



# RPEC NEWS

The newsletter of the Richmond Peace Education Center

July-August 2007

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## Profiles in Peacemaking

### You Would Never Let Me Hide from the Truth A Profile of Jennifer K. Harbury

Rev. Judith Bennett



Jennifer K. Harbury

In March of 2002 Jennifer Harbury finally had her day in court. And it was *her* day, quite literally, as she argued her own case before the US Supreme Court. Her suit was against US government officials who, while her late husband was still alive, undergoing torture Guatemalan officials (one of whom was on our federal payroll), withheld information on his status that would, she contends, have saved his life. An NPR interviewer at the time suggested that there is “no constitutional right to candor from US officials,” and given the rampant deceptiveness we have lived with through the current administration, we know, to our sorrow, that is true. But that was not Harbury’s point. Her assertion was that she had a right *not to be lied to* when that lie foreclosed her right to legal recourse which, in this instance, would have saved her husband’s life and 350 others.

It is unusual, although not unheard of, for a lawyer to argue their own case before the Supreme Court. Described by a one writer as “a bereaved, All-American, Julia Roberts-type widow that has been wronged,” Harbury made a powerful point that day, for “not in the memory of any justice now serving had the courtroom been the stage for the passionate declarations and accusations that poured forth today.” She has since gone on to be a powerful voice for victims of torture and other human rights violations.

#### The Making of an Activist

Harbury grew up in Connecticut, graduated from Cornell University, traveled widely in Asia and Africa and saw injustice and brutality firsthand in many cultures. By the time she entered Harvard Law School she knew she wanted to be a civil rights lawyer. Upon graduation she worked for a small legal aid bureau in Texas on the US-Mexico border. During that time, immigration officials were sending back thousands of Guatemalan Mayans who were fleeing death squads and massacres in their country. She decided to go to Guatemala to see for herself what

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Shop at and  
donate items  
to  
The Thrifty  
Quaker  
in  
September!

All sales to  
benefit RPEC  
for one month.

13567  
Midlothian  
Turnpike,  
9:30 to 7 p.m.  
weekdays,  
9:30 to 5 p.m.  
Saturday.

## RPECNEWS

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Richmond Peace  
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400 W. 32nd Street  
Richmond, VA 23225

Phone: (804)232-1002

E-mail:  
rpec@rpec.org

RPEC Web Page:  
<http://www.rpec.org>

**RPEC STAFF**

Executive Director:  
Adria Scharf

Asst. to the Director  
Paul Fleisher

Office Manager  
Johnnie J. Taylor

**NEWSLETTER STAFF**

Editor:  
Bill Gerow

Newsletter Committee:

John Gallini  
Jane Rosecrans  
Shirley Silberman  
Cathy Woodson  
Judy Bennett  
Ruth Anne Young  
Angela Lehman-Rios  
Adria Scharf  
Francis Woodruff  
John Williamson

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Contact Bill Gerow at  
[mbgerow@comcast.net](mailto:mbgerow@comcast.net).

**Reflections from the Director**

Adria Scharf

## Thoughts on Peacemaking

*What does it really mean to commit, in your community involvements and in your social-change work, to nonviolence?*

Two of the 20th century's greatest peacemakers, Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., are true models and guides on this question. A look at how these men practiced and thought about nonviolence offers important lessons for today.

The first lesson I draw from Gandhi and King is that being a peacemaker requires having the capacity to see beyond the current status quo; the capacity to imagine a dramatically different society in which injustices that today seem unalterable are dismantled and transformed.

The second lesson is that nonviolent social change work is not passive. It's just the opposite. It's proactive. It requires directly challenging systems of injustice and oppression.

Third, and critically, being a nonviolent peacemaker means putting the principles of truth and love at the center of what you do.

For Gandhi, the Hindu tenet of "ahimsa"—the refusal to harm others in intention, word, or deed—was the basis of nonviolence. King advocated agape, or love. He argued that one must love—or feel redemptive goodwill for—others, including those who oppose you and even those who oppress you.

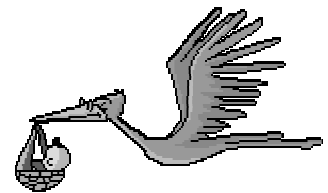
Nonviolence therefore is not just the avoidance of physical violence. It's also the spiritual recognition of the possibility of connection with and transformation of one's fellow human beings, even in conflict.

I sometimes do a thought experiment. I think about what Gandhi and King would do if they were here in Richmond with us today. Richmond has had a reputation, in its history, of being a city conditioned to accepting grave injustice as normal. But many societies are like that much of the time—including the societies that King and Gandhi and their movements helped to transform.

I invite you to participate in this thought experiment with me. Let's imagine a more peaceful and just future, and work to make it a reality, through peaceful means.

IT'S A GIRL!

**Congratulations!**  
**To Adria and Thad**



On the birth of their daughter, Sahara Scharf Williamson. She was born at 3:22 p.m. on Saturday, July 21. She came in at 20 inches, 7 lbs, 2 oz. Mother and baby are doing fine.

## Profiles in Peacemaking

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was happening, and her life was forever changed.

In 1990 she met a Mayan resistance fighter, Efrain Bàmaca Velasquez, known as Commandante Everardo, a leader in his people's efforts to resist the brutal oppression of Guatemala's oligarchy. The two fell in love, married in 1991, and by March, 1992 he was captured by the Guatemalan army. Harbury was told that he had been wounded in battle and committed suicide to escape capture. For months she believed he was dead but, early in 1993, an escaped prisoner of war told her he was still alive and being tortured in a Guatemalan military base. She began what would be a decade-long search for Everardo, and for the truth.

Officials in both countries stonewalled Harbury's efforts to get information, including three hunger strikes, two in Guatemala, one in front of the White House. "She braved rain and heat and death squads," said her attorney in her case against the Guatemalan government, adding "You can find somebody who will do a hunger strike, but not in front of the Presidential Palace and not for 32 days." Harbury's efforts brought much-needed publicity that prompted congressional investigations into long-standing abuses by State Department and CIA in Guatemala. They also led her to what she was told was Everardo's grave; the remains proved otherwise. In the end it was a US State Department official who leaked the information Harbury needed: not only did our government know all along her husband's

fate, but those who tortured and killed him were on the CIA payroll. Had she known the truth earlier, there would have been time to act on behalf, not only of Everardo, but the others who were suffering the same fate.

### Learning the Truth

Harbury's 1997 book, *Searching for Everardo: A Story of Love, War, and the CIA in Guatemala*, is described as "a classic work of courage and truth telling" which bares US complicity in "right wing torture and violent, anti-democratic suppression of poor people's rights." The direction Harbury's life took from that point on was to speak out for the cessation of torture wherever it takes place, but particularly when it is under the auspices of our government. In 2005 her book, *Truth, Torture and the American Way: The History and Consequences of U.S. Involvement in Torture*, was published. She currently serves as Director of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's "Stop Torture Permanently" campaign.

In *Searching for Everardo* Harbury writes of her internal dialogue with her husband during the prolonged period when she had no certainty, when he was among the desaparecidos, the "disappeared." "In the silence I try to stare past the shroud of sparkling fireflies . . . Are you out there, Everardo? You have been missing for so long, vanished for three years now . . . You are still so real to me, it is hard to believe that you are dead and broken . . . This is not what I fought for, not what I hoped for, all this time. I don't want to believe it. Yet I do believe it, no matter how hard my heart resists, for it has the ring of truth. You would never let me hide from the truth."

Clearly, what Harbury's life has been about, her mission, is the ongoing search for truth - - initially for herself, surely for Everardo, for all those other victims, named or nameless and, by extension, for her country. Latin American case histories, she writes, leads to the grim conclusion that "the highly sophisticated torture methods used on most of the survivors . . . all too closely mirror the abuses of the prisoners in Iraq and Afghanistan." Could it be mere coincidence, she asks, "the overlap of torture techniques used in Latin America with those used in Afghanistan and Iraq?" She concludes, "Not a chance. They are far too sophisticated for low-level MPs to have dreamed up alone on a Saturday night. These methods took years to develop and refine."

### Hiding from the Truth

Torture has never been legal in this country; indeed, "it is difficult to imagine any prohibition more fundamental to American jurisprudence." Yet there is abundant evidence that the US, through the CIA, is engaged in torture. "We are looking not at a few rogue operators, but rather at an entire rogue agency that has seized powers it was never granted and . . . has placed itself above the law," writes Harbury. She is not alone in her assessment. Tim Weiner, author of a newly-published book about the CIA, *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA*, was asked in a recent NPR interview if that agency had changed since it provided faulty information during the Bay of Pigs crisis. Weiner replied, "It's the same organization," and has had three generations of officers and analysts. The current generation, half of which came on duty since 9/11, is very new, and "has had a leadership that

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## Profiles in Peacemaking

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has sometimes been at odds with the president of the United States.” Since the Bay of Pigs the CIA “has been exquisitely sensitive to presidential command and control” and is “the president’s secret army.” It belongs, Weiner said, to the White House, “and it is presidents who have misunderstood, misused and abused the CIA, and that has gotten the CIA in trouble because presidents won’t take the rap.”

Harbury makes a convincing case for abolishing torture, contending that nobody wins - - ever - - by using torture. She catalogs its futility, its counterproductive nature, and its costs to individual victims, the larger society, and the international community. Americans continue to live in denial about torture, she believes. We responded appropriately to the

news of Abu Ghraib, proving that “our country, as we have always known it, still has a pulse.” However, we “have a great weakness for wishful thinking”, we ignore warning signals, and allow ourselves to be lulled with light assurances that it was just a few bad apples.” In the end, writes Harbury, “whether we admit it or not, we are frightened . . . we are not thinking (but) are allowing our ancient survival instincts and corrupt national leaders to drag us toward a true apocalypse.” Our fear is compounded by the realities our leaders conceal from us; in the end, however, this is our government, torture goes on in our names, supported by our tax dollars; this makes us responsible.

### The Challenge to Us

What, in the end, has Harbury gained for her passionate, unswerving persistence? She had her day in court,

making it harder for a while for officials to lie - - and she got an apology from the Guatemalan government. What she asks of us is that we not hide from the truth, rather, that we engage in strategies available to us for creating world peace and security. Begin with basic crime prevention work by law enforcement officials around the world, engage in teamwork, not dominance, and set aside our own politics. Once an attack occurs, she says, it must be answered, but “the thinking response would be an intensive international police campaign, supported, if truly necessary, by international surgical military efforts” for which the goal would be, not shock and awe, but hearts and minds. It may not satisfy our lust for revenge, but it may increase our safety. Quoting Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., she says that it’s not too late to turn back: “We can live together as brothers, or we will surely die together like fools.”

## RPEC Makes a Difference

*A testimonial from a teen from Kyrgyzstan who participated in RPEC’s “Generation Dream” edu-concert in January. She helped to write, and perform, a group poem on stage.*

“I am sixteen years old. First of all I would like to say that I am happy that I had a brilliant opportunity to participate in this peace educational concert in honor of Martin Luther King. The concert showed that peace is in our hands. Peace comes from each person's efforts in the world to it. We have to develop the sense of the desire to make peace and keep peace in the world since the childhood. We should develop peace starting with our families, neighborhood, schools, communities. Little by little we together can achieve our goal.

This concert was a blast of opportunities for me. First it helped me to make the first steps of my contribution to making peace in the world, continue, and realize Martin Luther King's ideas. Moreover, I really enjoyed working with the high-qualified peace educational center staff. They taught me how to perform on the stage, the art of performing on the stage, so that people will get your message in the way you want them to understand. I met so many other people who I enjoyed to work with too. Furthermore, there were performers of different nationalities and races, so it showed that all the people want peace, and we can achieve that only together in the unity. I am planning to organize such a concert in my country after I go back home.”

# Happenings at the Center

## RECENT EVENTS

### Winners of 2007 Peace Essay Contest Announced

The winners of this year's Peace Essay Contest have been selected. They are:

**Grades K-3:** 1<sup>st</sup> Place Sam Brady, Fisher ES, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place (tie) Daniel Holloman, Mary Munford ES, Erik Akbar, Marguerite Christian ES, Honorable Mention Isaiah Hall, Mary Munford ES, Sydney Tinker Mary Munford ES, Jayla Thompson Mary Munford ES, Rachel Le, St. Matthew's Catholic School

**Grades 4-5:** 1<sup>st</sup> Place Sean Sequeira Three Chopt ES, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Woody Rogers, William Fox ES, 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Georgina Coffey, William Fox ES, Honorable Mention Yash Tekriwal, Three Chopt ES, Nathan L. Illmensee, William Fox ES, Cristina Peters, William Fox ES, Anne Carter Bland, William Fox ES

**Grades 6-8:** 1<sup>st</sup> Place Eric Ott, Manchester MS, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Victor Paul P. Tejada, St. Matthew's Catholic School, 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Karina Simoni, Swift Creek MS, Honorable Mention LaJuan Neal. Lucille Brown MS, Laura Deale, Swift Creek MS, Katy Owens, Swift Creek MS, Sajada Taylor, M. L. King MS, Kyle Brady, Albert Hill MS

**Grades 9-12:** 1<sup>st</sup> Place, Emily Schenck, Deep Run HS , 2<sup>nd</sup> Place, Jodi Tyler Corbett, Appomattox Regional Governor's School, 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Brittany S. Johnson, Open HS, Honorable Mention Aphrothiti Kostopanagiotis, George Washington HS, Natiqia Charletta Crawford, Adult Career Development Center, Chris

Rowecamp, Maggie L. Walker Governor's School, Killeen King James River HS, Alice Ann Mahoney, Roanoke Catholic School.

All the winners' essays are posted on the Peace Center's web site. Thanks again to our volunteer judges, who read and reviewed about 200 entries in this year's contest, and to the Community Foundation, whose grant once again made this RPEC program possible.

The Peace Essay contest has been underwritten since its inception by grants from the Community Foundation, responding to the recommendation of Jim and Mary Lou Doherty.

### Stop the Abuse of Power

On Monday, June 11, RPEC and the Virginia ACLU cosponsored a talk focused on how the Bush administration and Congress have eroded our constitutional rights, and what we as citizens can do to restore law and justice. Jeffrey A. Mittman, ACLU National Legislative Office, spoke to an audience of about 25 people about the post-9/11 erosion of civil liberties, from the 2001 Patriot Act to the 2006 Military Commissions Act. He described specific pieces of legislation aimed to redress these wrongs, and organizers collected names of people interested in participating in a June 26 Day of Action in Washington, D.C. For more information, see <[www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org)>.

### Ex-Offender AVP

The Peace Center and *Road to Redemption Association* (R2R) co-sponsored an Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) Basic workshop on June 15-17, 2007 at the Hope Center in Richmond. Ram Bhagat, Santa Sorenson, and Linda Heacock teamed up to facilitate the training for eleven participants, including ex-offenders served by R2R, staff members from R2R, trainers from RPEC's Conflict Resolution team, and several other members of the community. This was RPEC's first community AVP training in many years, and we are grateful to Sasha Davenport, R2R Executive Director, and her staff for helping to make this effort possible. By the end of the weekend, our enthusiastic and highly diverse group together had built a community of trust and deep understanding, laced with new peacemaking skills, and lots of fun! Most of our participants are eager to complete the AVP Advanced workshop which will be in November of this year.

### McCutcheon Concert – Peace is Patriotic

An enthusiastic crowd showed up on July 5 to celebrate our nation's birthday in fine nonviolent fashion. John McCutcheon, folk musician par excellence, brought an eclectic mix of songs to remind us that peace is indeed patriotic.

John's selections included some political satire (“the buck stops... MILES FROM HERE” and a reflection on the fortunes of Scooter

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# Happenings at the Center

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John McCutcheon

Libby), union classics (*Step by Step* and *John Henry*), a hymn to remember the Virginia Tech tragedy, family classics (*The Room at the Top of the Stairs*), some anti-war standards (*My Name is Penny Evans* and *Christmas in the Trenches*), a moving reflection on forgiveness, and several patriotic selections (*America the Beautiful* and *This Land is Your Land*). All of this was skillfully woven together with John's stories.

Attendance was the largest in recent years, due in part to advertising on WCVE-FM. That, coupled with generous support from La Difference and the proceeds from sales of ice cream provided by The Ice Cream Connection, ensured that the evening was also a financial success.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **AVP At Goochland Women's Prison**

On **July 28-29** we will hold our second AVP Basic workshop of the year at the Virginia Correctional Center for Women (VCCW) in Goochland, VA. Our AVP team for this training will consist of Susan Buniva, Duron Chavis, Ram Bhagat, and Linda Heacock. We hope to draw participants from these two Basic level workshops to hold an Advanced AVP training in the fall or early 2008. Our goal is to then follow up with an AVP Training for Trainers, certifying a group of "inside" facilitators to serve on RPEC AVP teams at VCCW.

### **Richmond Youth Peace Project Plans Picnic and Training Workshop.**

The Richmond Youth Peace Project (RYPP), RPEC's conflict resolution initiative for teens, has scheduled two upcoming events. On August 15, we plan a picnic and gathering, tentatively scheduled for Forest Hill Park, starting at 5:30. This event is open to all interested young people. Call the RPEC office for further details.

On the weekend of September 29-30, RYPP will conduct its second workshop for teen trainers at the Berryman Center. The free workshop will run from 10 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. each day, and lunch will be provided. Teens who successfully complete this training will become part of the RYPP teen conflict resolution

team. They will be eligible to serve as workshop leaders for other groups of children and teens. Interested young people age 14-20 should complete an application which can be found online at [www.rpec.org](http://www.rpec.org), or they can call the RPEC office to have one sent by mail. This RYPP program is supported by a grant from The Youth Philanthropy Project.

### **Quaker House to Offer Peacemaking Workshop September 22**

On Saturday, September 22 from 1-4 pm., Quaker House will offer the workshop "Strategies for Long-Term Peace Work, or What Peace Activists Can Learn from the Military." Chuck Fager, Director of Quaker House in Fayetteville, NC., will present this opportunity to learn more about new peace building strategies.

Quaker House is a peacemaking project situated next door to Fort Bragg, one of the largest military bases in the United States. Quaker House has been doing peace work there since 1960. Quaker House supports the troops. Last year its GI Rights Hotline took over 8000 calls from soldiers and family members. In addition, Quaker House has helped organize peace actions which have garnered international media attention. It also serves as a bridge between the increasingly estranged military and civilian American sub-cultures.

Based on a 38 year history of Quaker House, and his five years of work there, Fager believes there is much about the strategic outlook and operational practice of the military

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# Happenings at the Center

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that could be usefully (and peacefully) adapted to the effort to end war. Chuck will share these ideas, and outline a strategic vision for long-term peace work.

This workshop is co-sponsored by the Richmond and Midlothian Friends Meetings and the Richmond Peace Education Center. It will be held at the Richmond Friends Meeting, 4500 Kensington Ave. A shorter one-hour Friendly Forum with Chuck about Quaker House will also be held on Sunday, September 23 after Meeting for Business, for members and guests of the Meeting.

Please contact Betsy Brinson at brinson422@comcast.net for more information.

## Family Peace Festival Save the Date!

**September 23, 2007,  
11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

**St. Joseph's Villa, 8000 Brook  
Road, Richmond, VA 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. It is our hope that this will foster a growing sense of community.

For information on exhibit tables or vending, e-mail:

tables@familypeacefestival.org.

For general information, email  
info@familypeacefestival.org.

To volunteer, email:

vol@familypeacefestival.org.

## Yoga and Peace Workshop to Benefit Peace Center

What do the principals of yoga teach us about living a life of peace?

Join acclaimed yoga educator Nora Pozzi in a two-hour workshop on Saturday, September 29. Pozzi will discuss "Ahimsa"—the principal of non-harming in thought, words, or actions and "Satya"—the principal of truthfulness. These are the same ideas that formed the basis of Gandhi's nonviolent movement for the liberation of India, which later served as a model for the civil rights struggle in our own country.

Pozzi's 45-minute discussion will be followed by an hour and a quarter of yoga instruction and practice.

The Yoga and Peace workshop will be held at the Richmond Friends Meeting, 4500 Kensington Avenue, from 10 a.m. to noon. All ability levels are welcome. Tuition for the session is \$20 in advance, or \$25 at the door. All proceeds will benefit the Richmond Peace Education Center.

To reserve your place at the September 29 event, send your check and contact information to RPEC, 400 W. 32nd Street, Richmond VA 23225, with "yoga" in the subject line. For more information, email rpec@rpec.org, or call the office of the Richmond Peace Education Center at 232-1002.

## Racial Justice Workshop

The next initiative of RPEC Race Justice Committee will be a four-part workshop on Racial Justice, beginning in mid-October. Following its workshop on white privilege in February, RPEC initiated a Race Justice

Committee with the aim of enabling those concerned with peace to engage more effectively with racial justice issues in the Richmond area. A series of four sessions are being planned to help participants develop a deeper understanding of racial justice issues, as well as to prepare themselves to be more effective activists and advocates in relation to such issues. The workshop is slated to begin Tuesday, October 16<sup>th</sup>, and continue on alternate Tuesdays through November 27<sup>th</sup>. The sessions will tap local experts and build from one to the next. Participants will be asked to make a commitment to take part in all four; this will also help develop better working relationships among participants, with a view toward follow-on collaborative action.

Here's an overview of the four sessions:

*1. Racial Justice and Injustice*  
(October 16)

Laying groundwork for the series, this session will draw from participants' experiences to develop an overview of the ways in which racism operates at personal, group, and institutional levels.

*2. Race and Power in Richmond*  
(October 30)

This session is intended to help participants view the City in new ways. It will address such questions as: How does race structure life in Richmond? How does it shape patterns of wealth and poverty, power, and access to opportunity?

*3. Racism and Violence* (November 13)

Much of the violence in our area has its roots in racial disparities and injustice. Fear of violence often in-

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# Happenings at the Center

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timidates people into not responding to or challenging racism. The session will explore such issues and what can be done.

#### 4. *Ways to Take Action and be in Solidarity* (November 27)

Recognizing that unilateral efforts by RPEC or any single group will be less effective than collaborative action with others, this session will identify opportunities for addressing the issues examined in the previous sessions. Representatives of local organizations will be invited to help participants explore how they and RPEC can support action by other groups as well as define its own role in addressing racial justice.

Each of the four sessions will include substantive input as well as exchange and discussion of participants' experience and perspectives. As each of the topics addressed are challenging and complex, resource material will also be identified for preparation and further exploration of issues. A limited number of slots are available, so if you are interested in registering and committed to attending all four sessions, as soon as possible send your name and contact to [rpec@rpec.org](mailto:rpec@rpec.org). An RPEC staff member will be in touch with you. A modest fee may be requested prior to the workshop to cover its costs.

## **SUPPORT RPEC**

### **Shop at and Donate to The Thrifty Quaker in September!**

This September, all sales at The Thrifty Quaker will benefit the Richmond Peace Education Center.

Please shop at, and donate gently worn (or new) items to, The Thrifty Quaker during the month of September! They are seeking furniture in good condition, household items, working appliances, kitchenware, books, shirts, clothing, candles, and much, much more.

The Thrifty Quaker is a thrift store operated by Midlothian Friends Meeting. They donate the profit from store sales to local charities, and RPEC has been a beneficiary for one month of sales for the past three years. Last year, the returns to RPEC were substantial, amounting to more than 5% of our total annual income!

Please help ensure RPEC sees strong returns from Thrifty Quaker again this year, by paying a visit to The Thrifty Quaker in September.

The Thrifty Quaker  
13567 Midlothian Turnpike  
9:30 to 7 p.m. weekdays,  
9:30 to 5 p.m. Saturdays

### **Annual Auction - Something Old and Something New**



While this year's Annual Auction Event will bring a number of

changes, much will be familiar to many of you.

#### **What's New?**

- We have a new venue – the Conference Center of Troutman Sanders. The site is on the top floor of the Troutman Saunders Building on Brown's Island and will offer some spectacular vistas of Richmond and the James River.
- The event will be on a Saturday evening, instead of Friday.
- Musical entertainment will be provided by Rickey Denton and her harp.
- Free parking in the parking deck in the building for everyone.

#### **What's Not?**

- Fourth annual Peacemaker of the Year award.
- Many of the same great items will again be available for auction.
- Karen Murphy will again preside at the live auction.
- Great catered food – hors d'oeuvres plus!
- Enthusiastic Peace Center members.

**Be sure to save the date: Saturday, November 10, 2007.**

**RPEC Web Page:  
<http://www.rpec.org>**



# RPEC Victory: Richmond Public Schools Adopt Military Recruitment Opt-Out Form

Adria Scharf

If you have a high school student at home, you almost certainly have had military recruiters call your child on the phone in the evening to recruit him or her into the armed forces. You may be surprised to learn that the recruiter in all likelihood got your child's phone number from his or her school.

A little known provision of the No Child Left Behind Act passed in

2002 requires all public schools to provide the names and contact information of juniors and seniors to military recruiters. However, it also gave parents and students the right to "opt out" of those lists. Different school districts have taken different approaches to informing parents and students of their right to opt out.

Now the Richmond Public Schools has made it easier for par-

ents to keep their teenager's name, addresses, and phone number off of the recruiter lists. Starting in September 2007, a simple, easy to read opt-out form will be sent home to Richmond public high school parents at the beginning of the school year.

In adopting this opt-out form, the Richmond Public School Board follows Hanover County public schools and countless other school districts across the country. Up until this year, the Richmond Public Schools did not use a form. Rather, it informed parents of their right to request that their child be removed from recruitment lists in a densely worded paragraph that was part of a legal document sent to parents. Parents who wished to remove their child's name had to draft a letter from scratch.

The decision by the Richmond Public School Board to adopt the easier-to-use opt-out form was made in response to a request by the Richmond Peace Education Center's committee on educating youth and the public about alternatives to military service. The RPEC committee researched the issue and collected sample opt-out forms from other school districts. Adria Scharf and Elizabeth Smith met with Richmond Public Schools superintendent Dr. Deborah Jewell-Sherman in March to talk with her about the issue, ask her to have the school board adopt the form, and share sample forms with her. She brought the request to the Richmond Public Schools Board, which moved quickly. They informed us in late April that they had agreed to adopt

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**Complete this form to exercise your federal right to privacy**

## MILITARY RECRUITMENT OPT-OUT FORM

FOR SECONDARY STUDENTS

*If you **do not** want your or your child's personal information released to military recruiters\* you must sign this form and return it to the school office by this date: \_\_\_\_\_.*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby exercise my federal right, granted to me by the Congress of the United States under section 9528 of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965*, as amended by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, (and any other applicable state, federal or local law or any school policy), and hereby request that the name, address, & telephone listing of \_\_\_\_\_ (name of student), a current student at \_\_\_\_\_ (name of school), **Not** be released to military recruiters without prior written parental consent.

I do, however, consent to the disclosure of such information to institutions of higher education other than military schools.

**Signed by:**     student     parent    *(check one)*

\_\_\_\_\_ signature/date

\_\_\_\_\_ print name

\_\_\_\_\_ address

\_\_\_\_\_ city/state/zip

\*The "No Child Left Behind" Act includes a requirement that high schools provide military recruiters, upon request, the names, addresses and phone numbers of all students unless the student or the student's parent requests that it NOT be released.

This certificate can be signed either by a student OR a parent. A student does not need parental consent to sign this certificate. No information about elementary students will be disclosed to military recruiters.

## RPEC'S 2007 Peace Essay Contest

### Theme: "Not With These Hands"

#### 1st Place Winner—High School

#### Emily Schenck, Deep Run HS

According to a famous Chinese proverb, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." Trying to create a less violent and more peaceful community may seem like a big task, but it has to start with a single step from each one of us. When people think of ways to promote peace, they may think of big group projects that require a lot of time, organization and money. These are definitely important, but I believe that peace really can start with one person.

In today's world, the rates of violence and crimes being committed are horrendous. It is clear that citizens need to address this problem. Most of the nightly news reports involve fights, shootings, war, and death. These are not the stories of a healthy and stable society. I want the day to come when I can turn on the news and see that a cure for cancer has been discovered. I want to read in the newspaper that global warming is greatly decreasing. I want people to focus on taking care of each other and the earth, not hurting each other and expressing hatred and anger.

There's a concept called "paying it forward" that describes the act of changing the world one good deed at a time. It involves doing something kind for others and expecting them to do something kind for someone else. It's something I believe in. Even if one person contributes only one act of kindness each day, this small effort can make a huge difference.

There are many ways we could pay it forward and show that one person can make our community a more peaceful place. For example, If I am at the supermarket and see a person holding a large bag of groceries, I could hold the door and offer my help. This small act may make that person feel good. On his drive home, he might want to help someone else, and he'll let a car go in front of him. The driver of that car might feel grateful that someone let him in the busy lane because he would have been late for work.

Since that driver is in such a good mood, he may leave a generous tip for the waiter at the restaurant where he eats lunch. When the waiter is treated well by his customer, he may

feel appreciated. When he goes to pick up his child later at school, he may give him a big smile at the door because he knows how good it feels to be treated kindly and he wants his son to feel that way, too. When the child is smiled at by his father, he'll feel happy and loved. All of these positive experiences can come from one small act done by one person. Random acts of kindness like these could keep spreading and spreading throughout an entire neighborhood, city, and country.

In order for our community to become more peaceful, something clearly needs to be done. Through my school, friends, youth group, family, neighborhood, and more, it would not be hard to create a chain of acts of kindness.

If people understand that one person really can make a difference, I believe violence would decrease, and our community and our world would become a more peaceful place. I pledge to contribute my time and efforts to making this vision a reality, and I pledge to start with me.

#### Richmond Public Schools Adopts Military Recruitment Opt-Out Form

*(Continued from page 9)*  
the form.

The Richmond Public Schools Military Recruitment Opt-Out form will make it far easier for parents, and students, in the city to exercise their right to keep their school from sharing their private contact information with recruiters.

The form adopted by the Richmond Public School Board is on page 9. *Parents and students of all public schools have the right to opt out of their schools' military recruitment lists.*

# CALENDAR

## Meetings of Local Groups

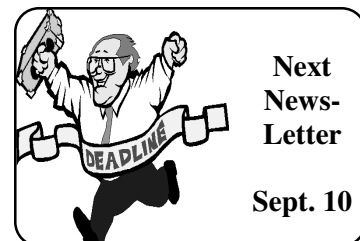
<b>Every Sunday</b>	<b>Food Not Bombs Richmond-Meal Sharing</b> , 4:00 P.M. in Monroe Park. Hotline # 359-4880 for details
<b>Every 3rd Wed.</b>	<b>Amnesty International</b> , University of Richmond campus. Contact Ray Hilliard at 289-8289
<b>Every 3rd Friday</b>	<b>Sufi Dancing: Dances of Universal Peace</b> , Tuesdays, 7:30-9:30 PM except Oct. at Camel cafe on W. Broad on . 353-4901
<b>Every Thursday</b>	<b>Richmond Organization for Sexual Minority Youth (ROSMY)</b> , 7:00-9:00 PM. Call support line: 353-2077 for more information; 353-1699 for the administrative line.
<b>Every 3rd Saturday</b>	<b>Equality Virginia</b> , 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.
<b>Every 4th Saturday</b>	<b>Pax Christi Peace Community</b> - Call Paula Powdermaker for details - 355-7395
<b>Every 2nd Saturday</b>	<b>Walk for Peace</b> - 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM. Meet at the Boulevard entrance of the Virginia Museum. Wear black.
<b>Every Friday</b>	<b>Protest the War on Iraq</b> - Noon til 1:00 PM at 10th and Main Streets.
<b>1st &amp; 3rd Weds.</b>	<b>The Hanover County Umbrella of Peace group</b> - 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

- Aug. 15** **RYPF picnic and gathering** - tentatively scheduled for Forest Hill Park, starting at 5:30 PM. This event is open to all interested young people. Call the RPEC office for further details.
- Sept. 22** **Quaker House will offer the workshop "Strategies for Long-Term Peace Work, or What Peace Activists Can Learn from the Military."** It will be held at the Richmond Friends Meeting from 1-4 PM, 4500 Kensington Ave.
- Sept. 23** **Family Peace Festival** - St. Joseph's Villa, 8000 Brook Road - 11:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Sept. 29-30** **RYPF will conduct its second workshop for teen trainers at the Berryman Center.** The free workshop will run from 10 AM to 4:45 PM each day, and lunch will be provided.
- Sept. 29** **Yoga and Peace workshop** will be held at the Richmond Friends Meeting, 4500 Kensington Avenue, from 10 AM. to noon. \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door. Contact 232-1002 or rpec@rpec.org to register.

### Racial Justice Workshops: (See pp. 7-8 for information)

- Oct. 16** *Racial Justice and Injustice*  
**Oct. 30** *Race and Power in Richmond*  
**Nov. 13** *Racism and Violence*  
**Nov. 27** *Ways to Take Action and be in Solidarity*



## A Telephone Conversation

Jack Payden-Travers, director of VADP

“Dad, how can this happen?” my older daughter asked over the phone.

“Tamara, the Court turns down most of the appeals presented to it.”

“But Dad, this is a matter of life and death. What was their reason for not hearing this case?”

“Honey, they don’t have to give reasons. It’s all a matter of procedure when a case is appealed. If the issue isn’t raised in the original appeal, even if it’s evidence of innocence, the Court doesn’t have to listen to it.”

“But Dad, Troy Davis may be innocent!”

“I know. We can execute an innocent man or woman as long as we do it according to procedure. ‘Evidence of innocence is irrelevant’ according to a former Attorney General of Virginia. We have and continue to send innocent people to death in this country.”

By the time you read this Troy Davis will likely be dead, a victim executed by technicality and procedure. He didn’t have the money. He was black, he was there, and a cop was killed. As with many in our criminal justice system he was presumed guilty by the police who stopped looking for the truth once Troy Davis was in custody.

I’m proud that my daughter in the midst of raising a 16-month old is so concerned about this case and even sent a letter to the Georgia Parole Board on Troy’s behalf. I wish I could tell her it would definitely save Troy, whose sister is a friend of mine and a co-worker in the abolition movement. But I know too much and she is too old to be given half-truths and soothing reassurances. And besides I don’t want to do that. I want to comfort her but also confront her as a fellow American about how we kill people to teach people that killing people is wrong.

The system is broken wherever capital punishment is practiced. Will we be successful in ending it? I hope so. But for me the most important thing is being faithful and I know that doing so will cause me to continue to protest “legal homicide.” I hope you’ll agree and consider taking a step to end capital punishment by writing to Gov. Kaine or sending a card to one of the inmates on Virginia’s death rows. See [www.VADP.org](http://www.VADP.org) for addresses.



### Richmond Peace Education Center

400 W. 32nd Street, Richmond, VA 23225

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