

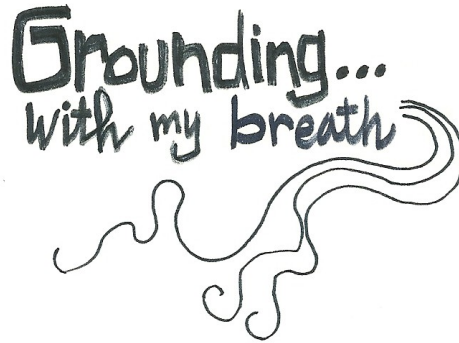
Michigan Peace Team

Michigan Peace Team
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Meeting the World with a Grounded Heart By Amy Gilmore Cairns



As a MPT nonviolence trainer and as someone who has served on more than a few domestic peace teams, people often ask what they can do to deepen their nonviolent practice or prepare for new teams in between actions. I always tell them that the most valuable thing they can do is learn to ground their energy and practice every day.

Grounding is simply a way to bring all of our energy and attention back to our bodies and our center. When we are grounded we are in the present moment, aware of what is happening around us, aware of being at choice about how we respond. I do this with my breath. On my first breath, I inhale, gathering my scattered attention and energy to me. As I exhale, I release all

the stress, tension and excess energy I am aware of and let it drop to the ground. On my next breath, I inhale deeply, feeling the air fill me, then exhale, connecting my feet to the earth underneath and all the stored energy there. As I inhale a third time, I am aware of my rooted connection to the earth and the environment around me. I exhale with focused awareness of the world around me.

It sounds simple enough but it can take practice. It can take more than three breaths. Perhaps you need several breaths just to call your attention back to your body. Perhaps you do not feel particularly calmer or more connected right away. Keep breathing. With practice, your body and mind will learn what to expect and what you want and it will get easier and faster.

This is why regular, preferably daily, practice is needed. When we are in conflict situations, the ability to be calm and centered will calm others around us. Being grounded will also free our mind to find alternatives, interventions, and solutions, where a scattered or stressed mind will run in circles or fall into controlling behavior that can escalate conflicts. **Continued on page 2**



Meeting the World with a Grounded Heart Continued

In my spiritual practice, I take time each day to ground and meditate. I also practice grounding throughout my day - when I feel stressed, when I am frustrated, when I wait at traffic lights. Grounding becomes habitual. After lots of practice, I now find myself grounding without thinking of it whenever I feel conflict or danger.

This didn't happen overnight and it won't continue happening if I don't keep practicing. If I wait until right before a peace team or right before I have a confrontation, I will be attempting to learn a new skill at a time when my attention needs to be most focused on the situation at hand. But if I practice every day, I am ready to meet the world with an open, grounded heart whenever I choose.



NEXT NEWSLETTER THEME for MPT 2011 SPRING NEWSLETTER

Transcending Polarities - Moving Beyond the Left, Middle, Right, and Other Paradigms

To submit possible articles to the Newsletter Working Group, please send to Liz Walters at MPT by March 1, 2011-length 500-600 words



Michigan Peace Team

808 Barnes Ave.
Lansing, MI 48910
517 484-3178

Our Vision:

We seek a just world grounded in nonviolence and respect for the sacred interconnectedness of all life.

Our Mission:

Michigan Peace Team pursues peace through active nonviolence in places of conflict.

Our Goals:

- Recruiting, training, and placing Peace Teams both domestically and internationally
- Educating the public to the vision and practice of nonviolence, particularly as it relates to nonviolent conflict intervention
- Cooperating, supporting, and participating with local peace and justice groups, particularly as it relates to our Mission
- Providing training in active nonviolence designed for the specific needs of the participants

Web Site:

michiganpeaceteam.org

International Peace Team Blogs:

<http://MPTinPalestine.Blogspot.com>

<http://MPTinJuarez.Blogspot.com>

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MPT Newsletter Artwork

Nancy Ayotte creates all the artwork for MPT Newsletters. Her creations are a pure gift to MPT and to our readers. This gift is yours to freely use in other peace work.

MPT Newsletters (2008-2011) available on-line

<http://michiganpeaceteamnewsletters.blogspot.com>

Hope Will Not Be Extinguished

By Bishop Thomas Gumbleton

I have been asked what keeps me grounded while working in the struggle to bring about a world without war, a world in which all can live in genuine peace. The simple answer, as I have discovered, is to find a way to maintain hope. Hope does not depend upon political leaders, whoever they are. Hope does not deny the reality of unbearable situations. It does not sugar coat the truth.

Christopher Hedges, in a recent article in *The Agitator* newsletter, insists that, "Hope knows that unless we physically defy government control, we are complicit in the violence of the state. All who resist keep hope alive. All who succumb to fear, despair and apathy become enemies of hope."

My own experience confirms the truth and wisdom of his words.

January 15, 2011 is the 20th anniversary of the first invasion of Iraq. I plan to be in Washington DC to demonstrate against this war which still continues and now includes a war in Afghanistan. I have no way of knowing how many people will be there. Perhaps there will be 50, maybe 100, maybe thousands, perhaps not even 50. But no matter – I will be there. I and those there with me have no illusions about what will happen. We know that our actions will not stop the wars, but the mere continued resistance, even by a handful, is the basis for hope. I know that I will come back more filled with hope because of participation with others in this action and with that hope I will continue to be grounded in the effort against war.

And even though acts of resistance are a very significant part of staying grounded, I also am convinced there must be more. The "more" comes from our prayer. In this regard, I find going to the Gospels as a basis for prayer is the most important element of staying grounded in hope.

In the eleventh chapter of Matthew's Gospel we find an extraordinary incident unfolding. The one whom Jesus proclaims "the greatest of all prophets" seems overwhelmed with discouragement. When from his jail cell, John the Baptist, in what must have been a deep sense of discouragement, sends disciples to Jesus asking, "Are you the one who is to come or shall we wait for

another?" And the response of Jesus gives John hope. He indicates that the reign of God is breaking forth. Jesus tells his disciples to go and tell John what they see and hear. Blind people see, deaf people hear, the lepers are cleansed and the poor have the Good News proclaimed to them. Knowing this, John begins to hope again.

But even more than dwelling on the experience of John the Baptist, it is helpful to share in the experience of Jesus Himself. In the 12th chapter of John's Gospel, just before the last week of His life, strangers were seeking to see Him. Less they misunderstand who He is, Jesus begins to speak about His suffering and death. At one point He seems to be almost in despair when He says, "God, what shall I say? Save me from this hour?" But then through a deep experience of God's love, Jesus is able to say, "But it is for this very reason that I have come to this hour. God, glorify your name." From Jesus we learn how, even out of death comes life. As we share this experience with Jesus we renew our hope, and this keeps us grounded in our efforts for peace.

I strongly believe that if we continue to combine our prayer with acts of resistance, no matter how small, hope will not be extinguished. Every act that gives hope is a victory in itself.



Being a Dreamer with a Passion for Making It Happen

By Peter Dougherty

It's good to reflect on and what keeps me grounded!

My basic belief is that at the heart of everything there is a Spirit of the universe, a divinity that I call God (other friends may not call it divine). Someone quoted by Paul of Tarsus, said: "In [him] we live and move and have our being." This divine Spirit, Energy, is Love, Truth, totally not violent. God is not "out there," manipulating our world like a puppeteer. Rather, you can't take divinity out of energy or matter or our DNA. That divinity respects the evolving of the universe in its own right. This belief keeps me grounded. .



Human beings, who emerged out of east Africa not that long ago, are the universe conscious of itself. We are endowed with the awesome power to choose what we will be/ do with what we have. We are power. It's in our DNA, a gift of the creator. We create and change things. This keeps me grounded.

Most people believe in human goodness – but up to a point. I join those who see the universe and everything in it as awesome in its essence, with humans capable of helping each other grow, become courageous, loving, healed and nonviolent, creators of a human society that reflects this. I believe that "Love is the most formidable of all cosmic energies." (Teilhard de Chardin, 20th century priest- scientist) The lives of courageous love and healing of people now, and the story of many who came before, keep me grounded. .

That means billions more are capable of becoming like them. Striving to make this a reality keeps me grounded.

I have family and friends and other human travelers who love me into being, who nurture me, and accept me as I am. How can we measure the awesomeness of that? Their love keeps me grounded. .

So many members of our human family are abused, have their human rights denied, suffer from decisions made by wealthy few (also my brothers and sisters) who dominate the world and steal the resources. I cannot not do what I can to stop the madness, the inflicting of pain and misery, and the abuse of our earth. Expending myself in this struggle keeps me grounded. .

I am part of the family of Michigan Peace Team, where we wrestle with the violence of the world, to transform it from violence to wholeness. In the struggle we are also dealing with the part of the world that is ourselves – human beings on the staff, core community, volunteers (all with our beauty and brokenness). There is no dealing with "out there" without living it in our relationships "in here."MPT keeps me grounded. .

The wider solidarity with so many close and afar, striving with courage to change, heal the world, make it more just, also keeps me grounded. .

Wanting to love everyone unconditionally, and falling so far short, keeps me grounded. .

I see the way out of the madness, blindness, societal addiction to violence, lack of vision of how we can create a world where we really act as a human family. Daily I look at situations with the vision of how we can structure it, change it, embrace small human community, strategic nonviolent social change, a total commitment to nonviolent love. This vision I can taste keeps me grounded. .



Celebrating life, dancing along in the madness, discovering the beauty in everything, enjoying humor, loving surprise, being grateful for the gift of life, experiencing joy – these are a part of this marvelous human journey.

These, too, keep me grounded AND going!

Grounded and in the Field

By Nicole Rohrkemper

Staying grounded is a huge part of International Team training and practice. Perhaps you're great at this - if so, consider becoming a Team Member. Or, perhaps you'd like to develop your skills and get more practice and support staying grounded ... read on for information on our upcoming trainings, and more.

INTERNATIONAL TEAMS 2011

Thank You to all of our Returned Team Members of 2010, and all of our 100+ team veterans.

We are hearing from many of you in response to our recent snail-mail to Team Veterans.

Keep those responses coming, and remember to con-

tact Nicole to volunteer, or ask about being an Anchor in 2011. We can't do it without you—thank you!

MPT is looking for both new Peace Team Members and Team Veterans/Anchors for 2011 and 2012! We train all participants—including returning team members—and no experience necessary for new Team Members. Good assets for a team member include: willingness to learn, commitment to nonviolence, self-awareness, commitment to the MPT process and the Team format (you'll learn this!).

The next **Advanced Nonviolence Skills Retreat is February 25-27, 2010** at our facilities in Lansing, MI. This event will include informational sessions about MPT and International Teams for those who are interested. The training is **open to all** who want to further their nonviolence skills, learn more about MPT, or join our list of on-call Domestic Peace Team volunteers. This session is **required for those who want to have the option of joining an International Team** with MPT from March-June 2011. It is helpful if participants have had our Basic 8-Hour Nonviolence Training prior to this event; *if you will not have completed MPT's Basic Training before February 25th, please contact us.*

****NEW**** Upcoming Phone-In **Information Session regarding International Teams!** Get the basics, ask questions, and connect with others interested in teams and more. Join us from anywhere in the country—this session will be held over the phone via our toll-free call in number. We're currently scheduling the first and second sessions for 2011; join us in choosing a date! **Visit any of our blogs (including www.MPTinJuarez.blogspot.com) to sign up join the call, choose a date, and get the call-in number.** Or, contact Nicole today for more information.

Watch the **Teams Insider E-News** for more information and regular updates, about once a month. If you don't already receive this in your email inbox, **visit one of our Team Report Blogs (www.MPTinPalestine.blogspot.com) to sign up for our E-News.** You can also find links to apply, see team sample budgets, and more on the team blogs.

As always, we welcome your questions regarding International Peace Teams anytime! Additionally, **many volunteer opportunities to support Teams are available for 2011/12**—from interviewing applicants, to holding the support phone, to helping on the steering committee. Email or call Nicole days or evenings at NicoleR.MPT@gmail.com, 586-419-1070. (For a faster response, don't call the MPT Main office with your questions about International Teams—call this direct number instead.)



From World and US Social Forum
Another World is Possible <http://vimeo.com/12176881>

The Daunting Dance of Peacemaking: From the Margins to our Sacred Center

By Kim Redigan

There is a daunting dance to peacemaking that calls us to the messy margins of life. Ironically, it is in moving to the margins, stretching ourselves to the edges, that we are given the opportunity to encounter our sacred center – that quiet place that gives meaning, depth, and sustainability to our work.

Many of us have found that despite the exhilaration, there is a shadow side to dancing on the edge when we allow ourselves to stay on the dance floor too long. We find ourselves trying to manage the margins and manipulate the outcomes of situations which are beyond our control, resulting in frustration, anger, and self pity.

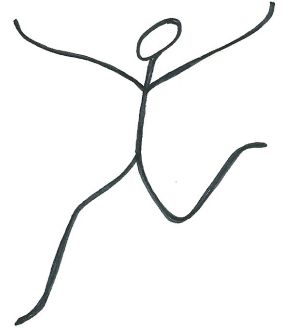
Taken to the extreme, this can result in messianic behavior that is ugly and sometimes dangerous to us and others. As we arrogantly choreograph not only our own lives but the lives of others, including people halfway around the world, we begin to believe that we are Masters of the Dance. As we drag our tired selves onto the dance floor in the belief that without us the music will stop, we find ourselves limping along on calloused feet, subsisting on coffee and candy bars, pale shadows of the change we want to see in our world.

Yet, our work calls us to the margins. To those places in our world where people suffer and struggle. Places where fear and courage, hatred and compassion, despair and hope come together and compete with one another. Places that break our hearts. War zones. Jails. Checkpoints. Soup kitchens. Places where people are persecuted, prosecuted, taunted, tortured, hungry, and hurting. When we touch, even briefly, the margins of our world, we feel compelled to dance, even if we are awkward and unsure of ourselves. While we often find our passion and life's work at the margins, we also come face to face with our shortcomings, brokenness, and addictions.

While for most of us, the problem is usually dancing on the margins for too long without a break, there is another temptation that is equally pernicious. This is the refusal to fully enter the dance, the temptation to sit comfortably on the sidelines, to acquiesce to passivity and quietism, to assiduously avoid the margins where one's pristine dancing shoes (not to mention one's soul) may get dirtied and scuffed.

The refusal to enter the dance is sometimes couched in a pseudo-spiritual philosophy that demands little more than visualizing world peace and praying for an end to

injustice. This disembodied, abstract approach sidesteps the messy and unpredictable nature of life on the edge. To remain on the periphery of the dance floor is to avoid the complexity of life, dulling the compassion and commitment that come from engaging with people in all their maddening and magnificent particularity.



To refuse the dance entirely is to vote with one's feet for personal comfort over active peacemaking. It is a stance that is more concerned with self preservation than with real transformation. Life becomes a solo interior dance in which one is moving to the beat of one's own music, tone deaf to the songs of others. While leaving the dance for a spell in order to rest and repair our tattered dancing shoes is crucial, we must eventually move back to the margins.

Ultimately, we must find a way to embrace the dialectical relationship of our inner and outer lives, the paradoxical dance from the center to the edges and then back again. We must learn that there is a time to march and a time to meditate, a time to protest and a time to pray, a time to stand in solidarity with others and a time to sit in solitude with ourselves. If we are committed to this dance of peacemaking over the long haul, we need partners who help us discern the ebb and flow, the movements of the dance. Those who call us to the margins and then remind us of our need to return to the sacred center. Gratefully, we do not dance alone.



MPT Peace Team at
Gaza Freedom March in Cairo, Egypt



A Favorite
Meditation walk

Receiving Life As It Is

By Leona Sullivan

Living with homeless women and children at the Mustard Seed Shelter in Saginaw, Michigan is the context of my life. At Christmas, a five year old boy squealed with delight at receiving Spider Man pajamas. A woman filled up with tears of gratitude upon receiving a box after Christmas. This was her only gift. Another guest rejoiced because she had a good family visit. Her hard work at recovery has restored relationships with her family. Our joys are accompanied by sorrows. A woman's brother was shot, another recently assaulted, and a third in our housing program has had water turned off for a week. The landlord did not pay the bill. This is life at the Mustard Seed. How do I stay grounded, peaceful and non-violent in this context?

As a high school senior, I made my first silent Ignatian* retreat which focused on the purpose and meaning of life. This spirituality has grounded me for over 50 years. It means receiving life as it is; knowing God is present, guiding me, and keeping my heart uncluttered, and my will surrendered to Jesus. I never thought that I could live alone in this setting as the only staff person. When this became my reality, I found that when I felt alone, turning in surrender to God—keeping solitude of heart—brought me new freedom and joy to center my life on the Divine Persons.

The over-arching way for me to maintain a peaceful, non-violent heart is awareness of companionship with Jesus. The grace of companionship is core; I know I am loved, forgiven and gifted. Over the years this companionship is colored and nuanced by reflection on the values and attitudes of Jesus in the Gospels. Out of this companionship flows compassion and service in mission.

The discipline is how to keep coming back to awareness in the midst of busy activity. Most of the time, this awareness is in the background. It is like having lived with someone for a long time, there is an awareness of this loved one, although not necessarily in the foreground. I need to attend to the movements, both resonant and dissonant, within myself in daily activities. As I was driving, stewing about a situation, a crane flew in front of me. It was Jesus' way of smiling at me, and I had to laugh and let it go. Another morning Scripture was on the 10 lepers. A guest was particularly difficult. A past guest calls to say thank you for what you did for me.

The difficulty is being tuned in when many things are going on at once. I am doing bookkeeping and a woman needs some paperwork faxed right away, a guest needs money to get prescriptions now, and two little children bring their toys to the office, and are intrigued with twirling chairs, papers to write on, drawers to open. In these situations, I find it harder to keep an eye of awareness toward the background. The dissonance of my impatience brings me to awareness.

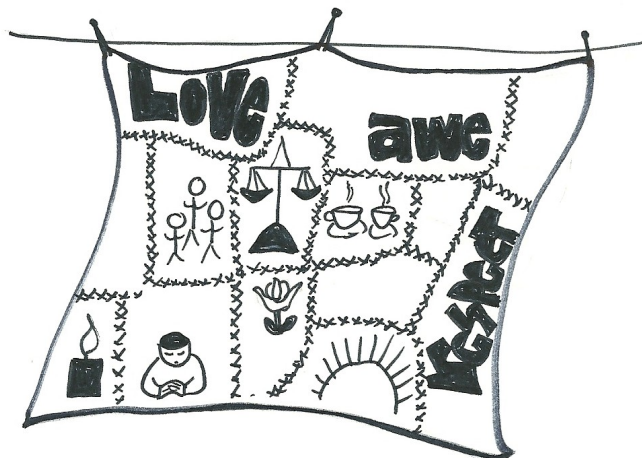
To keep companionship with Jesus fresh and vital, I need daily prayer, scripture, examen, a couple of longer times of silence and solitude a week, a community with whom to celebrate Eucharist, and accountability with my small faith sharing group or spiritual director. Also of significance is time with friends, time away from ministry, time in nature, as well as art, music, reading and keeping a sense of humor.

** An Ignatian Retreat is based on the Spiritual Exercises which are a compilation of meditations, prayers, and contemplative practices developed by Ignatius Loyola to help people deepen their relationship with God.*



Patchwork Lessons in Nonviolence; Some Thoughts on Spirituality **By Sheri Wander, President of MPT**

My own spirituality is a patchwork quilt, pieces picked up along the way from various spiritual traditions and sewn together with love, respect and community.



Growing up Catholic gave me an appreciation of ritual and showed me the grace in admitting my mistakes. I learned from the Quakers the importance of silence, to hear the voice of the divine within and that each of us have, at our core, this spark of the divine that cannot be quantified, denied or compared to the worth of another. Buddhist teachers like Thich Nhat Hanh remind me of the power of mindfulness and that every act can be a meditation and a prayer for love and peace. The list could go on....quilt panels gently sewn side by side and overlapping.

Much of the fabric for this quilt comes from various Pagan traditions. The word Pagan comes from a Latin root that means 'land' or 'countryside' and it refers to the people who held on to the local earth-based teachings and traditions - indigenous peoples - witches - some of the beliefs of my own Roma ancestors.

At the heart of this spirituality is the understanding that everything is interconnected and interrelated. Nature, all living things, and the connection itself are sacred. It is this understanding that grounds me and calls me to strive toward nonviolence, toward treating all living things with compassion, dignity and respect, and to protect the earth and to live in balance with nature.

From Pagan traditions I have also learned the power of intuition and imagination, which I find to be critical in my work as a peace team member and in nonviolent direct action.

This spirituality sometimes requires belief in things I cannot see, but counts as more important an attitude of awe and wonder and respect for the everyday miracles that I can see: making a connection with someone who on the surface seems so different from me; enjoying a cup of sweet tea with our Palestinian friends in the midst of tanks and soldiers; admiring a crocus pushing its flower out to the sun through the cold snow. These every day miracles give hope. And my faith reminds me, where there is hope there is power.

I have a quote written down by Author/activist Starhawk. I don't know where I found it, but it sits, written on crinkled paper, below the photo of an olive tree:

One challenge of Goddess spirituality is to put the sacred back into the world, to heal the spirit and to speak for the deep value of each one of us and of the natural world that sustains life. [Starhawk]

Perhaps it is this idea as much as anything that both grounds me and pushes me to the edge in my desire to lovingly meet this challenge.



"I'm struck with the importance of staying grounded. For me it means I want to make sure that what I am doing and promoting is the right thing to do. I try to make sure that my words and actions fit solidly in justice and peace work with my conscience." [

Jasiu Milanowski, Co-Founder of Michigan Peace Team]

Keeping Ourselves Grounded

By Paula Marie Deubel

Sometimes the challenge of standing for justice can be wearying and isolating. You sense you've somehow created enemies when the exact opposite was intended! Certain family members don't understand your thoughts. Events happening in this world are very disturbing and the need to discuss them with someone becomes very intense.

A relative may become angry because you don't believe in the war and certain friends seem to become distant. And all because of something said in another moment of passion over the fate of our world. I suppose many of us struggle with this paradox. We are peacemakers who often unwillingly (and ironically) seem to create more chaos and strife.

Being a pacifist, of course, has nothing at all to do with being a "passive" person, even if the two words sound remarkably similar. The origin of the word pacifism comes from early 20th century French, *pacifism*, or *pacifier* 'pacify.' But is that meaning exactly true? Did Gandhi try to pacify anyone? Did Martin Luther King Jr.? Do we?

The Oxford dictionary defines pacifism as "the belief that war and violence are unjustifiable and that all disputes should be settled by peaceful means", but this doesn't always feel accurate.

Are debates about human rights peaceful? Are protests and demonstrations a peaceful experience? Does directly confronting someone oppressing another human being arouse feelings of tranquility or peace? No. Such things inspire feelings of action. Whoever coined the word "activist" was wise – we are activists aspiring toward peace and are not afraid to stir the air. We are not daunted in confronting a person with a gun and telling them to please re-think their violent methods, because we care about the person on the other side of the barrel, even if they're a stranger.

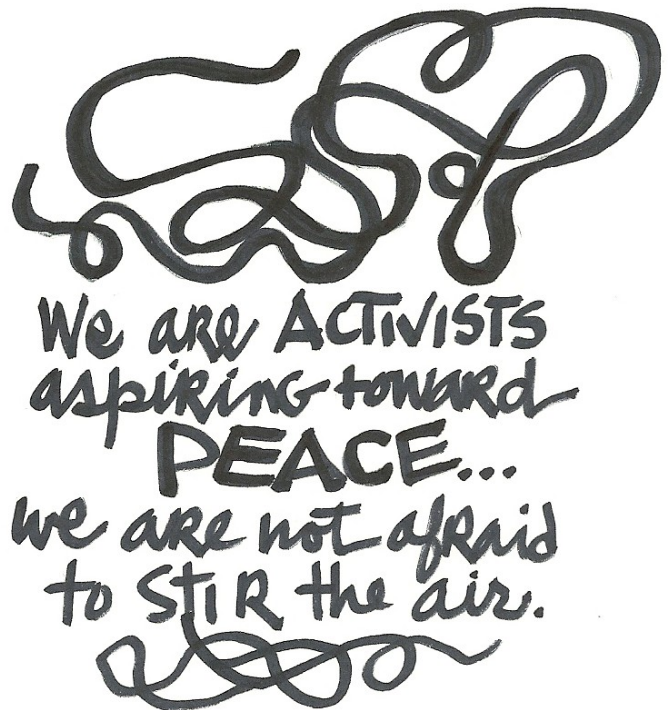
We do this without lifting a hand or shedding any blood (except, perhaps, our own). Our fight is of the spirit, and it is a difficult fight indeed. It takes courage, intelligence, empathy, and an extremely strong backbone. The weak need not apply!

The beauty of our effort is a life imbued with inner passion and meaning; we live actively and refuse to take life sitting down. We're rarely in the audience, we are right there in the arena.

Action defines us and passion is who we are.

Eventually, we learn to be more tactful, to save our energy for where it's needed; we realize family gatherings are not necessarily the place to be an educator. After all, we want to express what we teach: tolerance. On our deathbeds we hope to have made this world a better place for others in which to live.

We're often told by a disenchanted world that our struggle is meaningless, because there's always going to be war; however, we know there will always be peacemakers, too (just as there have always been.) We are not going away.



Compassion remains our greatest strength and solidly grounds us in the face of any odds. It is the staff upon which we lean our active souls.

*"To help me stay grounded ...
I think of all the peace workers and peace
groups in the past who didn't give up when
things looked bleak."*

[Rosalie Riegle, Facilitator for Michigan Peace Network]

In Pursuit of Peace

By Barbara Nolin

In the junior high office, just before you leave, there is an impressive, framed statement:

"The race is not always to the swift,
but to those who keep on running."

The large word at the top says, DETERMINATION.

Is that what has kept me in pursuit of peace all of these years? Determination? I don't think so. It is true, I am determined, for I was the smallest child in the room at school, and I am female. And as I grow older, I grow shorter. = (Determination has helped a lot. But there's more.)

Through these years I have watched people who have apparently failed. The public doesn't realize that many of the successful ones have failed miserably at one time. For instance, did you know that ...

MICHAEL JORDAN was cut from his basketball team, went home, locked himself in his bedroom, and cried.

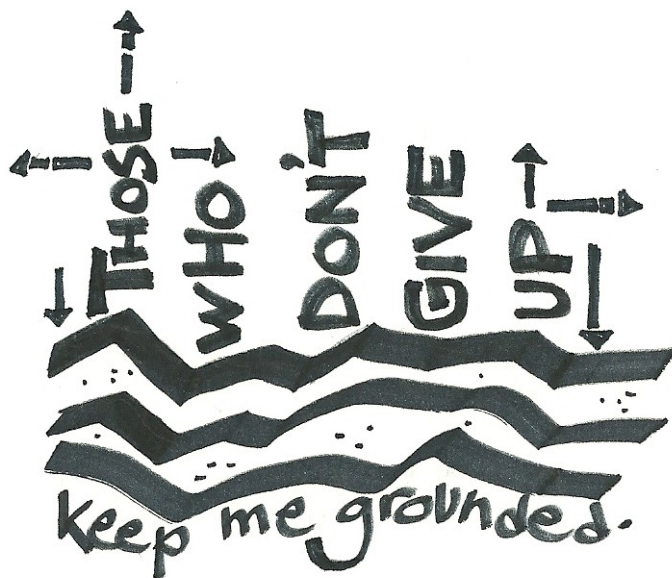
LUCILLE BALL was dismissed from drama school with a note that said she was wasting her time, because she was too shy to put her best foot forward.

THE BEATTLES were turned down by a recording studio because they didn't like their sound and said guitar music was on the way out. But back up a few decades.

THOMAS EDISON was told by a teacher that he was too stupid to learn anything, and he should go into a field where he might succeed by virtue of his pleasant personality.

ALBERT EINSTEIN did not speak aloud until he was 4 years old. He had a sister who talked for him. He was thinking!

Knowing that great achievers have faced failure but did not accept 'put-down' from others, is encouraging to those of us who have yet to see REAL peace achieved.



Those who don't give up keep me grounded. I have close friends like that, and I have public figures who inspire me. Gabrielle Gifford is not giving up. Tucson is a light to this nation. May we be a light to each other.



A broader PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

By Barbara Nolin

I pledge allegiance to the flags of the United Nations
and to the countries for which they stand.

One world, under God, so divided -
with liberty and justice for all - SOMEDAY.

Reaching Deeply

By Annette Thomas

Staying focused and grounded is at times difficult when fighting a seemingly unwinnable battle against injustice. To see suffering, human rights violations and a people oppressed becomes overwhelming when all one can do is stand helplessly by because powerlessness is the reality.

I came back from Gaza in early 2003 frustrated and angry, not at any one person in particular but at a situation that had been allowed to go on for too long and will be allowed to go on indefinitely because no one in power has the courage to end it.

With very few people - O.K., no one - in my community with whom I can share my concern about the fate of the Palestinians, I rely heavily on the internet to inform me of current events. Time and time again, the news is devastating. More home demolitions, more abuses, more innocent people dying. A family in Bil'in, whose villagers have been bravely holding peaceful demonstrations for almost six years, was hit hard by the death of yet another child, this time a daughter, at the hands of the IDF. It would be easier to close my eyes, shut off the computer and pretend none of this was happening. Attempting to remain grounded and steadfast takes its toll, but then once again the computer is turned on and the stories are read.

Tonight, I find a photo of a familiar looking girl.

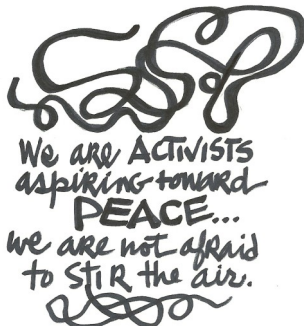
Could this have been a child I met during my visit into the Gaza City refugee camp? Eagerly I open drawers, fumble through paperwork for photos of the 6 girls in Gaza, five of them sisters, any of whom could have been the wide eyed girl in the photograph.



Then I remembered, my photo was taken eight years ago. Where are these girls now - what has happened to them? Were they part of the fatalities I had read about after the Gaza massacre - the five sisters at the Jebalyia refugee camp who perished when the bombs fell or were they lucky enough to have

escaped - that time? Although I gave my word to come back, I have yet to keep that promise.

Sharing with a Palestinian/American friend my desire to return there, he advised me to give up hope on Gaza, that many of the people there weren't true Palestinians - their background, Egyptian- so in his eyes, less worthy of rescue. He is mistaken - they are human beings, worthy of much more than that. Their origin is insignificant - their well-being, critical. If I were to heed the advice that has been given me, I'd have walked away years ago. Am I able to remain grounded? Sometimes. Am I scared? Much of the time. Worried for them? All of the time. Frequently my faith in mankind is challenged. Too often there is no one to turn to for reassurance, so I have to reach deep within myself for that bit of extra strength and groundedness.



Annette Thomas' question to Noam Chomsky:
How do you stay grounded and focused in your pursuit of peace?

"I have nothing very significant to say ... I continue to devote time and energy to these issues because perhaps I can make a positive contribution, however small. The alternative - not trying - helps assure that the worst will happen. Not a very difficult choice." [Noam Chomsky, 1-28-11]

Michigan Peace Team at Work - Some Recent highlights

Prepared by Liz Walters

Fall 2010 Peace Team to Palestine - Israel

Nicole Rohrkemper coordinates MPT's international peace team program. Each year Palestinians invite MPT peace teams to join them during the olive harvest because Israeli settlers threaten and harm Palestinians during the harvest. Here are photos from the 2010 olive harvest. Pictured are peace teamers with Palestinians. Special thanks to Martha Larsen, Katy Johnson, and Sandra Quintano for their Third Party Nonviolent Intervention work.



Fall 2010 Peace Team to Juarez, Mexico

The Human Rights Center of Juarez, Mexico invited a MPT peace team to work in Juarez due to the extreme violence there. From early September to Christmas 2010 peace team members participated in neighborhood and city wide marches for peace. Also teamers worked with parents in two neighborhoods on behalf of the children. In addition teamers were a peaceful presence as they visited families who lost loved ones to the violence. Special thanks to Nina Rodriguez and Angie Mann for their courage, hard work, and unflinching love.



2010 Signature Event

Michigan Peace Team in partnership with Palestine Cultural Office sponsored the MPT 2010 Signature event on November 5, 2010 at the Greenfield Manor Banquet Hall in Dearborn. Honored guests included Grace Said, sister of Dr. Edward Said, and Cindy Corrie, mother of Rachel Corrie. Warren David and Siham Awada Jaafar were honored emcees. Before and during the event the hospitality of the family who owns the hall and the surrounding Arab community was spectacular. MPT was received as family. Also, over 500 people registered. A special thanks members' of the planning committee: Hasan Newwash, Maureen Aman, Hind Ameer, Sarah Bazzetta, Cheryl Bukoff, Rita Carey, Alia Charara, Karen Donahue, Sharon Feldman, Lourdes Fonseca-Nearon, Mary Ann Ford, Sherri Muzher, Julie Powers, Kim Redigan, Isabel Rowen, Annette Thomas, Liz Walters



Michigan Peace Team at Work

Some Recent highlights - continued

East Lansing Domestic Peace Team

East Lansing neighborhood groups and MSU student groups asked MPT to send a peace team during the Westboro Baptist Church picket of East Lansing High School on November 18, 2010. In preparation, MPT met with the faculty of the high school and participated in all East Lansing preparatory meetings. Twenty five committed and trained members joined this team. Members of Westboro brought their messages of hate, condemnation and provocation. East Lansing counter-protesters brought messages of diversity, love and acceptance.



Intern Program



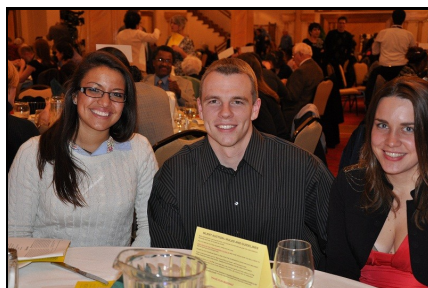
L to R: Haby, Chelsea, Ray

-on MPT experiences including nonviolence trainings, and domestic peace teams, presentations.

Recent MPT interns include Haby from Paris, France, Chelsea from Alma, MI, Ray from Lansing, MI, Angelina from Muskegon, MI, Bryant from East Lansing, MI. and Aude from Toulouse, France.

Mary Hanna coordinates the Intern Program at the MPT Lansing Office and it is flourishing.

MPT interns complete a curriculum on non-violence, work on a research project, and are involved in hands



L to R: Angelina, Bryant, Aude

Iowa Speaking Tour



Martha Larsen and Liz Walters traveled to four Iowa cities: (Cedar Rapids, Ames, Des Moines, and Clinton) during December to introduce Iowans to the vision and mission of MPT

and to promote nonviolence trainings and peace teams.

During February, Martha and Liz will return to Iowa for 20+ additional presentations in a variety of locales.



Michigan Peace Team at Work

Some Recent highlights ... continued

Newly Formed Training Committee



2011 Training Dates
Basic Nonviolence Training February 19 May 28 July 16 November 5
Support Training March 5
Advanced Nonviolence Training Retreat February 25-27 April 1-3 June 3-5 August 19-21 October 14-16
Train the Trainer May 20-22

Ignatian Family Teach-in Georgetown University, Washington DC With Advocacy Day in the U.S. Congress, Nov. 13-15, 2010

Elliot Adams, Peter Dougherty and Kim Redigan traveled to Washington DC to facilitate a MPT nonviolence workshop and staff a MPT outreach table at this event. Over 1200 students participated in the event.

George Rishmawi and Rosina Hassoun Speaking Tour



Loretta Johnston and Martha Larsen organized speaking events at MSU, U of M and People's

Church, featuring guest speakers George Rishmawi from Bethlehem, West Bank and Rosina Hassoun from East Lansing.



Portraits in Social Justice Exhibit Touring Southeast Michigan

Peter Dougherty, Kim Redigan and Liz Walters are among thirty people featured in the Portraits in Social Justice Exhibit, touring South East Michigan. This exhibit is a tribute to some of the inspirational and admirable activists and advocates working for peace and justice. It is created by Michael Shore, an award-winning photographer, along with his wife and journalist, Amy Lange. The exhibit is posted on the Internet at this address:

<http://portraitsinsocialjustice.com/index.html>

In Memory of John D. Hanna

In a special way we want to share that we are remembering John D. Hanna and his family. November 14, 2010 is the date of Mr. Hanna's passing. Our hearts are one with his daughters Janine, Diane, Mary, and his son Tom as they grieve the loss of their Father and as they celebrate his life.

Most especially we want to say that John D. Hanna is Mary Hanna's Dad. All of us know what a gift Mary is to the peace and justice movement, and we are grateful to Mr. Hanna for raising such a wonderful daughter!

Pax Christi Michigan's 30th Annual State Conference

"Behold I Make All Things New:
Building the New in the Shell of the Old"



Keynote
Peter Dougherty
Michigan Peace Team

March 26, 2011
8:00 am - 3:30 pm

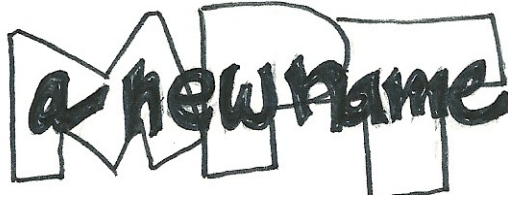
St. Mary Magdalen Church
Brighton, MI

Registration: \$40 if received by March 19 (\$45 after); Students and low income \$25

Questions: Contact PCM Office 517 481-5280

Brochures and Flyers are available

Co-Sponsorship opportunities are available too!



MPT is searching for a new name! We Need Your Help!
MPT's Branding and Technology Committee

We're looking for a new name and we want YOU to get involved: send us your ideas and feedback, and vote.

1. For the electronic version of this newsletter, print this page, fill it in and mail via postal mail to: MPT Branding and Technology Committee, 808 W. Barnes, Lansing, MI 48910
2. For the hard copy version of this section and send this page via postal mail to above address OR, EASIEST OF ALL ...
3. Visit the new site about our name change: www.MPTNewName.Blogspot.com and respond there!

Read our mission and vision statements in this newsletter as you think about ideas/suggestions.

Three things to consider:

1. MPT Members come from all over the country - and all over the world. The term "Michigan" can sometimes be misleading to folks who don't know this.
2. The letters "MPT" are recognizable; we may (or may not) wish to try to make our new name fit this acronym. This could be handy, or too limiting.
3. We do Nonviolent Conflict Intervention both locally/domestically and internationally (as well as training and awareness work). How can we communicate the fairly unique nature of this work AND set ourselves apart from other peace and justice groups?

We may also craft a new tagline to go with our new name, if necessary. Our current tagline is: *Creating a nonviolent alternative to militarism and violence through empowered peacemaking.*

New Name or Tagline Ideas:

Other Feedback/Suggestions:



808 W. Barnes Ave.
Lansing, MI 48910