



Michigan Peace Team

VOLUME XIV, NUMBER 4

FALL 2008

Michigan Peace Team (MPT) empowers people to engage in active nonviolent peacemaking. MPT was started in 1993, in response to the growing need for civilian peacemakers both in the USA and abroad.

VISION:
To pursue peace through active non-violence in places of conflict

MPT seeks a peaceful, just, sustainable Earth Community grounded in nonviolence and respect for the sacred interconnectiveness of all life.

MISSION:
Provide training in active nonviolence designed for the specific needs of participants.

Recruit and mentor individuals seeking experience with violence reduction teams.

Place violence reduction teams in domestic and international conflicts.

Convene, support and participate with local peace action groups.

Educate the public to the vision and practice of nonviolence.

MPT - Vision of Nonviolent Peace Team

by Liz Walters, IHM

The tragedy of war coupled with the enduring appeal of war characterize these times. A century ago 90% of the casualties of war were combatants; today 75% are civilian.¹ Much of the 20th Century was devoted to warfare and scholars describe it as "the bloodiest era in the history of the human race."² Now, in the first decade of a new century, the notion of unending war is the catch phrase. Now too, cities, towns, and neighborhoods around the planet struggle as individuals and groups resort to violence in response to conflict.

Gandhi and peacemaking

For Gandhi, war never led to peace, because it uses means that are the opposite of peace and always leaves behind the seeds of hate and retribution. Gandhi saw in satyagraha (*truth force; applying the principles of nonviolence and self suffering*) an alternative to war that would not continue or escalate the cycle of hate and retribution, but would instead quench it. Moreover, Gandhi, a devote Hindu, lifted the love ethic of Jesus beyond interaction between individuals to a powerful, effective, societal force.³ Gandhi's vision includes nonviolent peace armies.

This may seem a distant goal, but it's obtainable. An individual can adopt a nonviolent way of life without having to wait for others to do so. And if an individual can do it, so can whole groups! And if whole groups can do so ...

MPT

As Sheri Wander, member of MPT, and nationally recognized nonviolent training facilitator says, "The power of nonviolent intervention is what you can say yes to, when you say no to war.

Michigan Peace Team and other nonviolent groups around the planet take this vision and these leading edge ideas to places of serious conflict and war. We go because we are invited by the local community. Our team members are well trained, disciplined, committed, and filled with nonviolent love. The goals are to reduce violence, be a protective presence, document human rights abuse, and bring hope in the face of despair. We build relationships, make new friends. and the movement continues to grow.!

1. <http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/en/npvideo>

2. <http://www2.ivcc.edu/alvin/hist-1001-01.htm>

3. Rynne, Terrence. (2008). *Gandhi and Jesus: The Saving Power of Nonviolence*. Orbis. p. 79-84.



Inside this issue:

MPT Mn Peace Team and Republican National Convention	2
Lifetime Achievement Award for Peace	2
Training Offers Opportunity	3
Meet Nkechi, MPT Intern	4
MPT at RNC, News Coverage	4 - 5
Meet Kati, MPT Intern	5
Invitation to MPT Metro Detroit Event	6
MPT International Teams Vets & New Faces Needed in 2009	6
Gift Ideas	7
Up-coming Presentations	7
Thank you! and Contact information	8

MPT Assists in Birth of Minnesota Peace Team at Republican National Convention

by Peter Dougherty



MPT has been a pioneer in fielding "domestic" peace teams in the U.S. since the early 1990s.

Some peacemakers from the Twin Cities had made a training organized by Nonviolent Peaceforce North America, which utilized MPT trainers Sheri Wander and Amy Cairns. From that training, Michigan Peace Team (MPT) was invited to help create a peace team for the Republican National Convention (RNC) in St. Paul the week of September 1, 2008.

During the summer, Sheri, Amy and I helped lay the groundwork for the Minnesota Peace Team (MnPT) and assist the new MnPT trainers to do the trainings for about 80 peace team volunteers.

This new MnPT plunged in – and it was a "war" zone during the RNC. Throughout the whole week, the police used batons, pepper spray, teargas and concussion grenades on local and national media, medical volunteers, peace team mem-

bers, and nonviolent demonstrators. Over 800 nonviolent people were arrested, many roughed up in the process by police. I and three other peace team members were included in arrests.

After the RNC, thousands of St. Paul citizens condemned the police action. Amnesty International issued a press statement saying that some of the police actions breached United Nations standards on the use of force. ACLU and National Lawyers Guild observers also condemned the police behavior.



I can mention only a few of many good peace team interventions. At the end of events the peace team would inform people lingering that if they chose to stay they would be pepper-sprayed, tear gassed or roughed up; if they didn't intend that, they should leave the street. Most took the advice and left.

A person observing one situation said the action of the peace team might have saved lives, or at least helped protect others from serious injury.

More than once peace team members went into tear gas to lead panicky individuals out and receive emergency attention.

Once, four riot officers came forward from their line and asked the peace team to tell the crowd that if the crowd dispersed, the police would disperse and people could soon come back into the neighborhood to get their cars.

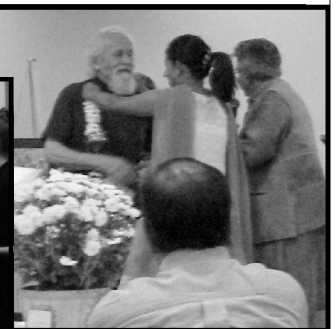
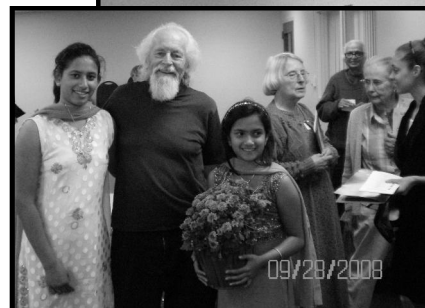
After it was over, St. Paul Chief of Police John Harrington commended the MnPT for its work!

If you are interested in being on domestic peace teams, or helping create a peace team in your community, contact Michigan Peace Team.

Lifetime Achievement Award for Peace

Reported by Liz Walters, IHM

On the occasion of the 36th anniversary of the East Lansing-based International Service Society-A Humanitarian Service of Vaishnava Center for Enlightenment, and in celebration of Gandhi's 139 birthday, Peter Dougherty was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award for Peace. As the award was presented, Shrikumar Poddar, Director of the Center, said, "Peter Dougherty is the Gandhi of America!" Attendees at the event agreed wholeheartedly!



Training Offers Opportunity to See the World with New Eyes

by Mary Hanna

“I don’t really know what to expect.”

This is perhaps the most frequent comment we, as nonviolence trainers, hear as people enter the gathering space for our day-long Basic Nonviolence trainings. Some come in the hopes of becoming better parents or spouses; some come to become more effective activists; some come with the forethought that’d like to join one of our Domestic or International peace teams. And some come out of pure curiosity: What could you possibly learn in 8 hours that has the potential to affect the rest of your life?

On September 20th, 35 people gathered at St. Mary Magdalene’s Church in Brighton, Michigan to explore just that.



A typical Basic Nonviolence training becomes anything *but* “typical”. The workshops organically morph into what is wanted and needed by the collective that’s come for training. Certainly there are key components that are always present: honing communication skills, learning ways to deescalate an enraged person, sharing stories of how a certain approach or technique was effective in stopping violence and opening up space for dialogue.... But what comes through time and time again is that each person is able to take from the training things they feel have the

capacity to change the way they look at the world – and each other.

“What I liked best was that you kept us interested the whole time” said one attendee. “I loved hearing people’s stories of things they tried (to stop violence) that worked”, said another. “The group discussions were wonderful” said an older woman. A younger man commented ““I usually *hate* role plays, but these really helped me see how to use the skills you guys were teaching”.



By the end of the day, folks were a bit tired, but all said they found the time spent learning nonviolent intervention techniques well worth it. “It was very enlightening and informative”, said one participant. “It made me realize how we as people really **can** change the world.

And in the final analysis, that is the goal of every nonviolence training we offer.

If you are interested in learning more about joining, or hosting, a nonviolence training in your area, please contact Michigan Peace Team. We’re just waiting for your call.

Meet Nkechi, MPT Intern for Fall Semester 2008



Nkechi Okefor is an intern with the Michigan Peace Team for the fall semester of 2008. She is currently a senior at Michigan State University in Cultural Anthropology and Peace and Justice Studies. Nkechi is presently applying to Graduate schools in order to research Activist Anthropology in the African Diaspora. She is interested in Applied Anthropology because it is an avenue where ethnographic fieldwork research can inform and guide political policies that affect citizens in local as well as international locations. Nkechi has been an activist in the Lansing area for 7 years, and would like to combine her activist initiatives with her scholarly endeavors. She believes that positive economic and social change can evolve peacefully through careful research that considers different historical contexts, cultural differences, and environmental issues that affect different locations in different ways. Nkechi believes that interning with Michigan Peace Team will help her learn how organizations are actively promoting nonviolence in areas of conflict.

Michigan Peace Team at the Republican National Convention: News Coverage Comparisons

by Nkechi Okefor

Where do you get your news? How do you know if the news source is covering the full spectrum of the story? Are major news networks biased, or representing news stories with an agenda or an opinion attached?

We have to consider who owns news companies, and who benefits from picking a specific political side of an issue. News stations and websites have the power to decide which stories to report, how people are portrayed in the story, and which pictures to display. These decisions can create an entertaining story, but they can also represent the people in the story in a negative way.

Michigan Peace Team members went to the Republican National Convention in Minneapolis to help train the Minnesota peace team, and to prevent violence between the RNC protesters and the police force. Father Peter Dougherty, and other team members were arrested, along with many other nonviolent citizens and journalists.

MPT's Intern Director Mary Hanna suggested that I research media coverage on the RNC protests and arrests.

Here is the list of independent media sources and major news networks that were examined:

- MediaMouse.org
- Independent Media Center at Indymedia.org
- Free Speech Television at FreeSpeech.org
- Submedia.TV/
- LinkTV.org
- DemocracyNow.org
- Truthout.org
- CNN
- Fox News
- USA Today
- Lansing State Journal

My research revealed that the Independent websites portrayed the RNC protesters as peaceful citizens, and that protesters and journalists were harassed by riot gear wearing police officers. Whereas, the larger news networks either portrayed the protesters as violent, or as pests, or they didn't report the presence of the activists at all!

Media Mouse reported that renowned journalist Amy Goodman was arrested by police officers, and that her media pass was

snatched away from her by the Secret Service. LinkTV.org posted recorded footage of Amy Goodman receiving calls from her camera crew while the crew was being arrested. Goodman was on the Republican Convention floor in the middle of an interview when she received phone calls from her camera crew. The live footage also shows Goodman's attempt to rescue her crew from arrest, but the police took her media pass and handcuffed her. One of her crew members had a bloody nose, and blood on their arms. Goodman is a reporter for DemocracyNow.org.

Indymedia.org displayed news bits that are convenient if the reader does not have the time to read long articles. The news bits gave quick information and the option to click on a link to read more. The Independent Media Center provided news on police brutality during the RNC protests, mass pepper spraying by the police, and complaints that the police singled out transgender activists in arrests and in the holding cells. The police also removed minority activists from the holding cells for questioning if they had "foreign sounding" names.

Continued on page 5

Meet Kati, MPT Intern for Fall Semester 2008



Kati Garrison commenced her internship with the Michigan Peace Team in September of 2008. She came to the MPT as a recent graduate from the University of Notre Dame where she earned her bachelor's degree in Psychology and also completed an interdisciplinary minor in International Peace Studies. She hopes interning with the MPT will facilitate the effective transformation of her academic studies regarding peace movements and strategic nonviolent conflict into action. At the moment, Kati also attends classes at Michigan State University, which she describes as taking one step closer to achieving her aspiration of being accepted into graduate school. She plans to enroll in a program focusing on international nutrition, specifically geared toward working in the field of humanitarian aid. On the rare occasion when Kati finds some free time, she also enjoys reading, painting, traveling, and playing the guitar.

RNC News Coverage continued

It is astonishing that these discriminating and violent actions did not reach the major news networks.

Minneapolis business owners were forced to shut down during the convention, which community members protested against. The reaction of the community is important to pay attention to because it is still their city, their businesses, and their livelihoods at stake. These various issues need to be included in news coverage to show the whole picture of the event.

The most colorful news source is the Submedia.TV/ website, and the Free Speech TV (freespeech.org) website. These are online broadcasts that reclaim television as a source that citizens control. Music and commentary are added to create the feel of a TV show. Free Speech TV displayed footage of the concert outside of the convention. Groups like Rage Against the Machine, Anti-Flag and Dead Prez performed free for the Anti-RNC demonstrations. The police pulled out the sound equipment plugs to stop the concert. So,

Free Speech TV shows Rage Against the Machine using an intercom to chant and perform for the crowd. This is when the police closed in on the crowd and began arresting random people, including Michigan Peace Team members. The police used pepper spray on people, and forced handcuffed citizens to sit on the ground for hours, including Father Peter Dougherty.

CNN posted stories only on Senators McCain and Obama, but they did provide a link to watch coverage of RNC protesters. This video showed a small group of activists sitting in the streets chanting "Our Streets!" while police officers stood by watching. The scene only showed this small group of protesters, leaving out the thousands of other activists that marched in the Poor Peoples March, Immigrant Rights March, and the Labor Day Rally. The minimal coverage suggests that RNC protesters are young, few, and in resistance to the police. I couldn't find any coverage of the authorized marches for human rights in the streets around the convention. These marches need to be seen

and considered. The numbers of people that marched with a serious message are phenomenal. CNN failed to give them a voice.

USA Today did not report on RNC activists, it suggests that there weren't any protesters present. This is a news coverage flaw that affects social movements worldwide. If movements do not get covered, how will people know the inspiring work of their neighbors? The silencing of these movements keeps the public silent. We need to see what is developing in the streets so that we can be inspired to join their initiatives, and to consider different perspectives on political issues. This is the responsibility of journalists to report various sides of a conflict, so that we can see the complexity of the issue. I can go on about each news source, and what they reported, but please check and compare these sources for yourself. You have a right to know what information is available, and what information is only a half truth. Our knowledge of world conflicts relies on our access to fair, complex, diverse, and multi-dimensional news.



**October 25, 2008 6 pm-9 pm
in the DETROIT METRO AREA!
at Affirmations Community Center
209 W. Nine Mile Rd, Ferndale, MI**

*Photo Story Presentation, hors d'oeuvres,
Fun, silent auction of team photography of
the West Bank, Olive Oil and,
Door Prizes!*

Tickets \$10 -25 sliding scale, at the door or
in advance. Call Mary at the office or email
michiganpeaceteam@gmail.com

MPT International Teams to Palestine/Israel: Veterans and New Faces Needed for 2009

by Nicole Rohrkemper, MPT International Team Deployment Coordinator

In 2008 Michigan Peace Team members will have spent more than 72 "person-weeks" in the Israel/Palestine. That's 12,096 hours of nonviolence work in the West Bank alone, the time equivalent of 6 years of salaried work for one corporate executive! All this was accomplished with funds team members raised in their own communities. Perhaps most astonishing is that the total cost of fielding ten team members over the course of a year was only a *fraction* of the salary that one corporate executive. These same team members participated in over 600 collective hours of Michigan Peace Team nonviolence training, building skills that they will use and share throughout their lives, not just in the West Bank but at home in their families, workplaces and communities.

We're inspired by what our Peace Teams have accomplished in 2008, and we hope to do even more in 2009. We're proud to have established long-term team members in the field, creating the relationships and impact that are only possible under long-term conditions. We're increasing our year-round presence all the time, and we plan to place at least four short-term teams in the West Bank in the coming year (roughly Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall teams). We're exploring opportunities for more integrated community placement in one area, and balancing this possibility with our current system of working as a fairly mobile team. Additionally, while we continue to efforts in this region with increasing strength, we're always exploring possible locations for new peace teams in places of conflict all over the world.

We're growing at Michigan Peace Team—and what we can do this year is only limited by what the community can support. If you're a veteran team member, contact us about being an Anchor team member for a 2009 team. If you're new to MPT, or if you've just been waiting for the right time to be part of an international team—call or email now to get your 2009 application in *before* the busy holiday season!

If you can't be part of an international team in person, consider supporting the team by donating. The cost to field one international team member in the West Bank for one day is \$30. Consider sponsoring a day, or a week (\$210), or removing a significant obstacle for many team volunteers: the cost of airfare. A donation of \$1500 will pay the airfare for one team member in 2009. Or consider buying our professionally finished framed and matted team photography, all proceeds benefit teams-- they make great Christmas presents-- email for info! Finally, join the MPT planning and support committee for team action in the region: the Palestine/Israel Group. The group meets in person in Brighton and also by phone monthly, so it's easy to contribute; just call or email for

**For information or to APPLY for an international teams,
or for info on MPT's Palestine/Israel Group,
call or email Nicole at NicoleR.mpt@gmail.com, or (586) 419-1070**

LOOKING FOR GIFT IDEAS? ... CHRISTMAS ... HANUKKAH ... WINTER SOLTICE ...

We invite you to consider gift-giving that helps Palestinian olive growers and artisans, and the peace work of Michigan Peace Team.

Gifts are available at Michigan Peace Team and easy to order by means of email, a telephone call, or a click on the MPT Web Page. And, gift possibilities are many and varied:



Palestinian Olive Oil

This exquisite product of Palestine is a chef's delight. It's available via Michigan Peace Team. Your purchase helps Palestinian farmers whose income has been devastated by the occupation of Palestine.

Prices: A 25.4 oz bottle costs \$20; a 16.9 oz bottle costs \$15.

Cross-stitch Embroidery

The popularity of Palestinian cross-stitch embroidery rests with its beauty and its association with the Palestine of the past. The designs are derived from sources as diverse as ancient mythology and foreign occupations and date as far back as the Canaanites, who lived in the area over three thousand years ago. The handicraft also symbolizes the traditional rural lifestyle of Palestine, much of which was lost after the 1948. **Prices:** With regard to the goods currently available at Michigan Peace Team, prices vary depending on both the artistry and quality. Presently the price range is \$10 to \$50.



Handcrafted Olive Wood Items

Olivewood is a local material found throughout Palestine. Wood carvings are made from the branches of olive trees which are pruned at the completion of the olive picking season. It takes a six-step-process and 45 days for a piece of wood to turn into a beautiful piece of art. It is a skilled trade that requires 6-7 years of training for one to become a professional crafts-person. In addition to the handmade quality of the item, the grain of the wood gives each piece striking beauty..



Olive wood candle holders, statues, crèches, rosaries an-many other items are available at MPT. By purchasing these crafts you help Palestinian

artisans to be economically empowered, and you help to support the preservation of the cultural heritage.

Prices: Prices vary depending on both the artistry and quality. With regard to the goods currently available at Michigan Peace Team, the price range is \$5 to \$50.

Olive Oil Soap

In Palestine soap making combines commons commercial activity with community work. The resulting product is outstanding. Handmade olive oil soap soothes as it cleanses.

Photography-Peace Teams in Action

Also available are fine frame-ready prints and professionally framed and matted photography taken by peace teams in action both locally and in the West Bank. To view a selection of what is available contact Nicole at NicoleR.mpt@gmail.com

MPT and Café Press Gifts

You may also want to explore our Café Press Gift Shop link on the MPT Home Page <http://www.michiganpeaceteam.org/>. There you will find Michigan Peace Team hats, shirts, children's clothes, tote bags, messenger bags, wall clocks, mugs, pillows, and even a gift for your pet!.



Up-coming MPT Presentations:

Let us know if you want to schedule a presentation

Date	Starting Time	Location
8-Oct	9:30 AM	Siena Heights College, Adrian
11-Oct	9:00 AM	Pax Christi at Higgins Lake
15-Oct	6:00 PM	St Peter' Episcopal Church, Detroit
25-Oct	6:00 PM	209 W. Nine Mile Rd. Ferndale
30-Oct	5:30 PM	Grand Valley State University

In addition ...

Each week, four to five presentations are given to small groups around the state, and,

There are requests for presentations at

- MSU Arab Cultural Society, E. Lansing
- St. Gerard's Church, Lansing
- St. Michael's Church, Grand Ledge



Michigan Peace Team

1516 Jerome St.
Lansing, MI 48912-2220
Phone: 517-484-3178
FAX: 517 484-4219
Web: michiganpeaceteam.org

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Dear Friends of MPT,

Thank you for your commitment to peace with justice. Thank you for loving Earth Community. Thank you for your gifts of time and energy on behalf of MPT. Thank you for your financial support.

The good work of MPT continues because of your support and generosity. We deeply appreciate all you do.

Your grateful MPT Staff, Interns, Volunteer Staff

MPT Staff, Interns, and, Staff-Volunteers Include ...

Email Addresses ...

Rev. Peter Dougherty	PeterDougherty.mpt@gmail.com
Kati Garrison	michiganpeaceteam@gmail.com
Darryl Haynes	michiganpeaceteam@gmail.com
Mary Hanna	MaryHanna.mpt@gmail.com
Mary Ellen Jeffreys	michiganpeaceteam@gmail.com
Loretta Johnston	michiganpeaceteam@gmail.com
Martha Larsen, RSM	michiganpeaceteam@gmail.com
Walter Niewiadomski	WaltN.mpt@gmail.com
Nkechi Okefor	michiganpeaceteam@gmail.com
Nicole Rohrkemper	NicoleR.mpt@gmail.com
Patricia Valaer	michiganpeaceteam@gmail.com
Liz Walters, IHM	ElizabethWalters.mpt@gmail.com
Mark Zussman	MarkZussman.mpt@gmail.com

**We invite you to let us know your preference regarding MPT newsletter delivery
If you have a preference, please detach, and mail to Michigan Peace Team**

For the future:

- I would prefer to receive the MPT Newsletter in electronic form, via my email
- I want to continue receiving the Michigan Peace Team Newsletter via postal services, like this one



1516 Jerome St.
Lansing, MI 48912-2220

**NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
LANSING MI
PERMIT #68**

Return Service Requested