

RPEC NEWS

The newsletter of the Richmond Peace Education Center

May-June 2007

Inside

Reflections 2

Consumers
Corner 2

Happenings 4

“Eyes Wide
Open
Virginia” 8

2006 Peace
Essay Contest
Winner 10

Calendar 11

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Next Newsletter
July 10

Profiles in Peacemaking

Revs. Brubaker & Watson's Pilgrimage for Peace

Ruth Anne Young



Rev. Watson (left) and Rev. Brubaker recite the Itinerary as they begin

There are many ways to act as peacemakers. Some people organize rallies or marches. Others advocate within large institutions. Yet others teach and promote dialogue. And some people, like the Rev. Natasha Brubaker and Rev. Margaret Watson, pray with passion.

Rev. Brubaker, Assistant Rector of Christ Church Episcopal and Rev. Watson, Rector of St. Mark's Episcopal Church recently engaged in the ancient and powerful prayer discipline of pilgrimage in the hopes of promoting peace. What separates a pilgrimage from a march is that its purpose is not to make a political statement.

Instead, it is to engage in “embodied prayer,” to use one's whole body in prayer and witness over the course of a journey. Pilgrimage offers an opportunity to, at least temporarily, leave the regular routine of the world behind, step back and reflect, and at the same time, give witness to one's beliefs. It is a form of prayer that is difficult, that has a cost, and that is uncomfortable.

But what does Revs. Brubaker and Watson's pilgrimage have to do with promoting peace? Both women believe strongly that our nation is perpetuating a great evil with its policies in the Middle East. They wondered what this does to our souls. Rev. Brubaker knows the stories that many of our returning soldiers share: how they wake up with nightmares of being caught in a firefight, how driving over a bump in the road can reignite the terror of an IED, and how they often feel tossed aside when they return. Both women follow the stories of the suffering that has been unleashed by this war.

They were looking for a faith based way to respond and decided to walk in pilgrimage from St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Richmond to the National Cathedral in Washington, DC. “It makes more sense to beat our feet to a pulp than to make war,” commented Rev. Watson.

The example of other pilgrims served as their inspiration. Rev. Brubaker drew inspiration from St. Francis of Assisi who made pilgrimages to Rome on behalf of the poor and

(Continued on page 3)

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Reflections from the Director

Adria Scharf

Friends,

By joining the Richmond Peace Education Center, you have made a statement. You have united with a large and growing community of people across greater Richmond, our members, in support of the mission of the peace center: *to work for a just and peaceful community and promote nonviolence locally and globally.*

We thank you for your commitment and for your participation in Richmond's growing peace community. We want to invite you, and all of our members, to participate in several special events and activities coming up this summer and fall.

- *Celebrate Independence Day with a Concert for Peace* (peace is patriotic, after all!) Acclaimed folk musician and songwriter John McCutcheon will be live in concert July 5, 7:30 pm, at the VCU Performing Arts Center, 922 Park Avenue. Proceeds to benefit RPEC. (Buy tickets at the door, or e-mail tickets@rpec.org or call 232-1002 to purchase tickets in advance. Credit cards accepted.)
- Youth ages 15-20 who wish to join our teen conflict-resolution training team in the fall should contact rypp@rpec.org. The next "training for teen conflict-resolution trainers" will be held in September.
- Don't miss Richmond's Family Peace Festival, Sunday, September 23, 1pm to 5pm, at St. Joseph's Villa. A community celebration with music, food, an interfaith worship service, activities for children, and more.
- This fall, RPEC will be hosting a series of RPEC-sponsored discussions on racial justice, as well as public forums on alternatives to war and militarism. Stay tuned for dates.

Do you have friends or colleagues who support the values of peace, tolerance, and justice? Please encourage them to join the peace center as well (on www.rpec.org). By joining, they will receive the bimonthly newsletter. More importantly, they'll be helping to build a more peaceful city and world.

Consumers Corner

Farmer's Markets and CSA Opportunities

John Gallini and Alisha Gallini

As you read this, we will be well into the spring season and local fresh veggies will once again be available at the 17th Street Farmers Market (17th & East Main, Thursday and Saturday, 8:30 am-2:00 pm), the new Byrd House Market (224 S. Cherry St., Tuesdays, 3:30-7:00 pm), farmer's markets in Ashland and Goochland (Saturday mornings), and roadside stands throughout our community.

And there may still be shares available in *Sprout*, Richmond's Organic CSA Group. This year Sprout has hooked up with a new farmer, Charlie Collins, who has relocated his Victory Farms from Phoenix, AZ to Hanover County. Details at: <http://www.alrdesign.com/sprout/>

However you choose to do it, take advantage of the season to see that your food dollars go to local farmers.

Profiles in Peacemaking

(Continued from page 1)

to Jerusalem in an attempt to make peace between Christians and Muslims during the Crusades. Rev. Watson drew her inspiration from Rev. Donald Schell, the former Rector of St. Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church in San Francisco. He and his daughter made a pilgrimage in Spain and wrote about it in their book: *My Father, My Daughter: Pilgrims on the Road to Santiago*.

Revs. Watson and Brubaker set out on Monday, March 5, 2007. At 8:00 am, approximately 25 well wishers gathered with them in prayer outside St. Mark's before they began their walk. With each step, for 110+ miles over the course of five days, they prayed for the nameless and the unknown who were suffering as a result of our government's policies.

As they suffered any difficulty on their journey, they would offer up their experience to God. They hoped to bring greater peace to someone on the other side of the world facing fear or injury in his or her own journey. Their official statement offered that they would be praying:

- For those who will never walk again.
- For those who are wounded in body, mind, and spirit.
- For those who are refugees.
- For those torn from their families.
- For prisoners of war and political prisoners.

- For the dead.
- For peace.

Each day began between 8:00 and 8:30 am with a prayer service called an Itinerary. The Itinerary comes from the ancient Benedictine prayer for peace and protection. In it, they asked God to send the Archangel Raphael to watch over and protect them, and they asked for mercy from God. Reassurance came at the sight of a red tailed hawk every day. They took this as a sign of Raphael's presence and protection.

On several occasions, they experienced close calls with a car or truck. Each time, they were reminded of the fear that refugees feel as they travel into the unknown, not knowing where the next threat will come from.

Between Bowling Green and Fredericksburg, they came across multiple animal carcasses on the side of the road -- deer, birds, raccoons, possums. After stepping over a number of these, Rev. Watson began to notice the details of how the animals decayed and to feel less sorrow for each individual animal. She realized how as human beings we can become immune to the devastation that is in front of us as the level of that devastation escalates. If this can happen after seeing animals on the side of the road, she imagined how it must be for those in Iraq who have to gather the human dead on a daily basis. How hard it must be to cope when life becomes cheap and worthless.

It was not their intent to take on all the suffering in the world. As Rev. Brubaker commented, "Praying for peace is bigger than I can do alone." And Rev. Watson was conscious of not wanting to take on the incredible pain and suffering of the war. She wanted to stay focused on praying for peace.

However, Rev. Watson found soon after starting the journey that her choice of shoe was not the best. Painful bruises and injuries developed on her heels, toes, and feet. She realized she could not avoid suffering and offered her pain as embodied prayer to God. At one point, Rev. Brubaker prayed that she could take on some of Rev. Watson's pain. Rev. Brubaker herself soon suffered leg cramps, and Rev. Watson experienced a lessening of her pain. Throughout this experience, as Christians, they were reminded of Jesus' suffering, and how suffering can lead to hope and reconciliation.

They ended their pilgrimage on Friday, March 7 at the National Cathedral. When they arrived, they went to the Center for Pilgrimage. While there, approximately 12 people joined them as they prayed for our war dead by name and for those killed whose names were unknown to them. Upon returning from their trip, they felt blessed to discover that many people had been praying for them as well. At Rev. Watson's parish, members had divided up among themselves the times the

(Continued on page 12)

Happenings at the Center

RECENT EVENTS

March Events

March was packed with peace events, from Gar Alperovitz's visionary March 15 discussion of how to end the cycle of repeated war, to G.I. activist Jonathan Hutto's inspiring March 21 discussion of the "Appeal for Redress" movement and the history of GI resistance. March 20, 21, and 24 was the Eyes Wide Open Virginia exhibit documenting the human cost of the Iraq war. RPEC cosponsored Eyes Wide Open with Midlothian Friends Meeting, Richmond Friends Meeting, Richmond Mennonite Fellowship, and the VCU Campus Antiwar Network. Volunteers from a number of additional communities, including Bon Air Presbyterian Church, VCU, and the University of Richmond were also involved in making this powerful exhibit a reality. See a sampling of volunteers' accounts in this issue of the newsletter.

RPEC Annual Meeting a Success

On April 18, approximately 30 people gathered for our Annual Meeting. Many of those present had never attended our annual meetings, indicating a growing interest in participating in our organizational success. We opened with comments by Executive Director, Adria Scharf. She began by looking back at the past year. She observed that the larger national peace movement, of which we are

a part, has begun to shift the debate in Washington. But we as a peace movement will have truly succeeded only when we have built the people power and credibility, and have dismantled the military industrial complex sufficiently to stop wars before they start.

She then offered a review of the peace center's work and accomplishments in meeting our four overall program goals:

- Building up the critical discussion of war and militarism in Richmond.
- Strengthening and expanding our youth leadership and violence prevention program, the Richmond Youth Peace Project.
- Reinvigorating the conflict resolution training program.
- Taking steps to begin to strengthen the links between the peace community and communities of color.

Looking forward, Adria listed several objectives for RPEC over the coming year, including:

- Developing and expanding the Richmond Youth Peace Project.
- Continuing to organize public forums that provide information and perspectives that are not readily available; articulating a positive vision.
- Educating youth about their rights and ensuring that local school districts provide clear and accessible opt out forms to students who do not wish to be contacted by military recruiters (Counter-recruitment program)

- Building the racial justice committee

Adria offered appreciation for the staff, board, and long-time volunteer John Gallini. Betsy Brinson was given special recognition for her volunteer work on our public forums, co-chairing our counter-recruitment committee, and chairing the Eyes Wide Open committee.

Before Adria's address, Ram Baghat and Gabriela Benevides led everyone in drumming and dance. Finishing off our evening, we engaged in a brainstorming/prioritizing exercise. We broke into small groups and brainstormed around several categories of "resource building/capacity building." The small groups then reported their results. Lastly, each individual present marked the ideas they felt were most important for RPEC to focus on for the next year with red dots. The top three areas with the most interest were:

- Invite peace and justice committees of various churches to attend RPEC forums. We could create a special forum on inter-racial and inter-faith collaboration, dialogue, and/or action.
- Target at risk middle and high schools for involvement in RPEC programs
- Work to bring our Conflict Resolution programs to schools and the school board.

Happenings at the Center

Counter-recruitment Table at Franklin Military Academy April 24

Betsy Brinson

The Franklin Military Academy is located in Church Hill and enrolls about 250 minority youth. We spoke to a number of high school youth, all who were very neatly dressed in their military uniforms. While both the Army and the Marines were present to recruit, any number of youth told us that they were most interested in going to college. With these students we discussed the importance of student financial aid for college rather than going into the military which promises college but does not always carry through on it. To those who indicated a first preference for the military, we gave them literature about reading contracts carefully and questions they should ask about military recruiter promises. A science teacher visited with us also. (He is finishing his second teaching year at the school since he is newly trained as a medical doctor and will begin practice shortly.) Nevertheless, he took samples of all our literature in order to discuss with his students during class. We gave him information about the RPEC website so that he could also use the North Carolina teacher guide for choice, which contains materials about options to the military. All in all, the Career Fair at the school was a good use of volunteer time and energy. We should continue it again next year.

Conflict Resolution Training for Trainers April 28-29

April 28-29 Harold Houghton, Chris Clarke, and Ram Bhagat facilitated a two-day conflict resolution training for trainers for about a dozen participants, many of whom plan to join the RPEC conflict resolution team.

Peace Festival at VCU April 29

On a beautiful sunny Sunday afternoon VCU students on their way to study for exams were greeted with loud music near the library. The sounds of Richmond AfroBeat moved people to dance to rhythms and the noise echoed throughout the Fan. Families and students came out for the festivities, such as raffle prizes from local businesses; free food from Cous Cous and Sticky Rice; and of course music. Donations were greatly appreciated. The afternoon was spent celebrating life and peace. The musical performers included a band from Virginia Tech, Red Moon Preachers, whom in the wake of the current event wore VT t-shirts to commemorate those lost. Peace was promoted by the tablers who presented information to students on how to reduce violence by the choices they make and to advocate for peace in the Richmond community. VCU Campus Anti-War Network led the organizing effort with support from RPEC and the Virginia Anti-War Network. Thank you to all who helped with and sponsored the event.

Youth Peace Summit

RPEC's Richmond Youth Peace Project held its third annual Youth Peace Summit on Saturday May 5, at Fifth Baptist Church. About 75 middle and high school age students from more than three dozen different schools attended. The program featured a lunchtime keynote talk by Salim Khalfani, Virginia NAACP Executive Director and RPEC 2006 Peacemaker of the Year. Participants chose from among 20 different workshops, including Conflict Resolution, Suicide Prevention, Introducing the Peace Corps, Hip Hop for Social Change, Radio Production with WRIR, Drumming, Aikido, Vegetarianism, Urban Clothing Design, and others.

The program was a major undertaking, made much easier by a dedicated group of volunteers. Special thanks go Kelly Evans, Sherilyn Booker, and Nancy Riddlemoser, who helped with both planning the event and gathering resources from a variety of sponsors. RYPP's next goals are to identify and to train an additional group of youth conflict resolution trainers, and to begin developing the program into a membership organization with regular meetings and activities. Any young people interested in participating should email rypp@rpec.org or telephone the Peace Center office.

(Continued on page 6)

Happenings at the Center

Maggie Walker Governor's School Adopts Measures to Increase Diversity

After a year and a half of lobbying by Genevieve Siegel-Hawley, Paul Fleisher, and other RPEC members and supporters, the Maggie Walker School Board has adopted several measures aimed at increasing the number of African American students enrolling at the school. The measures recommended by a committee of local district superintendents who studied the issue—include seeking an external review of the current selection process by an outside consultant who would then make recommendations for changes. The school board also decided to conduct follow-up interviews with minority students offered admission to the school who then choose not to accept. And it decided to increase outreach to upper-elementary students and their families in order to encourage the pursuit of challenging coursework that would help qualify them for admission in their eighth grade year.

Two other recommendations from the superintendents were tabled for later review by the school board attorney. These included assigning plus points to applicants from lower-economic backgrounds or from underachieving schools; and seeking private funding for scholarships to support the enrollment of additional minority students. Several other proposals offered by Siegel-Hawley and Fleisher were not adopted by the

school board. Those included evaluating an admissions lottery open to all students meeting the school's selection criteria, or adopting a holistic selection process similar to those used by many colleges and universities.

Siegel-Hawley, a Maggie Walker graduate, began studying the issue of diversity at the school as part of her Master's program at Harvard University. She and Fleisher obtained and analyzed previously unavailable enrollment data from the school and shared it with the school's board. These data make a strong case for the need for reform.

The RPEC advocates addressed the Maggie Walker board on a number of occasions and also met with school administrators and representatives from several localities served by the regional Governor's School. The next step in this process is expected to be the identification of a suitable consultant, followed by that consultant's study and report.

UPCOMING EVENTS

June 15-17 Alternatives to Violence Project Basic Workshop

On June 15 - 17 RPEC is collaborating with Road to Redemption Association to offer Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) community workshop serving ex-offenders who are transitioning back into community life. Workshop participants will

take away new skills for positive and peaceful living in the community. This is a first for the Peace Center

For more information, contact Johnnie Taylor at 804-232-1002 or rpec@rpec.org.

The workshop will concentrate on conflict resolution skills. Exercises focus on:

- Affirmation – Building self-esteem and trust.
- Communication – Improving both listening skills and assertive methods of expression.
- Cooperation – Developing cooperative attitudes that avoid competitive conflicts.
- Creative Conflict Resolution – Getting in touch with the inner “Transforming Power” to resolve violence.

By role-playing, participants learn new and creative ways to respond to conflict situations.

Hanover County Peace Group Forms

The newly formed Umbrella of Peace meets in the Parish House of Immanuel Episcopal Church 3263 Old Church Road Mechanicsville, VA, 23111 the first and third Wednesdays of each month, 10:00 AM. UP is ecumenical and will cover various concerns. We are committed to treat our neighbors as ourselves. To get involved, contact Nancy Ketner at 804-781-1602.

(Continued on page 7)

Happenings at the Center

Family Peace Festival September 23, 2007

St. Joseph's Villa, 8000 Brook Road - Richmond, Virginia 23227. "The mission of the annual Family Peace Festival is to provide an opportunity for children, youth, and adults of the greater Richmond area to gather in celebration of peace and diversity". This year's festival will include activities for children, musical acts, food, exhibitors, and an inter-faith ceremony.

SUPPORT RPEC

Seeking Concert Sponsors

Help make RPEC's upcoming "Independence Day Concert for Peace" a financial success. Purchase an ad in the concert program booklet, which will be distributed to the hundreds of guests in attendance that evening. Your advertisement will serve a two-fold purpose, supporting the mission of the peace center while spotlighting your message, product, or service before a large group of community members and consumers. All concert proceeds will support the Richmond Peace Education Center.

Prices for program booklet ads are:
\$110 full page ad
\$60 half page ad
\$45 one-third page ad
\$30 quarter page ad

Download the ad reservation form from our website. Please e-mail it to rpec@rpec.org before June 15. Your support is sincerely appreciated.

Peace is Patriotic!

Join us for an Independence Day
Concert for Peace
John McCutcheon in Concert
Thursday, July 5
7:30 p.m.

VCU Performing Arts Center
922 Park Avenue

Tickets available at the door.

Credit cards accepted.

To order tickets in advance,
call 232-1002

or email tickets@rpec.org.

\$20 adults

\$12 students

\$50 family rate (up to 5 tickets)

Musician and songwriter John
McCutcheon:

"...the most impressive instrumental I ever heard." -- Johnny Cash
"...the Bruce Springsteen of folk music." -- The Oakland Tribune
Proceeds to benefit the Richmond Peace Education Center.

Save the Date

RPEC Annual Auction Event
Saturday, Nov. 10, 6-10 PM
Troutman Sanders Conference
Center (1001 Haxall Point Rd.).
Free parking is available.

This year we would like to feature items created by our members, i.e. food, crafts, services. What can you offer? Call Johnnie at the RPEC office (232-1002) and let us know.

Connecting to Our Faith Communities

Dear RPEC members,

About 25% of the financial support that keeps RPEC going comes from our faith communities such as churches, synagogues, and mosques. We are initiating a process to increase the number of these faith communities who provide financial support by identifying RPEC members who will be our contact person with that one particular community.

Some of you already fill that role in an informal way. But we would like to make that role of maintaining contact a more formal one. We would like to invite you to become an RPEC "Ambassador" to your particular faith community. We are especially looking for people who are members of a faith community that does not now provide regular financial support to RPEC.

The task is simple. Find out what the process exists in your community for providing outreach funds. What is the timeline and who are the key people? Then set up a meeting between RPEC people (staff and/or Board members) and the key people in your faith community – and accompany the RPEC folks in that meeting. Then once a year remind us how best to request funds.

Of course, it is not just about money. We want to be known as the place to come to for programs about peace and nonviolent conflict resolution. So we want connections to your education people also.

If you would be willing to take on this small task for RPEC, call Adria at the office (232-1002) or send an e-mail to rpec@rpec.org. We will do some training for those who would find that helpful.

In peace,, RPEC Board and staff

Stories from “Eyes Wide Open Virginia”

A sampling of reports from volunteers at the exhibit documenting the human cost of the Iraq war, held in Richmond March 20, 21, and 24 of this year.



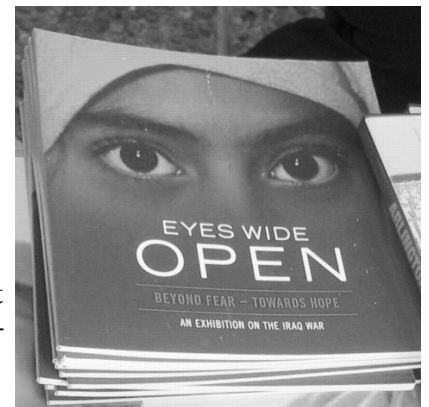
- ◆ On Tuesday, during our set-up, a young man stopped to ask what we were doing. He was a soldier on medical disability leave for 6 months. He began to tell his story to me, about seeing his buddy blown up in front of his eyes in Iraq. He told me that he was going back to his unit in Iraq in May and he might even make the military his career. ... Then he asked if he might address the audience at the opening ceremony. When he spoke, he told the audience that there were other soldiers and veterans enrolled at VCU who had served in Iraq. He asked the audience to be mindful of student soldiers like him on campus and to be considerate because they had given all. Because we have freedom here, he said, he could speak.
- ◆ A mom of one of the soldiers came by. She brought a laminated card with his picture and the words "in our hearts forever." She asked that the card stay with the boots.
- ◆ A VCU student told me she was in the National Guard and had been stationed in Afghanistan for 13 months. She said there was a lot going on at the time that she was not told while she was there. She looked at all of the boots and said, "There is so much they do not tell us."
- ◆ There was a young woman sitting cross-legged in front of a pair of boots. She had been crying for a while. I sat down next to her and put my arm on her back, trying to comfort her. The boots belonged to a boyfriend of hers from high school. ... Through her tears, she talked about what a wonderful guy he was and how he always worked hard to make others feel better.
- ◆ On Saturday at Wal-Mart, a car with a family pulled up near the exhibit. A mother, father, and two young children climbed out and went directly to the exhibit. The father hung back while the mother went to find specific boots. I was standing near the father and asked him if they knew one of the lost soldiers. He told me that his wife's brother that had died. She stayed for a few minutes at the pair of boots that were her brother's. ...
- ◆ A woman with a camera came late Saturday afternoon, moved through the boots, and then went inside Wal-Mart. She returned with small American flags and proceeded to a set of boots, to which she attached a photo of the deceased soldier. She placed a flag in each boot. She then took many photos of all the boots, staying a good while. ... She had read in the *Danville Bee* (local newspaper) that Eyes Wide Open was coming to Richmond. She could not come on a weekday so she came to Wal-Mart on Saturday. She said that she knew she had to come. She was taking photos for other family and for herself. She wrote an entry in the guest book before she left. She also put pictures of his two children in his boots and wrote messages on them from the children.
- ◆ An Iraqi family with two young children stood quietly near the civilian shoes during the reading of the names at VCU and expressed gratitude for the exhibit.

(Continued on page 9)

Stories from “Eyes Wide Open Virginia”

(Continued from page 8)

- ◆ I noticed a middle-aged man who appeared to be of Middle Eastern descent who walked slowly up and down the row of Iraqi shoes carefully reading each tag, and pausing at the sign which said how many miles the shoes would reach if all were included. He seemed very moved. I don't think he spoke with anyone.
- ◆ Yesterday, I saw a woman with three children under the age of 5. One was in a stroller. They spent a while looking at the boots and shoes together. As they turned to go, the mom turned them all around facing the display and said, "Look one last time before we go at all those shoes. It is very sad, isn't it?" The children stared for a few moments, and then off they went.
- ◆ We did not know that Tom Fox's shoes were among the Eyes Wide Open collection until we found them positioned among the Iraqi civilian shoes. When a young friend came late Tuesday, she brought flowers and placed them with his shoes. She was very tearful as she knew Tom personally from her Young Friends [Quaker] involvement. The next day the shoes and the flowers were at the head of the Iraqi civilian line. Then we decided that this was not the right place because Tom was not an Iraqi citizen. In consultation with others, I moved them to the space in between the boots and the shoes. Tom Fox had sought to bridge the gap between warring parties and had died in the effort. This is where his shoes belonged.
- ◆ The mother of the youngest Virginian killed in the war to date arrived 15 minutes after we had begun packing up the boots on our third and final day. ... The volunteers stopped packing and began unpacking, looking for his boots. When they were found, we placed them with the other boots that had not yet been packed. The mom took pictures and cried. She said, "It's been three years but, it is not getting easier." ... Having only known her for 10 minutes, a hug seemed inappropriate. So I stood with her for a few moments with my hand on her shoulder before she thanked us again and turned to go. The pain that was in her eyes is difficult to describe.
- ◆ A young man approached us at VCU and said he was offended. Three of us were there, and one asked, "Why?" He said he had done two tours in Iraq, and had one more to do. He was fighting for women's and children's rights in Iraq and found our protest offensive. We stood in silence and as he turned to leave, I said, "This is not a protest." I could feel his pain and confusion, and wish we could have had a heart-felt discussion.
- ◆ As we were setting out the boots the first morning at VCU, a young man with a cane stood a short distance from the boots. He looked skeptical, and I went over to tell him what we were doing. "I left both my knees in Iraq," he told me. "But that was in the first invasion. I was a dog handler and they got me in one knee as I stepped out from behind a building. Then, as soon as I had recovered and could go back on active duty, they got my other knee. I couldn't handle dogs any more and that was what I wanted to do. So they discharged me. "Now I am trying to finish a master's degree and become a teacher. I have a pension of about \$700 a month, plus social security. It's not much for me, my wife, and a four-year old. Vietnam. Then the first Iraq invasion. Now this. You'd think they'd learn."



2006 Peace Essay Contest

Middle School Winning Entry - First Place

Matthew Disler Collegiate School, Richmond, gr. 6

Peace. What an elusive thing to be talking about in our world today. I mean, with the whole conflict in Iraq, and the India-Pakistan border problem, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there doesn't seem to be much peace in the world. In my religion, the Jewish faith, people believe that one day there will be a time called the Messianic Age where there is no war, hate, or violence. It will either come when there is no fighting in the world or there is so much violence that God has to send it to save the Earth from total destruction. The Messianic Age is the ideal, the perfect world. But we don't need that to create peace. For peace, we need to simply try to achieve a time where people aren't hurtling themselves at each other's throats.

However, there is no point in creating peace now if our descendants simply return to fighting. To prevent this, schools should show students the horrors that occurred in times when peace is absent and people didn't understand each other's culture: the Chinese Cultural Revolution, where uncountable numbers died of hunger, or the Holocaust, where millions of Jews, gypsies, and homosexuals were massacred. Show them photographs of the corpses piled up outside of Nazi concentration camps, or other examples of the results of fighting. Then they should be asked, do they really want this to happen to them? Do they really want a life of sadness and suffering? Because that is what will happen if they engage in violence and peace does not reign.

How can peace be learned? Well, as I was pondering over this question, I found many ways to learn peace, and they are all linked to love. The Christian golden rule is, "You must love thy neighbor as you love thyself." Jesus was displaying his famous wisdom when saying this, because he gave the basis of peace. If you love everybody around you like a member of your fam-

ily, then you are probably not going to hurt them. But I know that I definitely do not love everybody in the world. In fact, I could probably say I hate some people. But love can be learned. This is simply accomplished. Make friends. You aren't going to kill a friend. Therefore, the more friends you make, the less people you kill. In class, though, teachers should stress the danger of violence and tell about the sadness that happens because of it. They could have someone come in who was in a war, and have them tell how they felt to be around so much violence and all the bad experiences that it caused. All of this would make students in any school shy away from violence, mine included.

How would I bring peace into my life? I would definitely try to find something good about everyone I see. No matter what they look like, I will try to accept them. This is crucial, since the center of many problems in our world is racial intolerance. For instance, the fight against terrorism is partially a racial conflict because it seems that the terrorists partly bomb us to "hurt those filthy Americans." Since we are now so afraid of them, we not only try to destroy them but discriminate against Muslims, too. This unfair prejudice is basically because of one thing: all of the terrorists happen to be Muslim. So now, out of our fear, we generalize that all Muslims are bad. To help bring peace, everyone must try to be tolerant of others, no matter what race or religion they belong to. If we continue on this example of hate and discrimination, peace may never be achieved. But in addition to tolerating others, we must spread peace throughout our family, school, and community.

To bring peace into my family, the essential is for all of us to eat at the dinner table and talk to each other. It shouldn't matter what we talk about;

just talking makes us associate with one another and grow more comfortable with each other so that we don't fight. To bring peace into the life of my school, I would create a class in which the children had to learn the aspects of creating peace: love, friendship, helping each other, and avoiding violent situations. Despite their cries of despair, I would probably give them a test, too, because they would have to study for it, and studying implants knowledge into the memory. I would try to set a peaceful example by apologizing to people I have hurt. Since I am Jewish, this is customarily done during the holiday of Yom Kippur. However, I will not only do it during that day, but all other days of the year. Finally, I would bring peace into the life of my community by holding a forum that would highlight peace and tolerance. The course would be open to all ethnic and religious groups, and it would discuss many diverse peoples. The fundraiser would have posters and literature which celebrate different ethnic and religious groups. The large amount of exposure to them would be so that by the end of the day, facts about different groups would be ingrained in the participants' minds. All of these aspects would bring forth an understanding of different peoples' ways and customs. The participants would learn to appreciate the diverse populations of the world; through their understanding, they would become less inclined to fight. This would bring peace to them, and gradually, as more and more people take part in the forum, to the community.

As you see, to achieve peace, all you have to do are very simple things. It doesn't have to be complicated or difficult. Just act kindly toward the people you're around and learn about each other's cultures. In that way, you can make the world one step closer to a time of peace.

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 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.
Every 1st & 3rd Weds.	The Hanover County Umbrella of Peace group - 10:00 AM In the Parish House of Immanuel Episcopal Church, 3263 Old Church Road, Mechanicsville, VA, 23111. For more information, contact 804-781-1602.

Upcoming Events

June 11	"Take Action to Restore the Constitution" —Discuss the erosion of habeas corpus, one of our most fundamental civil rights. At 6:00 PM, First Unitarian Universalist Church, 1000 Blanton Avenue. Co-sponsored by ACLU of Virginia and RPEC.
June 13	Scheduled execution of Christopher Emmet —VADP has set the date as the annual "Fill the Field" witness at the Greensville Correctional Center. There will also be a vigil at 8:30 PM that night at Richmond Friends Meeting.
June 15-17	Alternatives to Violence Project Basic Workshop —For more information, contact Johnnie Taylor at 804-232-1002 or rpec@rpec.org.
June 22-24	Annual Gathering of The People United at Shannon Farm in Nelson County . Connected to this, on Friday afternoon, will be the Peace Summit meeting of Virginia Peace Centers . For more information contact John Gallini at 272-8141 or gallinjb@aol.com.
June 26	Day of Action to Restore Law and Justice in Washington, D.C. —co-sponsored by the ACLU, Amnesty International, Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, and the National Religious Campaign Against Torture. For more information visit www.juneaction.org or contact Elizabeth Wong at 804-644-8080. Help restore habeas corpus and other constitutional rights!
July 5	John McCutcheon in Concert —Thursday, 7:30 PM—VCU Performing Arts Center, 922 Park Avenue. Tickets available at the door. Credit cards accepted. To order tickets in advance, call 232-1002 or email tickets@rpec.org.
Sept. 22	"Strategies for Long-Term Peace Work" —Saturday, 1-4 PM. A workshop led by Chuck Fager, director of Quaker House in Fayetteville, NC, at Richmond Friends Meeting. Co-sponsored by Richmond Friends Meeting and RPEC.
Sept. 23	Family Peace Festival —St. Joseph's Villa, 8000 Brook Road, Richmond.
Nov. 10	RPEC Annual Fundraising Auction and Dinner . Saturday, 6-10 PM—Troutman Sanders Conference Center, 1001 Haxall Point, Richmond.

Profiles in Peacemaking

(Continued from page 3)

women would be on the road, so that there would be no time when they were walking that someone wasn't praying for them.

When asked for their advice to others who might be considering engaging in a pilgrimage, they both agreed that they would be encouraging. They also recommended taking time off to reflect on the experience afterward. Both took one week of vacation time for their pilgrimage and only one day off to recover afterwards. They both wished for more time to reflect on the experience before jumping back into the busy world.

They each offered some separate pieces of advice, as well. Rev.

Brubaker noted that it is important not to over prepare, but be wise. She quoted the verse from the Bible which says to be "as wise as serpents and as gentle as doves." "Know where you are going and that you have people watching out for you. Travel light. Pray beforehand. You will find out how to be quiet in your own soul."

Rev. Watson's advice includes double checking your equipment and being sure to make a better shoe choice than she did. "Be clear with yourself about what you are entering into, and recognize that things will occur that will break you open. Pick a good traveling partner.

Lastly, keep your sense of humor, and love God first."



Celebrate
Independence Day
with a
Concert for Peace
John McCutcheon
July 5, 7:30 pm,
VCU Performing
Arts Center
922 Park Avenue



Richmond Peace Education Center

400 W. 32nd Street, Richmond, VA 23225

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