Ralph Nader, Jim Wallis

from Sojourners magazine, and Bracken Hendricks from the Friends Committee on National Legislation.

Anyone may submit an article for publication. Contact the office or the editor (mbgerow@comcast.net). Letters to the editor are encouraged and printed.

In past years rpecNEWS was printed ten times a year, but with the new austerity budget, publication takes place six times a year (every other month). We currently have a circulation of about 1200.

We are looking at the option of publishing the newsletter electronically on our website to make further savings. Publishing the newsletter electronically would involve some investment in new computer software and possibly new computers. In order to save money the newsletter is printed locally by a method that limits the inclusion of photographs and color. Contributions of publishing software and state-of-the-art computers would greatly enhance our ability to publish a professional quality newsletter that would attract the attention of the public.

Putting out a newsletter requires the expenditure of much time and effort by a number of people, the authors, the editors, and the office staff and volunteers who address and mail it. Volunteers with the knowledge of how to design a newsletter and/or how to use publishing software to put one together would be welcomed, as well as those who

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The Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP)

Vivian Sullivan

AVP was started in 1975 by the Quakers in response to the need of prisoners for some method of communicating the consequences of violence, and more specifically, to provide skills that lead to fulfilling and crime-free lives. The first program was held at Green Haven prison in New York State.

The program is presented through a series of experiential workshops designed to promote communication skills, self-awareness, affirmation, creative conflict resolution, and problem solving. Role-playing is an integral component of the workshops. As the inmates progress in the Basic AVP workshops, they proceed to the Advanced level, which focuses on the underlying causes of violence. Train the Trainer workshops are available to inmates that successfully complete both levels, and inmates who complete this workshop help to facilitate the Basic and Advanced programs.

Although the program originated in New York State, there are now programs throughout the world. Russia, Cuba, the Netherlands, Great Britain are among the countries that have large ongoing programs. It has been shown that successful completion of the program dramatically improves inmate conduct and reduces recidivism.

AVP celebrated its 25th anniversary

in 2000, and Virginia was the venue for the 2002 national convention. RPEC has always been a sponsor of this unique program. There are three regular facilitators at present, Vivian Sullivan, Don Ayers and Elizabeth Kirkland. They serve the women's prison in Goochland and the James River men's prison.

New facilitators are needed as well as someone to coordinate the program for RPEC.

Conflict Resolution Training

RPEC, since the late 1980's, has provided training in conflict resolution for a variety of groups using a variety of curricula. The first programs were aimed at students and their teachers and were based on the Children's Creative Response to Conflict (CCRC) curriculum developed a decade earlier.

During the years that followed, RPEC incorporated workshops on Anger Management, Bias Awareness, Diversity Appreciation, Peer Mediation, and Parenting for Peace and Justice. A group of RPEC members have been trained to lead one or more of these workshops. They have been presented in public and private schools, for both teachers and students, for the staffs of local non-profits, at church camps, for adult education classes in churches, and even for the youth at Fort Lee.

As requests for workshops are received, RPEC's Executive

Director or one of the trained leaders works with the client agency to select and adapt the appropriate curriculum to fit the time (and budget) of the agency. For the longer trainings, two or more facilitators present the material. A fee is charged and the trained leaders are paid a stipend for their work. Often we work with the school or agency to find grant money to support the training.

There is a continuing need for new trained leaders, and trainings are offered for this purpose every year or so. The preparation involves the basic CRC course and a follow-up "Training for Trainers" course. Each course requires 15 hours on a weekend (Friday evening, all day Saturday and Sunday afternoon). There is a \$135 fee for each course. RPEC plans to offer the trainings again this October. Call the office if you want more information (358-1958).

Providing training in nonviolent conflict resolution in its many forms is among the most important functions of RPEC, as our Director notes in his reflections. We encourage each of our members to look for opportunities to bring these skills and understandings to our community.

The Peace Essay Contest

Christopher Patterson

This year will be the sixth year of the Richmond Peace Education Center's Peace Essay Contest. This contest was developed to give K-12

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students a forum to express their views about timely peace issues and to stimulate students to think about such issues and how they impact their everyday lives. It also gives adults a glimpse into how our actions impact our children and possibly fresh and new solutions to the problems of our day. Essays from previous years have covered a wide range of topics from "What has 9/11 Taught us about Peace and Justice?" to "I Can Turn My Dreams of Peace into Reality..." Previous winners have won cash prizes and been invited to the RPEC Annual Dinner/ Auction or the Spring Concert.

This year's topic will have children explore how US wars abroad, like in Afghanistan and Iraq, have directly effected our

The Virginia Peace Summit

During the 1980's, there were five or six Peace Centers in Virginia with paid staff. Those staff members began meeting together to share ideas, frustrations, hopes and dreams. Gradually all of the Centers, except RPEC, have evolved into volunteer organizations, but the need to come together remains, and there has been an annual meeting of peace groups from around the state most years since, and one or more RPEC folks have participated in each one. Individual Peace Groups take turns organizing the meeting and RPEC was responsible for the 2003 meeting.

In recent years we have met during June at Tabor House Retreat Center in Lynchburg and the event has been dubbed "The Virginia

Peace Summit". The primary agenda has been reports from the different groups, although on occasion special emphasis is given to a specific group or topic. In 2003, for example, Jeff Winder described his vision for a new community organizing group he has founded, "The People United", which seeks to build a network of locally-based progressive communities bringing together diverse voices, finding the common ground among them, and working together proactively for the world we envision. Fourteen groups from around the state talked about their programs, with much focus on the

Richmond Youth Peace Project

Megan Field

Justin looked, walked and dressed exactly like my first boyfriend. He carried his skateboard around the halls of my school, laughing and joking with his friends. We smiled when we passed in the halls, though we were never really friends. I think I made him nervous.

I cried for an hour straight when I heard that Justin had been murdered. I couldn't believe that someone real, someone I knew had actually been killed. I read about teenage deaths everyday in the newspaper, but this was different. Newspaper deaths were tragic, but distant. Justin dying made me realize that teen violence is more than just statistics and moments of silence, teen violence is lives. His death made me realize how urgent our city, and world's, situation really is. It made me want to change

things.

Based around the simple idea of wanting to make the world less violent, fifteen high school students and I, with the help of high school teacher and RPEC board member Ram Bhagat, formed the Richmond Youth Peace Project. We want to make our city safer by giving kids options other than violence. We had our first event a few weeks ago; a drum slam in memory of the youth homicide victims in the Richmond area. At the event Drums No Guns, and local high school musicians performed. The energy at the drum slam was incredible. We are currently planning a peace conference for September. At the conference, students would share skills, such as urban art, dance, yoga and screen-printing. We believe that having a creative outlet for emotions gives students an alternative to violence. In addition to the creative workshops, the students would discuss how violence had affected them, what they believe causes violence, and what solutions they believe would help to end the violence. In the end, the students will have created not only a resolution to be given to the mayor or governor, but a lasting network.

The Richmond Youth Peace Project has many hopes for the future. We would like to train students in peer mediation, and conflict resolution. We'd like to work with younger children, giving them somewhere safe and interesting to spend the most dangerous hours of the school week. We want to have tire-painting parties, concerts, and trips. We want to create an annual Peace

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The RPEC Web Page

The RPEC Web Page was initiated and designed in 1997 by Paul Fleisher. A few years later, John Gallini took over management of the site, and currently edits and maintains it. The site includes the following:

- 'Question War' Advertising Campaign
- A guide to local and State progressive organizations
- Connections to national peace and justice organizations
- Issue Areas - links to sources of recent articles, web sites, and background information organized by topic (now includes over 60 countries and topic areas)
- Executions Scheduled
- Discussion groups, Mailing Lists, and Comments
- Join the RPEC e-mail List
- About RPEC and how to join
- A limited calendar of events in the Richmond area.

In recent years the major effort has been placed on providing an up-to-date set of links to articles related to issues thought to be of interest to our members. Recently, it has become clear that there are a number of list-serve sources and web sites doing a fine job of this, and we will figure out how best to use our effort. One possibility is that we would try to provide an expanded calendar page focusing on events of interest in the

Response to the Second War on Iraq

The war against Iraq has preempted much of effort and attention of peace folks for the past year and a half. RPEC staff, committees and members have been involved in a number of ways. While some of the programs and activities listed below have been primarily RPEC initiatives, most have been led by other area groups with support from RPEC and its members.

Question War Campaign

In January of 2003 as the United States debated the necessity of a war in Iraq the members of the board of directors of RPEC decided that the center should take a strong visible anti-war stance. To this end an ad-hoc committee was created to develop a message that would be presented to the public in the form of public service advertisements. The committee consisted of board members Keo Cavalcanti, Christopher Patterson, and Noah Scalin. The group decided that it was important to speak to the audience thoughtfully rather than just providing a blunt, bumpersticker-like statement. The result was the Question War campaign. The campaign featured four different ads that spoke to different aspects of a potential war in Iraq (funding, weapons, troops, and history) all of which ended in the tagline "Wage Peace: Question our War on Iraq". The ad copy was developed by the committee and the design of the ads was donated by Noah's socially conscious design firm ALR Design. The series ran in Style Weekly and the Richmond Free Press in March and April of 2003. Radio Free Richmond, a local internet based community radio station, helped create audio versions of the ads with Christopher, which they ran on their station during the same period.

The Question War ads designed to run on the GRTC buses, however, were refused by the company as being political messages. RPEC is currently in the process of working with the ACLU to determine the legitimacy of this claim. The website which was a companion to the campaign can still be seen at www.questionwar.org.

Billboard, Yard Signs and Bumper Stickers

An ad hoc group, which called itself the Richmond Peace Coalition (www.RichmondPeace.org), collected the \$700 required to put up a billboard on Broad Street proclaiming "**War in Iraq? Not in our Name**". The design of the billboard was provided by ARL Design. Jon Singletary, pastor at Richmond Mennonite Fellowship, led this effort, and RPEC was a key participant. The billboard went up in February, as war seemed imminent. Around the same time, yard signs began appearing around Richmond with the message "**Stand Up for Peace**" and "**Say No to War**" and bumper stickers with "**Attack Iraq? No!**" were seen on more and more cars. Both were made available through RPEC. Indeed, the bumper stickers and yard signs continue to be seen around town.

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Response to the Second War on Iraq

Demonstrations

Public witness, through demonstrations and marches, is one popular form of protest. There have been many opportunities for Richmonders to say “NO!” to this war in this way, beginning in the Fall of 2002. At one end of the spectrum, Bashla, a grad student at VCU put out the word that there would be protest of the coming war in September on the VCU campus and 75 folks turned out – who decided to continue the protest as a weekly event which continued through November. A small group picked up the protest with a weekly demonstration outside the Federal Courts Building in January (which still continues).

At the other end were the huge anti-war rallies in D.C. and NYC sponsored by ANSWER and UFPI. Buses and carpools went from Richmond to these demonstrations in October, December, January, February, March and April – most were organized by the local A.N.S.W.E.R. group.

In between, the Richmond Food Not Bombs group organized protest rallies and marches in November, March and August (the March rally brought out over 1000 folks in the largest antiwar rally in Richmond history.) In January, Women in Black began their powerful silent walks each Saturday. These continued weekly through September, and have since been restarted as People in Black on a monthly basis. At their peak, 150

women gave witness to their opposition to war. In March, Hanover Citizens for Peace began weekly protests in Ashland.

At Noon on March 19, the day the bombing started, 80 people came to 10th and Main in the pouring rain, including Larry Syverson who had two sons on their way to Iraq. That protest continued daily for a month and then shifted to M-W-F for the next year and is now continuing weekly on Fridays, led by Larry, one of whose sons is still in Iraq.

Speakers, Prayer Vigils and More

There are, of course, many ways to oppose our country’s policies. During the buildup to war, there were over 100 events in our area related to the war. Speakers addressed the many aspects of war at college campuses, in churches and schools, as well at public protest rallies. Local speakers included Professor Michael Fishback of Randolph-Macon, Dr. Dick Couto of UR and Dr. Steve Colecchi with the Catholic Diocese. The Aubry Brown Peace forum devoted its weekly series to issues related to war. First Unitarian Church brought *The Lysistrata Project* to Richmond.

There were a series of prayer vigils and services in area churches, including four ecumenical services that were conducted at Richmond Mennonite Fellowship, and weekly prayer gatherings at Richmond Friends Meeting and St. Edward

Catholic Church.

All of these events were publicized through an e-mail network, set up and maintained by John Gallini. E-mails went out once or twice a week from September through June to a list of over 100.

New groups were formed to oppose the war, including Hanover Citizens for Peace and the Virginia Anti-War Network.

Peace Weekend

On the first anniversary of the start of the bombing of Iraq, RPEC participated in the planning of a major weekend of anti-war events. On Friday evening, 3/19/04, a Candlelight Peace Vigil was held at Forest Hill Park. As part of the vigil, members of a number of faith traditions offered prayers for peace and an end to this war. The next morning, a number of folks walked in silence on the Boulevard, with a single sign, “Build Peace”. This peace vigil was modeled on the Women in Black movement that had offered such a powerful witness a year earlier.

That day a bus carried folks from Richmond to the Day of Global Action in New York City. And on Sunday afternoon the Buddhist Peace Fellowship led an hour-long silent meditation focused on peace.

The culminating event of Peace Weekend was a panel discussion, “Iraq: One Year Later”. Panelists included Marie Rietmann, Dr. Ali

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Hossaini, Saba Abed, Larry Syverson and Glen Besa, each offering a unique perspective on the impact of the war on Iraq.

Peace Weekend was sponsored by RPEC and PeaceAndJustice at First Unitarian Church. Key organizers

The Patriot Act - Safe and Free Coalition

In the fall of 2003, RPEC joined with local branches of the ACLU and the NAACP to form the Safe and Free Coalition to educate Richmond citizens about the USA PATRIOT Act and convince Richmond City Council to pass a resolution opposing some of the provisions of the Act.

The first step was an October public forum on the Act. The forum was held at the Virginia Holocaust Museum and attended by over 100 citizens. Panelists included Congressman Bobby Scott, Del. Viola O. Baskerville, M. Imad Damaj of the Virginia Muslim Coalition, Sarah B. Watstein, a Virginia Commonwealth University librarian and John Hager, head of the Office of Commonwealth Preparedness and Assistant to the Governor.

Following the forum, a campaign of letter writing and personal contacts with members of Richmond City Council finally resulted in a resolution being brought before Council on March, 2004. The Coalition organized a series of speakers to present the case at the Council meeting and the resolution was adopted with only

one dissenting vote.

The key people organizing this campaign were Aimee Perron of ACLU and Tyla Matteson of the

RPEC and Conscientious Objection

Dave Depp

Conscientious objection has a long history dating back to the early Christians and before. Many of the early settlers of North America were seeking religious freedom, which often meant freedom from coerced military service.

The First Amendment to the United States Constitution says, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..." Unfortunately, Congress passed a military draft law during the Civil War and again during the First and Second World Wars. Some conscientious objectors to the Civil War lost property; were beaten and driven from their homes. Some were jailed or shot. During World War I, members of historic peace churches were allowed to be noncombatants, but among those CO's who refused such service because they believed such service supported war, many went to prison and 18 died there. In 1940, the Selective Training and Service Act was passed, allowing CO draftees to participate in alternative service during World War II. Again, those CO's who refused for reasons of conscience to comply with this law were imprisoned. During the Vietnam war, the Supreme Court

rulings in "Seeger" (1965) and "Welsh" (1970) allowed for conscientious objection based on purely ethical and moral convictions, belief in a supreme being, and/or membership in a church were no longer required.

Conscientious objection remains an issue today even though there is not presently a draft. Sometimes those who volunteer for military service realize later that killing violates their conscience and they request a discharge from the military on CO grounds. During the first Gulf war, more than 2500 service people were denied CO status and placed in military prisons. There is also the problem of Selective Service registration. Since 1981, all 18-year-old male citizens must register within 60 days of their 18th birthday. Failure to do so can result in a variety of penalties varying among the states that include loss of college tuition assistance, exclusion from state colleges, and refusal to issue drivers licenses. Today, young people who conscientiously object to military service may want to begin documenting their CO feelings at the time of selective service registration or earlier.

The Richmond Peace Education Center can be a source of information, counseling and support for those trying to live in accord with their conscience either as they face registration or as they cope with being a conscientious objector. Given the widespread and increasing deployment of US

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military forces throughout the world today, it is likely that Peace Center involvement in CO issues will be growing significantly.

The Peace Center also provides information and support to people who conscientiously refuse to pay for military preparations and war. Listed below are organizations that the Peace Center and interested individuals can rely on for information and support about conscientious objection as it relates to military service or paying for war.

- Center on Conscience and War (CCW), 1830 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC, 20009. Tel: 202-483-2220. Web: www.nisbc.org.
- Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors (CCCO), 1515 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102. Tel: 215-563-8787. Web: www.objector.org.
- War Resisters League (WRL), 339 Lafayette Street, N.Y. NY 10012. Tel: 212-228-0450. Web: www.warresisters.org.
- The National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund, 2121 Decatur Place NW, Washington, DC, 20008-1923. Web: www.peacetaxfund.org.

Reflections from the Executive Director

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Bhagat and a Youth Advisory Council coordinated by student board member, Megan Field. Since statistics show that the most recent wave of violence in the greater Richmond area involves youth as either victims or perpetrators (or both), this effort is a direct response to the previously cited remark by Chief Parker and stresses the importance of providing area youth with examples of alternatives to violence through conflict resolution training that encourages the positive redirection of their energies as artistic expression. (Periodic updates about this program will follow in future issues of rpecNEWS.)

Unfortunately, over the past several months, RPEC itself has encountered another type of conflict, one to do with funding, or, to put things more accurately, a lack of funding. As a small nonprofit, we have not been alone in this regard. Consider this statement from an e-mail message received recently from another local

organization, "We reached a lull in our funding, have been weathering several storms..."

The fact that other agencies have faced recent funding difficulties has made a definite impact on RPEC because, in many cases, it has meant that these agencies have not been able to contract for our services. Thus, we have faced a loss in anticipated income. We have also experienced a drop in individual donations during the past year.

However, due to overwhelming response to our first-ever January membership renewal drive, the tide has turned. I am pleased to report that RPEC's financial state is now greatly improved and want to thank everyone who either renewed his or her membership or joined the Center for the first time during the past five months. For those of you who are still contemplating doing so or who found it necessary for some reason to delay, I urge you to send your contribution as soon as possible.

Remember, RPEC is your voice

Nonviolence and Us

By Arun Gandhi

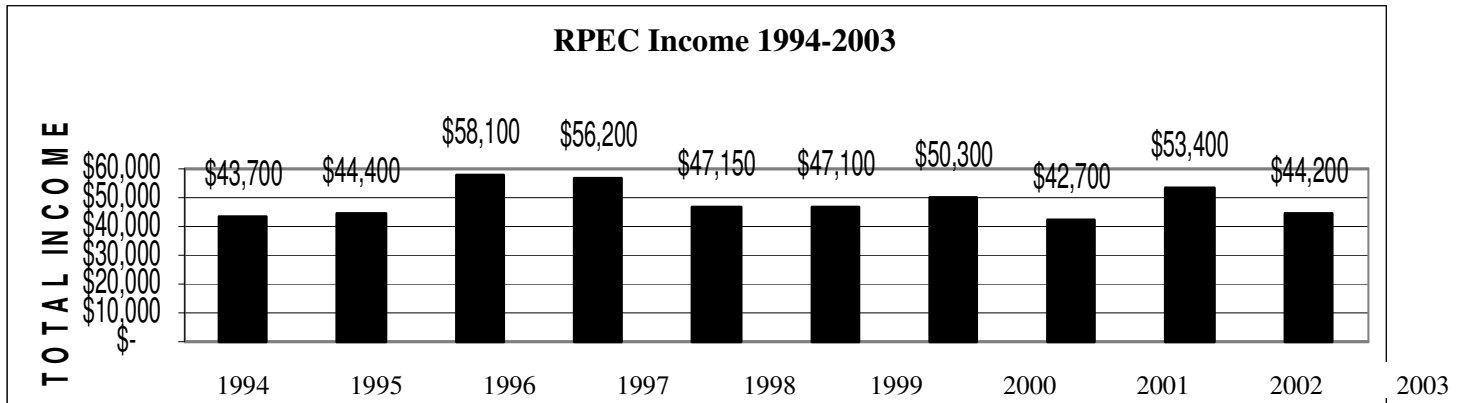
Modern society is plagued by violence - at home, at work, in the streets, in schools. In fact anywhere there is, unfortunately, the distinct likelihood of violence breaking out. So much violence is an indication of our deteriorating human relationships, as well as the stress under which we live and work.

Many of us enjoy living in the "fast lane" because that, we are told, is the road to success. So we allow our minds to street us at phenomenal speed, oblivious of the danger of crashing. When we live on the edge day after day we become like taut rubber bands - either we break or we bounce back. And in either case, the consequence is that we damage or destroy human relationships. What we must learn now is how to rebuild those relationships and lessen the stress so we can create an atmosphere of harmony around us.

Finances - Income

RPEC is now in its 26th year of continuous operation with paid staff. During that time, our financial support has increased from less than \$10,000 in its first full year to the current level of around \$50,000 per year. Chart 1 shows our total income for the past ten years.

Chart 1



The peak income years were due to substantial income from our programs, but this has not proved to be sustainable. Chart 2 shows the major sources of our income for the past four years along with our expense levels for those years.

Chart 2

RPEC Financial Summaries, 2000-2003				
	2000	2001	2002	2003
INCOME				
Contributions - Individual	\$ 19,718.00	\$ 22,092.00	\$ 26,334.00	\$ 23,403.00
Contributions - Organizations	\$ 14,755.00	\$ 12,999.00	\$ 11,972.00	\$ 11,643.00
Program Income (Net)	\$ 5,368.00	\$ 2,805.00	\$ 4,859.00	\$ 1,187.00
Fundraising Events (Net)	\$ 7,857.00	\$ 4,478.00	\$ 7,232.00	\$ 7,576.00
Grants (Net)	\$ 2,000.00	\$ -	\$ 2,500.00	\$ -
Other Income (Net)	\$ 622.00	\$ 315.00	\$ 484.00	\$ 427.00
Total	\$ 50,320.00	\$ 42,689.00	\$ 53,381.00	\$ 44,236.00
EXPENSE				
Salaries and Benefits	\$ 33,801.00	\$ 40,938.00	\$ 40,911.00	\$ 42,084.00
Office Expense	\$ 12,142.00	\$ 10,024.00	\$ 10,262.00	\$ 10,641.00
Total	\$ 45,943.00	\$ 50,962.00	\$ 51,173.00	\$ 52,725.00
NET INCOME (DEFICIT)	\$ 4,377.00	\$ (8,273.00)	\$ 2,208.00	\$ (8,490.00)

Individual

Finances - Where Does the Money Come From?

Contributors

You, our members, provide over 40% of our support. Of that amount, 75% is provided by 100 “major donors” who contribute \$100 or more each year. More than a dozen of you contribute at least \$300 each year. And you responded with great generosity to our recent plea for help. Our February appeal letter has brought in over \$8,000 and assured our survival for another year.

Organizational Support

Another 25-30% of our support comes from organizations, primarily churches. Chart 3 lists the organizations that have contributed at least \$100 during the past two years. Of these, seven church groups contribute \$1000 per year or more. We must make special mention of the support given to us by the Catholic Diocese of Richmond in the form of office space, heat and light, with no charge. That is a huge contribution to our work.

Fundraising Events

We hold two major fundraising events each year, the Spring Concert, which raises \$1,000 - 2,000, and the Annual Dinner and Auction which raises \$4,000 - 6,000.

Spring Concert

The tradition of the spring concert fundraiser began over ten years ago when popular folk singer John McCutcheon agreed to do a concert for us. John returned for several years, always providing a great evening and significant income.

In an effort to broaden the appeal of this fundraiser beyond the traditional peace community, we decided to invite different groups to perform, including Ezibu Muntu African Dance Troupe, Vivace a cappella singers and Walter Bell Latin jazz group. All provided great entertainment, but none brought out the crowds that John McCutcheon did. So we convinced John to return.

McCutcheon combines exceptional musicianship with a thorough understanding of peace and justice issues. He performs with acoustic guitar, banjo, piano, violin and hammer dulcimer. His songs celebrate nonviolence (*Christmas in the Trenches* and *No Mas!*), unions (*Step by Step*), and the perseverance of the human spirit (*The Great Storm is Over* and *How Can I Keep from Singing*). He always has something for the children (*Kindergarten Wall* and *Rubber Blubber Whale*) and an occasional observation about politics (*I Want to be in Ashcroft's Army*). John performs again this June 25 at the VCU Performing Arts Center (see also the ad in this newsletter).

Annual Dinner and Auction

This event started as a meeting required by RPEC Bylaws to elect new members to the Board of Directors. Over the years it has evolved into our major fundraising event, which included a live auction and many tables of silent auction items. After many years where we

(Continued on page 13)

Chart 3 Organizational Support

<p>Church of the Brethren – Virlina District West Richmond Church of the Brethren Cathedral of the Sacred Heart Church of the Epiphany – Catholic Church St. Augustine Catholic Church St. Bridget Catholic Church St. Edward Catholic Church St. Elizabeth Catholic Church St. Gabriel Catholic Church St. Mary Catholic Church</p>	<p>St. Michael Catholic Church The Episcopal Diocese of Virginia First Mennonite Church Richmond Mennonite Fellowship Bon Air Presbyterian Church Ginter Park Presbyterian Church Presbytery of the James Three Chopt Presbyterian Church Midlothian Friends Meeting Richmond Friends Meeting</p>
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Finances - Where Does the Money Come From?

(Continued from page 12)

raised a couple thousand dollars, it took a jump one year to \$6,000. I remember Jane Hare after that event saying, "I think we made \$8,000!" Well, it turned out it was only \$6,000, but that was 3X what we had done in past years. And it has stayed in that range ever since.

Now the fundraising committee is seriously looking at the need to increase participation and purchases at the Annual Dinner and Auction. One thing we have planned is to move the place to a space that will allow us to serve wine and to make a real effort to have a much more upbeat, party atmosphere. A second is to focus more attention on the auction, by having heavy hors d'ouvres that will feel filling to folks, but won't necessitate sitting down all at the same time to have a meal. That way, people won't have to wait to eat, either, but can begin nibbling as soon as they arrive. This will mean that we need to increase the cost of the tickets to cover the cost of the food and wine, though we aren't prepared to give you that cost just yet. We will continue to have a family rate, so people might bring children if they want. We want to give people plenty of heads-up about the change in format. We hope that you will plan to come, plan to have a very good time, and plan to bring people who may not have come in the past.

Other Fundraising Activities

Over the years we have experimented with other ways to raise money. The challenge is to find activities that fit with our values and don't take too much of our staff's time.

Our latest attempt is a great example - good for the environment and for us. We can get \$2 for each used, original equipment, ink-jet printer cartridge that is mailed to the Recycling Center. Right now we have two or three collection points (one in a church, one at REA) and are collecting about \$30 each month. What if we had 50 collection points! Call RPEC, 358-1958 for details.

We have held garden parties, St. Patrick's Day parties, etc. most years recently with variable results (\$500-1200). Occasionally we get a musical group willing to do a benefit concert, and these have provided similar financial benefits. Yard sales provide some income but require much staff (or volunteer) time. We do participate in Ukrops' "golden receipts" program, and appreciate those who send us their coupons. And we participate with Diversity Thrift in a program whereby they pay RPEC for volunteer time spent at the store.

We always appreciate suggestions and participation.

Announcing Virginia C.U.R.E's Annual Family Day Picnic

Saturday June 12, 2004

10 am to sunset

Location:

Rockwood Park

3401 Courthouse Rd. and
Route 360

Virginia CURE will be holding its Annual Family Day event again this year at Rockwood Park in Richmond, and we invite you to participate.

This year the event is scheduled for Saturday, 12 June 2004, from 10 am to sunset. Our theme is "Bridges to Our Future". The event is dedicated to children and family members with incarcerated loved ones, and it is an exciting day of food, music, games and events provided at no cost by numerous sponsors, including many local businesses. Everyone is invited!!

This year we plan to have even a larger turn out. We have planned a get acquainted social on Friday night for those who come in early, and we have been invited to join several of the local church congregations for Sunday morning service.

You can get up-to-date information on the event by visiting <http://www.advocareflash.org/FamilyDay.html>.

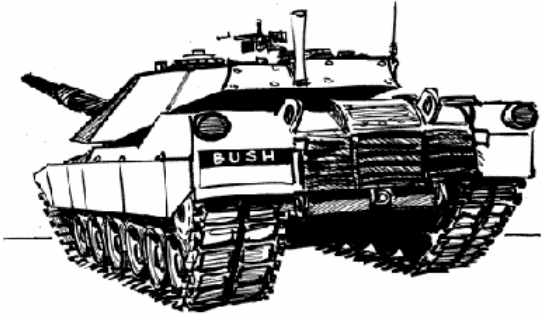
For out-of-town participants, a special rate of \$48 per night is available for the weekend at Homestead Studio Suites - Midlothian. Availability is limited, so call now. Call Homestead directly for reservations (804-272-1800) and tell them you are coming for Virginia C.U.R.E's Family Day.

RPEC World Wide Web Address:

<http://www.rpec.org>

rpecNEWS 2003 in Pictures

Why Are We Going to War?



Local Billboard



Question War

NUCLEAR WEAPONS:
IRAQ - 0
NORTH KOREA - 1-2
UNITED STATES - 10,000+

* source: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Wage Peace: Question our War on Iraq.

a message from the Richmond Peace Education Center www.questionwar.org



Again, Fort Benning and the SOA

Your Tax Dollars Support Dictators, Torturers & Terrorists...

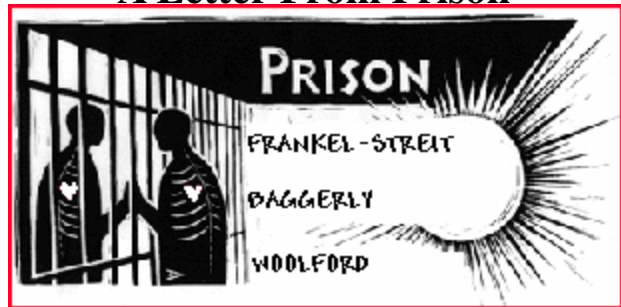
¡NO MAS! CLOSE THE SCHOOL OF ASSASSINS!



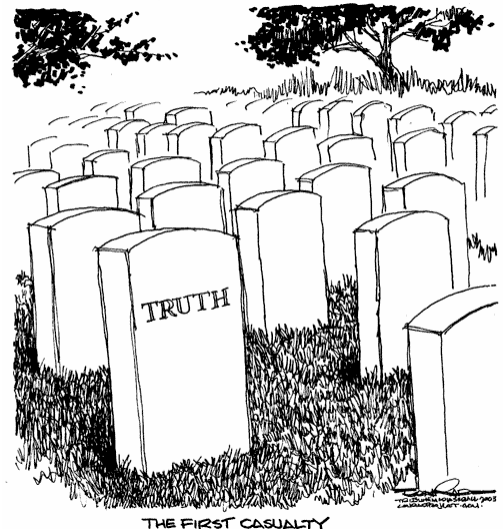
Demand A Truth Commission NOW...

CLOSE THE SOA !!!

A Letter From Prison



Does Truth Matter?



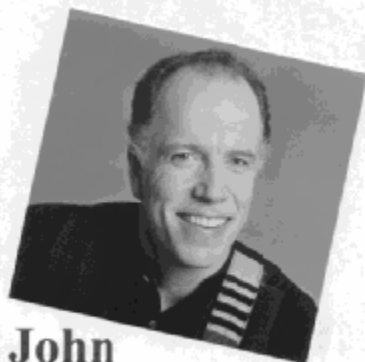
CALENDAR

Meetings of Local Groups

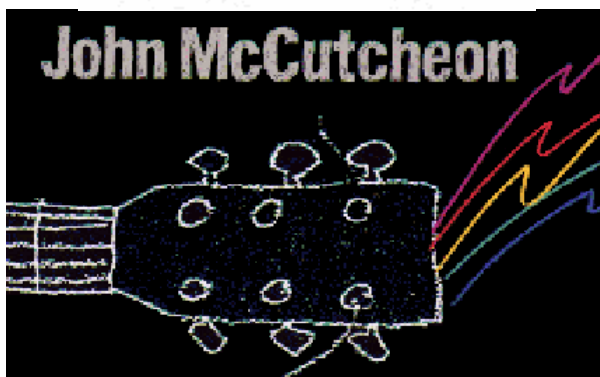
- Every Sunday** **Food Not Bombs, Richmond - Meal Sharing**, 4:00 P.M. in Monroe Park. Hotline # 359-4880 for details
- Every 3rd Wed.** **Amnesty International**, 7:00 PM at Friends Meeting. 4500 Kensington Ave. Call 320-9488.
- Every 3rd Friday** **Sufi Dancing: Dances of Universal Peace**, 7:30-9:30 PM except Oct. Round House, Byrd Park. 353-4901
- Every Thurs.** **Richmond Organization for Sexual Minority Youth (ROSMY)**, 7:00-9:00 PM. Call support line: 353-2077 for more information; 353-1699 for the administrative line.
- Every 3rd Sat.** **Equality Virginia**, 12:00 noon at the office. A political advocacy group working towards equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender citizens of Virginia. Open to the public. Contact number is 643-4816.
- Every 4th Sat.** **Pax Christi Peace Community** - Call Paula Powdermaker for details - 355-7395
- Every 1st Mon.** **Virginia People of Faith for Alternatives to the Death Penalty**, 4:45 PM
Catholic Diocese Conference Room, Floyd and Cherry, Kathleen Kenney, 359-5661
- Every Third Sun.** **The Richmond Virginia Buddhist Peace Fellowship** holds a meditation vigil for peace in Monroe Park from 1 PM to PM.
- Every 2nd Sat.** **Walk for Peace** - 9 AM - 10 AM. Meet at the Boulevard entrance of the Virginia Museum. Wear black.
- Every Friday** **Protest the war on Iraq** - Noon till 1 PM, at 10th and Main Streets.
- Every 3rd Thurs.** **Richmond Chapter VADP** - 7:00 PM at St. Marks Episcopal Church.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- May 22** **Hymn Sing for Peace** - 1:00-3:30 PM - U.S. Capitol Building, Reflecting Pool steps in D.C. Sponsored by First Mennonite Church of Richmond
- May 23** **Annual Prayer Service for Nonviolence** - 7:00 PM - At Bon Air Presbyterian Church, 9201 Huguenot Rd. Sponsored by Pax Christi and the Peace Study/Action Group of Bon Air Presbyterian Church. Contact John Gallini (272-8141).
- June 1** **Interracial Dialogue** - Sponsored by RPEC & Richmond Human Relations Commission - 7:30 PM, Tuesday, First United Presbyterian Church, 3401 North Ave., Richmond. Topic: "Brown v Bd. of Edu. & Massive Resistance - Historic Facts, Contemporary Implications". Guest speakers/facilitators: Del. Viola Baskerville & Ken Woodley, Editor, Farmville Herald.
- June 22-23** **Virginia Peace Summit** - Taber House, Lynchburg. Contact John Gallini at 272-8141.
- June 25** **John McCutcheon Concert to benefit RPEC** - Friday, June 25, 7:30 PM at the VCU Performing Arts Center. Call 358-1958 for reservations.
- June 25-27** **EarthSpirit Rising: A Conference Celebrating Earth As Teacher** will be held at Midway College - Midway, Kentucky (near Lexington) will be. You may access our entire conference brochure on the web at: earthspiritrising.org or contact us at earthteacher@aol.com or (502)897-2721.



**John
McCutcheon**



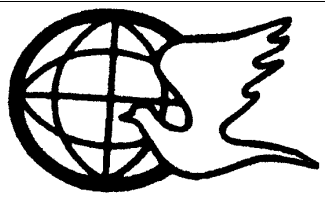
**John McCutcheon
in
Concert**

**Friday, June 25
7:30 pm**

VCU Performing Arts Center

**Tickets:
Adult - \$20
Student/child - \$10
Family - \$50**

To Benefit RPEC



**Richmond
Peace
Education
Center** 14 N. Laurel St., Richmond, VA 23220

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