

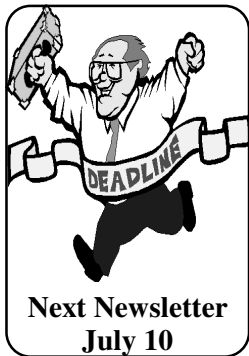
RPEC NEWS

The newsletter of the Richmond Peace Education Center

May/June 2006

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Profiles in Peacemaking

A History of the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP)

Linda Heacock

We believe that there is in the universe a power that is able to transform hostility and destructiveness into a cooperation and community, and to do justice among us. We believe that the power is everywhere—in us, in our opponents, and in the world around us. We believe that there are certain individual and group dynamics that make it possible to tune in to this power enabling us and our opponents to realize our birthright of peace and dignity.

~ Basic Manual, Alternatives to Violence Project

The Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) is a grassroots, international, volunteer movement that is committed to reducing interpersonal violence in our society and the world. AVP works towards this goal by presenting highly experiential workshops in prisons, schools, and communities. In origin and philosophy it has ties to the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), but it is a non-sectarian, non-profit organization, funded entirely by private sources.

AVP began in 1975 in the New York State prison system when an inmate group at Greenhaven Prison, "The Think Tank," felt the need of nonviolence training to prepare them for their upcoming roles as counselors in an experimental program at an institution for under-age offenders. A local Quaker group held weekly worship services at the prison. Knowing that Friends were opposed to war and violence, The Think Tank asked them to provide the training they needed.

A committee of four Quakers from the weekly worship group became the first AVP facilitators and developed the rudiments of what is now the AVP Basic workshop. These founders of what became known as the Alternatives to Violence Project were Larry Apsey, Ellen Flanders, Janet Lugo and Lee Stern. The Basic Manual, first issued in 1975, consisted of material adapted from the marshal training of the peace marches of the 1960s and 70s, plus material from Children's Creative Response to Conflict Program, the Movement for a New Society, and the Quaker Project on Community Conflict. Many of the original workshop discussions and exercises remain an integral part of the AVP training.

The insights that the Greenhaven inmates gained from this new program enabled many of them to find alternatives to their violent ways. They experienced a profound change in attitude, values and aspirations, by drawing on a power within them capable of restoring harmony and transforming their lives. With the realization of this inner power they developed an understanding of what became known as *Transforming Power*, the heart and core of AVP philosophy.

The AVP program spread to other state prisons through Quaker worship groups and

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Reflections from the Board Chair

Wendy Northup

Though I am many years out of school, even from working on a school schedule as a teacher, I still look forward to summer as a time of kicking back and doing things slower. In fact, these days my life doesn't really change much in the summer, but I anticipate the season as if it were going to. Warm weather, blooming flowers, soft breezes.... I don't keep in mind that August will come — hot, dry, dusty!

We all need the renewal of summer, literally and figuratively. It's helpful to think of this as we continue to work for peace in a world and a community that is increasingly violent. It's easy to feel dry and dusty and to forget the warm breezes and the blooming flowers. This month's newsletter should bring a sense of renewal as you read about all the exciting things that are happening at the Peace Center. We had an excellent annual meeting with energy and suggestions from members. We look forward to the John McCutcheon concert—an annual renewal of our spirits. We are rejuvenating both the conflict resolution and the Alternatives to Violence teams and so are able to bring the message of nonviolence at many levels to lots of new people. And our young members who participated in the youth summit bring special hope to me.

So, as your summer starts, take some time to rest and enjoy the longer days. Be hopeful about the work we are doing and think about how you are contributing to the greater peace in the Richmond region; perhaps you may decide to get involved in an RPEC project that you haven't been part of before. Each of us doing our part is what we need for peace in our world.



Drumming workshop led by RPEC board member Ram Bhagat at the April 22nd Youth Peace Summit. For more details see p. 8.

Profiles in Peacemaking

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word of mouth. For some years the focus was on prisons, as a means to help people reduce the level of violence in the prison environment while at the same time deal with the violence in their own lives. However it soon became clear that prison violence is merely a distilled version of the violence that pervades all of society. People unconnected with the prisons, many of them Quaker meetings, first in New York and later other states, began requesting community-based training to develop teams of AVP facilitators. As AVP spread among prison populations around the country, program emphasis also took root in various community settings, including shelters for battered women, homeless people, criminal justice programs, and other community agencies. As AVP broadened its outreach to include many communities nationwide, program manuals were developed and expanded for use in each of the three, 22-hour workshop levels, Basic, Advanced and Training for Training.

Eventually, AVP made the international leap to Australia and New Zealand, then to Europe, Central and South America, the Far East, and Africa. It now has a presence in 44 states, and 37 countries on nearly every continent.

The AVP program has been particularly successful and is rapidly expanding in the Great Lakes Region of Africa (Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda) where throughout the region there continues to be ongoing threats of ethnic and tribal violence. More specifi-

cally, response to recent AVP workshops held in Western Kenya has been overwhelmingly positive. At the October 2005 AVP training I conducted with Kenyan co-facilitators, eight of our group of 20 participants, who certified as AVP facilitators, have committed to apprenticeship at a Basic Level workshop in each of the ten locations in their District—one each month. What is most significant is that these workshops are all self-financed—they are not dependent on outside funding.

AVP's organizational model is one of building from the grass roots up, based on the approach taken by Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. It is felt this approach is essential to nonviolence training. AVP makes use of consensus as its decision making process, incorporating the Quaker idea that shows respect for the opinions of all and resists development of a hierarchy within an organizational structure. AVP is about community, acknowledging and encouraging the potential within us all to grow, develop, and work together by reaching mutual agreement and without coercion.

Note: portions of the above were taken from: the AVP Organizing Kit and the AVP Basic Manual, AVP Distribution Services, Plainfield, NY; and an article by Gini Floyd, AVP facilitator to Kenya in 2004.

AVP in Kenya

Linda Heacock

*[In September-October of 2005 I traveled to Kenya as part of my Quaker ministry through Richmond Friends Meeting and Baltimore Yearly Meeting. I am in the process of raising funds for a return trip again this September to continue my work with the **Alternatives to Violence Project**]*

My ministry with Friends Peace Teams (FPT) evolved out of a strong personal leading to offer training and skills gained over the years in the field of alternatives to violence education, as a resource to the work being done in Kenya and parts of Africa through FPT's *African Great Lakes Initiative* (AGLI). Thanks to the overwhelming support of my Meeting, and my family and friends, my leading became reality in September of 2005, when I embarked on a 6-week journey to Kenya. I joined a peace team of Kenyan facilitators to deliver Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) workshops in Western Kenya and Nairobi. The program is a joint collaborative effort of FPT-AGLI and the Kenyan organization, *Friends for Peace and Community Development* (FPCD). AVP, originally founded in the United States in the 1970's by Quakers in their work with prison populations, is now international in scope with programs in many countries on nearly every continent. The program is still in its infancy in Kenya, and so they are very dependent on the resources

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Profiles in Peacemaking

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and leadership offered by the African Great Lakes Initiative. AGLI supports and promotes peace activities at the grassroots level in the Great Lakes Region of Africa. In collaboration with (Quaker) yearly meetings and other peacemaking organizations in the area, AGLI works together with native people in local communities to deliver programs and training such as AVP, and promote deeper understanding and community between Friends in Africa and those in the United States.

The major focus of my trip was devoted to facilitating a series of five, 3-day AVP workshops to a diverse group of participants: community officials, police, paralegals, teachers, and youth. Much of my time was also spent meeting with Quaker activists and leaders in Kenya, attending Quaker worship services, and visiting several of the many Friends-sponsored programs, including orphan support groups (caregivers of children orphaned due to the AIDS pandemic), and an extensive youth program that includes peer education, community outreach, economic empowerment, and the use of participatory drama focusing on pertinent issues such as gender-based violence, substance abuse, and HIV/AIDS.

Among the most meaningful experiences I had while in Kenya was witnessing the profound impact of AVP on its participants. I believe the AVP training has been so universally effective because of its concept of “Transforming Power,” which is the core philosophy of AVP. To me Transforming

Power is synonymous with the Quaker “Inner Light,” the belief that there is “that of God” in every human being. In our workshops, following an initial phase of building trust and community, each group would inevitably begin to reveal their personal stories – through conflict scenarios shared in small groups, in role plays, and large group discussions. It soon became apparent that no one had escaped incidences of overt violence in their lives. Violent outcomes – or the potential for violence – were shared in countless examples: disputes over land or animals, quarreling between neighbors, domestic violence, alcoholism, and extra-marital affairs. The training presented our participants with many questions; some seemed almost desperate for answers – *how do I deal with drunkenness and violence in my family, how can I personally confront the HIV/AIDS pandemic, what can I do about my anger??* Perhaps because collectively, these participants have experienced their share of violence in their lives, we found in general they seemed to have understood the roots of violence in all its forms almost without question. They were ready and willing to look at its alternatives and how to apply them. This may explain why our experiential exercises and role plays were so effective at each level of the workshops. Over and over again, evidence of “Transforming Power” was both demonstrated and noted by our participants.

The response to our AVP workshops in Kenya has been overwhelmingly positive. In Western Kenya, eight participants who be-

came certified AVP facilitators at our October 2005 training have enthusiastically committed to become part of an AVP team to deliver a basic-level workshop in each of the ten locations in the District—one each month. What is most significant is that these workshops are all self-financed (without dependence on outside funding), thanks to generous donations of time, food, and workshop location.

In my 6 weeks of living and working with the people of Kenya, I was privileged to learn much about and appreciate their everyday life and culture. I found I began taking certain inconveniences – lack of plumbing, electricity, modern transportation – in stride. They were overshadowed by the intense richness in the quality of my daily interactions with the environment and the people. I wrote of my experience of the people in my daily Kenyan journal:

There is a spirit of perseverance and determination in the face of many odds. The average citizen has experienced their share of hardship. Because of a severe shortage of medical care, and the prevalence of AIDS, malaria, TB and other disease, most people have lived through the death of multiple family members by the time they have reached adulthood. I find that those I am living and working among demonstrate a genuine acceptance of and appreciation for the good things life has to offer, instead of dwelling on hardship and diversity. They grieve, let go, and move on. Those I meet often appear to be living life to the fullest, reap-

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Profiles in Peacemaking

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ing gratitude and joy from the little they have.

My life will forever be changed from all I have seen and experienced while in Kenya. I am now even more convinced that the intentions of the Spirit are for me to continue to be an instrument for this work. I have learned that there is an enormous amount of visible grass roots work being done in Kenya and other countries of the Great Lakes Region (Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda) by Quakers, African NGOs, women empowerment programs, and other peacemaking groups. I believe we can all search for and find both individual and corporate ways to support a strong peace and justice witness in the region. Kenyans are deeply indebted to the help that comes from the US through programs such as Alternatives to Violence Project.

AVP in Richmond

RPEC has been a local sponsor and coordinator of the Alternatives to Violence Project for over 12 years. (See accompanying article.) AVP trainings—Basic, Advanced, and Training for Facilitators—have been conducted regularly throughout this period at local area prisons. The Center has approximately 50 people listed as having completed certification to become an AVP facilitator. This number includes many incarcerated people who have served on an AVP team (past and present). There has been an active AVP team of inside and outside facilitators at the James River Correctional Center for many years, delivering workshops an average of four times a year.

An enthusiastic effort is currently underway to re-introduce the AVP program at the Virginia Correctional Center for Women in Goochland, VA. AVP at the women’s prison has not been operating since Marilyn Robertson, the former coordinator of the program, moved out of state a few years ago. Our goal is to expand the AVP program to other correctional institutions as well as to offer the training in community settings.

An AVP Organizational Gathering recently took place on May 23rd for people (past facilitators as well as *anyone with an interest in AVP*) who would like to be involved in re-establishing a presence at VCCW—and beyond. We hope to be ready to begin scheduling AVP workshops at the women’s prison within the next year, if not sooner.

****Please contact the Center (804-232-1002) if you have any interest in involvement with RPEC’s AVP program.**



Linda facilitating a role play at an AVP workshop in Nairobi



Linda with family of AVP participant who invited facilitators to their home

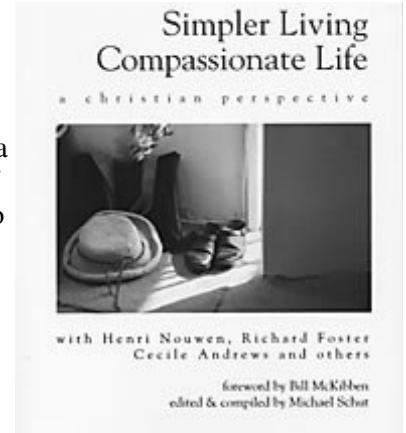
Consumers Corner

Where Do We Get Our Food

John Gallini

In a book that I highly recommend, *Simpler Living, Compassionate Life* (Michael Schut, Editor, 1999), Jim Mulligan has a short essay titled “The Great Hunter-Gatherer Continuum.” Mulligan argues that people living in metropolitan areas in the US today have little sense of where our food comes from and even less of an idea of how detrimental to the earth the processes for bringing us our food can be. Part of the problem lies in the fact that supermarket food travels an average of 1200 miles to get to us!

Mulligan proposes a way of looking at the spectrum of options for obtaining our food that he calls the Hunter-Gatherer Continuum. He uses that metaphor because our distant ancestors who survived by hunting and gathering had no significant impact on the environment in which they lived. The spectrum looks like this:



Culturally Normative

Most Earth Friendly

**Supermarket
Only**

**Specialized
Grocery Stores**

**Farmers'
Market**

**Subscription
Farm**

I would add growing your own vegetables to the Earth Friendly end of the spectrum, since I know people who provide most of their family's sustenance that way, preserving foods by canning and freezing so that the supply extends beyond the growing season.

Locally, there are several subscription farms available, including Sprout Organic which I have been part of for several years (www.sproutorganic.org). The 17th Street Farmers' Market is open Thursdays, April 6 through Oct. 26 from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Farmers sell homegrown free-range eggs, beef, pork, fresh herbs, greens, and bedding plants while bakers offer their fresh focaccia bread and rolls. And by now, smaller markets will have appeared throughout the area. Specialized grocery stores would include Ellwood Thompson and Good Food Grocery stores.

In recent years, even the supermarkets are making an attempt to respond to customers' preference for organic produce and, during the growing season, locally grown produce. Look for the Appalachian Harvest brand at Ukrops and Ellwood Thompson. You can reduce the harmful impact on our planet by choosing products with a minimum of packaging and by moving away from high meat diets (especially beef which requires 5 pounds of grain and a gallon of gasoline for every pound of beef – not to mention the soil erosion, water consumption, and pesticide and fertilizer runoff).

It usually costs more, in both money and time, to buy and cook fresh, locally grown, organic produce – but the benefits are obvious to our own health and that of our earth. This is a great time of year to develop the habit of buying at least some of our produce from local sources.

Responsible Shopper – Coop America has upgraded their “Responsible Shopper” website (<http://www.coopamerica.org/programs/rs/greenshift.cfm>). You can find more sources of environmentally friendly clothing and merchandise and it is easier to navigate.

Peace Essay Award Winners Selected

The winners of the annual Peace Essay Awards have been selected to receive cash prizes, invitations to the Annual Spring Concert and to appear on the Indymedia radio show on WRIR.

The First Place Winners will be featured in subsequent RPEC newsletters.

This year's winners are:

Primary (K-3)

First: Cory Brumagin Collegiate School, Richmond, gr. 1

Second: Gabriela Brumagin Collegiate School, Richmond, gr. 3

Third: Morgan T. Bell Twin Hickory Elementary School, Henrico County, gr. 3

Honorable Mention:

Omar Divleli, Al Fatih Academy, Fairfax gr. 3
Jafr Kazmi, Al Fatih Academy, Fairfax gr. 3

Upper Elementary (4-5)

First: Katie Gilmer, Pearson's Corner Elementary School, Hanover County, gr. 5

Second: Faria Rahman, IQRA Academy of Virginia, Richmond, gr. 5

Third: Bonny A. Turnage, Battlefield Park Elementary School, Hanover County, gr. 5

Honorable Mention:

Destiny Mbotto, Providence Elementary School, Chesterfield County, gr. 4
Toni Okelana, Providence Elementary School, Chesterfield County, gr. 4
Amy Pressey, James River Elementary School, Williamsburg/James City County, gr. 5
Jessie Thomas, Pearson's Corner Elementary School, Hanover County, gr. 5
Jordan Wrenn, Collegiate School, Richmond, gr. 5

Alive in Baghdad Film Showing and Discussion

View a short film of interviews with Baghdad residents and footage of the streets of Baghdad under occupation on June 6 at 7 pm at 2107 Grove Avenue. The film was made by independent journalist Brian Conley last year. Informal discussion to follow.

Middle School (6-8)

First: Matthew Disler, Collegiate School, Richmond, gr. 6

Second: Izzi Atkinson, Lucille Brown Middle School, Richmond, gr. 8

Third: Yusuf Albarzinji, Al Fatih Academy, Fairfax, gr. 6

Honorable Mention:

Osman Aijazi, Al Fatih Academy, Fairfax, gr. 6
Ryan Easter, Lucille Brown Middle School, Richmond, gr. 8
Channa Mik, Lucille Brown Middle School, Richmond, gr. 8
M. Radiah Shabazz, Binford Middle School, Richmond, gr. 8
Sean Youngstone, Lucille Brown Middle School, Richmond, gr. 6

High School (9-12)

First: Zuri McClelland, Maggie Walker Governor's School, Richmond, gr. 11

Second: Erika Parker, Maggie Walker Governor's School, Richmond, gr. 11

Third: Zack Budryk, Hermitage High School, Henrico County, gr. 11

Honorable Mention:

Meg Allin, Douglas Freeman High School, Henrico County, gr. 12
Peter Smith, Douglas Freeman High School, Henrico County, gr. 10
Brittany Johnson, Open High School, Richmond, gr. 10
Danielle Haas, Manchester High School, Chesterfield County, gr. 11
Wesley Nathaniel Mason, Maggie Walker Governor's School, Richmond gr. 9

You can read the First Place essays at the RPEC web site (www.rpec.org)

Happenings at the Center

Recent Events

Many Attend Youth Peace Summit

On April 22, about 90 young people gathered for RPEC's Richmond Youth Peace Project Youth Peace Summit. The teens spent much of the day in participatory workshops, including Spoken Word, Drums No Guns, Conflict Resolution Training, Youth Activism, Aikido, Cultural Diversity, Preventing Dating Violence, Urban Gear T-shirt Design, and more. Several of the workshops were facilitated by young people themselves. VCU psychology professor Micah McCreary gave a powerful and personal keynote speech during lunch. Then, at the end of the day, the teens broke into small groups to discuss steps they would take to build peace in their own lives and communities.

RPEC Looks to the Future

At the May 4 membership meeting, RPEC members brainstormed ideas for the coming year and provided input on RPEC's program priorities. The evening opened with a drumming demonstration led by board member and Drums No Guns founder, Ram Bhagat. Executive Director Adria Scharf gave an overview of the peace center's accomplishments over the past seven months, and a preview of the year ahead.

AVP May Start Again at Women's Prison

Fourteen people attended a meeting on May 23, organized by volunteer Linda Heacock to discuss re-establishing the Alternatives to Violence Project conflict-resolution program at the Virginia Correctional Center for Women at Goochland. Contact the peace center (rpec@rpec.org) if you are interested in getting involved.

Upcoming Events

Contribute Your Talents for Auction

The Auction Committee is looking for items for the October 27, 2006 Annual Auction. We're counting on your talents, RPEC members, to bring fun and funds to our Gala Annual Auction and Dinner. Here are some ideas:

- Homemade food items
- Craft lessons (e.g., knitting)
- Computer support
- Arts & crafts workshops
- Consulting Services
- Garden design and upgrades
- Foreign language practice

Or you can donate art/craft items from other parts of the world that you find in your travels this summer.

Here's an example of one talent for auction: Mim Scalini is offering her Mail Art workshop in the home of one lucky person, including up to

five friends. This three-hour workshop includes an introduction to the history of mail art, three mail art-making experiences, and the opportunity to participate in mail art shows. No experience is necessary, just a willingness to have fun.

If you have a skill that you think might be appreciated by other RPEC members, please contact Barbara Williford at 329-4719 or balawilliford@aol.com.

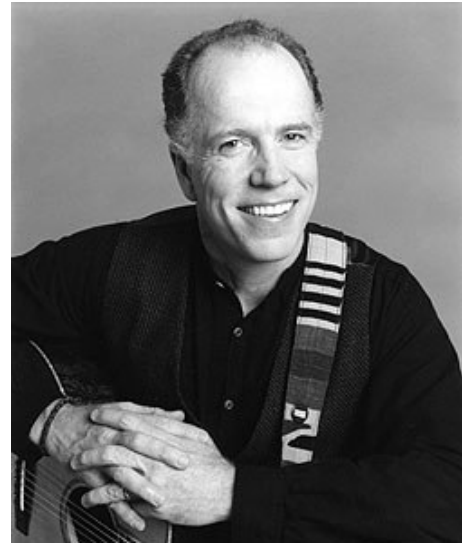
Peacemaker of the Year

Have you thought about who should receive the third annual Peacemaker of the Year award at the RPEC Annual Dinner on October 27, 2006? If not, it's time for all our members to think of someone who has made the world a better place through their dedication to peacemaking in all its forms. It only takes a minute to fill out the nomination form on www.RPEC.org. If you don't have access to a computer, just call the RPEC office at 232-1002 and the office staff will mail you one. But please take the time to make a thoughtful nomination and do it soon. This is important. The deadline for nominations is June 30, 2006.

Family Peace Festival

The Family Peace Festival can use more help this summer with publicity and exhibits. They're also looking for someone with drama experience to organize a youth skit over the summer. Contact the peace center, rpec@rpec.org, if you're interested in getting involved.

**The Richmond Peace
Education Center
Presents
John McCutcheon
In Concert**



**Friday, June 16, 2006
VCU Performing Arts Center
922 Park Ave.
7:30 p.m.**

**Ticket prices:
\$20 for adults
\$12 for students
\$50 for a bundle of up to five tickets ("the family rate")
Order tickets today by calling 232-1002 or e-mailing tickets@rpec.org.**

The Richmond Peace Education Center is holding its annual spring concert June 16, featuring Grammy nominee singer-songwriter John McCutcheon (www.folkmusic.com).

This event is a major fundraiser for the peace center and an important supplement to our primary source of income, donations from members. It's also a wonderful evening of music by a singer-songwriter and instrumentalist like no other. John McCutcheon is a master of a dozen different traditional instruments and his lyrics reflect his life-long commitment to the struggle for peace and justice.

Strong turnout is crucial to making this event a success. Support the work of the peace center by joining the fun on the 16th. All ages are welcome.

A Pacifist in Wartime

Jinny Batterson

I am fortunate so far not to have experienced directly the privations and dangers of warfare, but only to have learned its results at second hand. My father's elder brother was killed during the final months of World War II. A high school friend's first beau was an early casualty of U.S. armed involvement in Vietnam. In the former Confederate capital where I now make my home, some beautiful hillsides are covered with soldiers' tombstones. Our local history museum carries photographs of our city in 1865--burned to rubble. Our country's current involvement in Iraq concerns and saddens me. I oppose most wars, partly because they cause human suffering, but mainly because they are destructive, expensive, and generally ineffective means of resolving conflicts. As this war drags on, I continue to participate in protests against policy decisions by our government leaders with which I disagree. I continue to work and pray for an end to the war and a limit to the casualties on all sides. Yet if years of involvement in various peace movements have taught me anything, they have impressed on me that being for peace is more complex and expansive than being against war.

Here are some roles I believe pacifists can usefully fill during wartime:

- 1) We can find a tangible problem that war is not solving and engage some of our time, energy and material resources toward solving it. The most glaring current example is global over-dependence on fossil fuels. This was vividly brought home in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, as many Gulf Coast oil refineries and pipelines were shut down, without any human attack of any kind. Changing our habits to use less fuel can have an impact. We can also work toward improvements in renewable energy technologies to reduce or even eliminate our dependence on oil. We can direct our political skills toward solutions that reduce dependence on the oil reserves of repressive and/or unstable governments and regions. We can work to change government policies that reward some for wasting energy while making energy less accessible to our most vulnerable citizens.
- 2) We can support those put in harm's way and their families. While we struggle to learn less-harmful ways to resolve our differences, we must respect and honor the sacrifices of those who bear witness to our intermittent failures. Families of combatants and non-combatants alike are losing loved ones, and their pain is all too real. Despite the horrors of combat, some are prompted to acts of unusual courage and humaneness as they experience it. We can admire wartime bravery and altruism, and also strive to repair and forgive the cruelties and lapses brought on by wartime fear.
- 3) We can remain the messengers of realistic hope. Conflicts are the inevitable result of differences in character and perception. However, wars are not an inevitable result of conflicts. We have not yet learned to avoid war entirely, and we are learning to defuse and de-escalate some of our disputes to minimize deaths, injuries and material damage. Wars tend to polarize; pacifists in wartime must hold a middle ground between unrelenting despair and unrealistic idealism. Though wars cause terrible loss of life, natural resources and productive capacity, no war has yet been universally fatal. Wars eventually end. We need to know there will be again a more peaceful time, to avoid giving in to despair. Just as damaging as despair is a naïve belief that the path to dispensing with wars altogether will be either quick or easy. It is true, regardless of what we may see or hear in media presentations, that each day the vast majority of people on the planet manage to avoid killing each other. Many contribute actively to our global stores of beauty, wisdom and love. Those of us who support peace can keep faith that a next peace will come, and do our best to make that peace more robust and long-lasting.
- 4) We can practice a spiritual discipline of abundance. For me this is the hardest discipline of all in our glitzy, goods-saturated age. Wars are fought from a perspective of scarcity—be it a perceived lack of human labor, land, coal or oil, or a spiritual hunger that urges one or both parties to seek ever more glory, recognition, honor or "rightness" in a vain attempt to fill a void at our core. In order to have peace among nations, we also must find the peace within ourselves. Life is abundant, and most abundant when shared. All the resources we need are readily available to us. It is from a deep knowledge of this abundance, found in all living faith traditions, that lasting peace comes. May this peace, that currently passes our human understanding, suffuse this wintry time. May we continue to learn to share its blessings.

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 , University of Richmond campus. Contact Ray Hilliard at 289-8289
Every 3rd Friday	Sufi Dancing: Dances of Universal Peace , 7:30-9:30 PM except Oct. Round House, Byrd Park. 353-4901
Every Thursday	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 Saturday	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 Saturday	Pax Christi Peace Community - Call Paula Powdermaker for details - 355-7395
Every 3rd Sunday	The Richmond, Virginia Buddhist Peace Fellowship - holds a meditation vigil for peace in Monroe Park at 1:00 PM.
Every 2nd Saturday	Walk for Peace - 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM. Meet at the Boulevard entrance of the Virginia Museum. Wear black.
Every Friday	Protest the War on Iraq - Noon til 1:00 PM at 10th and Main Streets.

UPCOMING EVENTS

June 6	Alive in Baghdad film showing — View interviews with residents of Baghdad filmed by an independent journalist who recently returned from Iraq. 7:00 PM at 2107 Grove Avenue.
June 16	John McCutcheon Concert — Friday, June 16, 7:00 PM at VCU Performing Arts Center, 922 Park Ave.
June 30	Deadline to Nominate someone for RPEC's Annual Peacemaker of the Year Award. See RPEC web site for nomination form (http://www.rpec.org).
August 24	Richmond Youth Peace Project: Conflict Resolution training for Teens. Call 232-1002 for details.

RPEC needs you!

Help us man tables at the following events:

July 8	MOTIV8S City Wide Recognition Day — from noon to 8:00 pm, at Byrd Park Shield's Lake, Richmond
July 29	2006 VeggieFest on Saturday , noon to 7:00 pm, Azalea Gardens, Bryan Park

Please contact Mim Scalin at 353-0217 or mgsalin@rpec.org. We really need your participation. Don't feel that you don't know enough about RPEC. We'll have plenty of handouts for people to learn about us.

The Virginia Journey of Hope

Jack Payden-Travers,
Director, Virginians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty

Mark your calendars now for the upcoming Virginia Journey of Hope. From Oct. 13 thru Oct. 29th Virginians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty will be touring speakers and programs across the commonwealth. The journey will end up in Reston, VA, with the 30th anniversary conference of the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, Oct. 27-29. The focus of the conference will be skill building for organizing against the death penalty.

VADP will be bringing murder victims family members, families of the executed, families of those on death row and death row exonerates together with social activists to speak at civic groups, community forums, religious congregations and educational institutions on the need for an end to executions. The Journey of Hope brings its unique message through those who have traveled the hard road from violence to healing.

We are presently seeking speaking engagements and local organizers who would be willing to serve as hosts in their home communities. The 2005 Texas Journey spoke in over 150 different locations. In 1996 when the Journey last came to Virginia it reached over 29,000 people with its healing message. Sister Helen Prejean, author of **Dead Man Walking**, will join the Journey Oct. 21 & 22 for Faith in Action Weekend. As part of the Virginia Journey VADP is looking for high schools, colleges or community theatre groups that would undertake the production of **DEAD MAN WALKING**, a new play by Tim Robbins during the October Journey.

To bring the Virginia Journey of Hope to your community contact Jack Payden-Travers at VADP. Call our toll free number 888-567-VADP (8237) and leave a message, email VADP at Jack@VADP.org or write us at VADP, PO Box 4804, Charlottesville, VA 22905.



**Richmond Peace
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