

Michigan Peace Team

Michigan Peace Team
808 W. Barnes
Lansing, MI 48910
517 484-3178

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Freedom Never Comes With Any Warranty by Paula Marie Deubel

Few historic moments were as moving or quietly powerful as demonstrations ending Hosni Mubarak's 29-year reign in Egypt. Like a relentless flow of water carving out a new path into the earth – drop by drop and tear by tear – the people of Egypt spilled into the streets with almost surreal dignity and grace.

Hundreds of civilian activists were tragically killed before their sacrifice bore fruit. Then smoothly, as if almost fated, the army dropped its arms and on February 11, 2011, history turned on its tide; a new transition, the outcome of which still remains unknown, was born in a wave of beauty.

Egypt was suddenly transformed, peacefully, mostly by the daring hands of pacifists.

There are, of course, no absolutes in Egypt's near future, but genuine democracy never holds such guarantees. Dangers and setbacks are to be expected, not feared. Patience, struggles, and additional trials will certainly be required in order to define Egypt's change.

Freedom rarely prances in on a white-winged horse, rather, it comes kicking and rearing like an uncontrolled wild stallion needing to be gradually tested, and then steadily ridden. Security and freedom do not always exist side by side, and, in many ways, are incompatible. With any great change always come the necessary doubts, risks, and many unknowns.

For example, there have been reports that the U.S. may have secretly backed the Egyptian uprising (*The Telegraph News*, 5/24/2011). It will take a very long while for all the facts and final outcome to appear. Certainly, both negative and positive happenings in the Middle East are still to emerge. Presently, however, most Egyptians seem to be enjoying results of their honorable and nonviolent activism.

(Continued on page 2)



Freedom (continued from page 1)

It seems that freedom can be happily contagious. Egypt announced it will open the crossing to Gaza, finally allowing a delicious taste of freedom to Palestinians, too. It will be the first time to view life outside of tiny Gaza for many young Palestinians, because of previous strict Israeli control.



The *Guardian* reports an explosion of creativity and art in Egypt since the toppling of Mubarak. Creative outlets are the cultural backbone of a country, considered healthy signs of open expression in any society. In fact, it is often the simple poet or artist who becomes most dangerous to the dictatorship itself. And, although attempts have been made to stifle this expression of spirit, the hope is undying.

Egyptian activist and artist, Ganzeer, spoke to the *Guardian* on May 19, 2011:

But culturally what we're seeing now is people, for the first time in their lives, taking control of the space around them and expressing themselves publicly in every way. There's a conversation going on in Egypt right now, and it's almost impossible for anyone to mute it

This feeling deserves a celebration because it's what tens of thousands of Egyptians longed for. Like any other place in the world, democracy must be continuously tended by its people and the challenges met.

Democracy does not come with a certified warranty and freedom cannot be forced. When capturing democracy, its "tamelessness" and stability naturally come last, just like taming the wild horse – it still must be allowed to run to be happy, to retain its own character and be itself. Sometimes it may go astray, or escape, but that's not the point when chasing winged horses or the dream of freedom,

Comparing Egypt with the Tragic Experiment of Iraq

A yoke of democracy was placed upon a shocked and unprepared Iraq by an invading and uninvited country. Even today, Iraq's enforced "democracy" remains fragile and inconsistent. It came on the wings of a mass foreign bombardment, followed by occupation, violence, and civil war. Such "liberation" aroused much fear and resistance, instead of inspiration.

The ancient Tigris and Euphrates became polluted and thousands of people died of disease. The long war against Iraq (since 1991) also killed marine life and migrating birds, although the negative effects of warfare on our environment is something rarely discussed. Rather than finding unity in Iraq, there was total chaos. This is not to say Iraq will not eventually overcome its demons, but Iraq remains an example that a forced democracy by merciless bombing is not possible, because it is antithesis to its own ideals.

The Iraqis, too, are highly inspirational in what they were forced to endure through long-suffering years. So many hopeful people of civil courage in the Middle East have become symbolic of unity and stir the inspirations and empathy of people all around the world.

Paula Marie Deubel is a published author, poet and a fantastic painter. She served on a MPT peace team to the West Bank. Upon returning Paula Marie continued to give of her many gifts to MPT's vision and mission. She is a member of the MPT Newsletter Working Group and Annual MPT Signature Event.

Michigan Peace Team Opportunities - Join us!

MPT International Peace Teams to the West Bank are forming for Fall and Winter 2011. Applications and FAQs for potential teamers are available on the MPT Web Page. Click on michiganpeaceteam.org.

Opportunities to participate in a MPT Nonviolence Training:

- July 16: Basic 8-Hour Training in Lansing
- August 19-21: Advanced Training in Lansing
- September 24: Basic 8-Hour Training in Saginaw
- October 14-16: Advanced Nonviolence Training in Lansing
- November 5: Basic 8-Hour Training in Lansing

Call Mary Hanna at 517 484-3178 to sign-up:



Arab Spring has Roots in Palestine

by Annette Thomas



As the Arab Spring continues to cause a ripple effect throughout the Middle East, there is increased speculation whether or not Palestine would eventually climb on board. Unbeknownst to most of the world, a small village of 1,800 residents just twelve kilometers west of Ramallah is in fact widely considered to be the true birthplace of the Arab Spring. Familiar to thousands of peace activists and people of conscience around the world, the sleepy village of Bil'in has been holding peaceful demonstrations since 2005, when a handful of international activists, Israeli anarchists and locals began gathering in the town square after Friday prayers to organize non-violent protests against the illegal Israeli settlements, separation barrier and the uprooting of citrus trees and ancient olive groves. Townspeople formed a popular committee against the wall, which was erected under the pretense of providing security for the settlements, but is viewed as a continued illegal land grab. Now thousands of people from around the world have made the journey to Bil'in and other villages, which have also followed their example.

Armed with bullhorns, Palestinian flags (some almost a city block long), colorful handmade signs, cameras and a strong determination, the people, young and old, take to the streets every week in an unforgettable show of solidarity. Some travel thousands of miles to offer support - others are familiar faces who participate week after week. A common sight is a young wheelchair-bound man, paralyzed from the waist down by a sniper's bullet during the Second Intifada, who oftentimes leads the demonstrators, completely undaunted by the waiting rows of Israeli soldiers. The protesters march through the streets singing, laughing, chanting - some have chosen to bring musical instruments with which to regale the soldiers, maybe to remind them that they could all be neighbors, not enemies. The mood is festive

and uplifting, yet their peaceful protests are met with tear gas canisters, rubber bullets, sticks, violence and arrests. Demonstrators are carried away and forced into waiting Israeli military jeeps. Attempting to reason with the soldiers is futile - trying to convince them that they have a choice to be conscientious objectors, impossible. Hundreds of people have been arrested - one, a father of five was charged with possession of illegal arms. His crime? Collecting spent tear gas canisters to create a peace sign. Many have been injured, and Bassam Abu Rahma and his sister Jawaher lost their lives - he killed by a high-velocity tear gas canister and she died from the effects of inhaling tear gas. Former President Jimmy Carter, Desmond Tutu and various other foreign dignitaries made the trip to Bil'in and visited the grave site of Bassam to pay their respects and show support for the Palestinian cause.

The occupation will continue, the settlements will expand, the world will still turn a blind eye and Israel will rule, but only for a little while longer, because the courageous people of Bil'in will march every Friday, after prayers, through the village, past the olive groves and citrus trees down the winding roads singing, laughing and chanting, knowing that one day, freedom too, will be theirs.



Annette Thomas is a mother of two wonderful children. She is a writer and activist. She participated in a MPT peace team to the West Bank and on numerous occasions traveled on her own to the West Bank and Gaza. Annette is a member of MPT's Newsletter Working Group and Signature Event Planning Committee. In her hometown, Annette is affectionately known as a rabble rouser!

Defining Moments, Messages, Movements by Liz Walters

Experience teaches that defining moments happen at the juncture of fear and hope, challenge and opportunity. These moments help us to clarify who we are and what we are about. Collectively we ask: In light of what is happening, how will we respond? Will we be true to the best that is in us? Or will our response contradict our humanity and our interconnectedness with the wider community?

A defining moment for a Detroit neighborhood and a local gang occurred during a recent wake and funeral. The gang leader was killed by members of another gang, and the man who was killed had children in the school where I was teaching. Two of us from the school attended the wake service. As we approached the funeral parlor, we were stunned by the message that greeted us. On the shirt of each gang member their leader was pictured and these words were proclaimed: "Rest in peace! We'll take revenge!"

Thankfully, revenge is not the only message that was lifted up. The next day at the funeral service, populated by hundreds of gang members, a young priest challenged each of us to clarify who we are, and to focus on what matters most. He courageously preached the Gospel of nonviolence and love of enemy. He explained that the call to take revenge violates the heart of the Christian message. He challenged everyone in the church to abandon plans for violent action. He urged each of us to embrace nonviolent action.

As I think about lessons learned from this death, wake, and funeral, what saddens me is the realization that all too often politicians embrace gangland ways. This is most evident when the 'powers that be' promote fear, insecurity, hatred, and super patriotism to gain support for immoral actions like revenge, assassinations, endless wars, torture and other forms of economic and political violence. At the societal level the consequences are catastrophic. For example, during the 20th Century an estimated 187 million people died in wars and as the 21st Century unfolds there is evidence of more of the same. Perhaps this should be called "gangster foreign policy."

For our country the attack of the twin towers was a defining moment. The government's response was "bomb and invade." Soon we were at war with two Muslim nations. During the last U.S. presidential campaign, candidates proclaimed: "We'll use predator drones to kill terrorists wher-

ever they find refuge" and "We will capture and kill the leader." Both pledges are happening. Now our country is at war with four Muslim nations. At the same time many other regional and national wars rage on Mother Earth.

However, gangster foreign policy is not the only movement afoot on this beautiful planet. From 1945 to the present, Earth Community has been inspired by nonviolent great ones. The Dalai Lama, one of the great ones, lifts up two others when he says:

Mahatma Gandhi took up the ancient and powerful idea of nonviolence and made it known throughout the world. Martin Luther King Jr. followed in his footsteps. Both were regarded with suspicion by the authorities they opposed, but ultimately both achieved far reaching and significant changes in the societies in which they lived.¹

There are reports that Martin Luther King's life and work were resources to the Egyptian revolution and Gandhi and King continue to inspire movements around the planet.²

In addition, since 1945, Earth Community has witnessed more victories for nonviolence than ever before in history.³ Successes include better wages and working conditions, the abolition of violent traditions and practices, the fall of dictatorships, the repeal of unjust laws, and the rise of democratic governments.

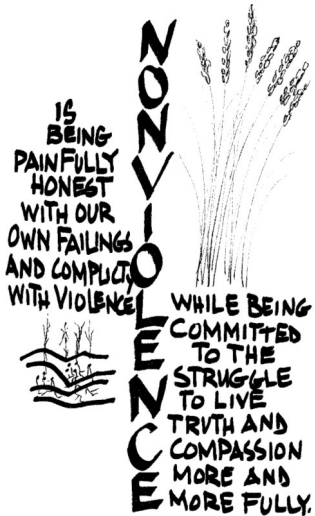
More recently we have been inspired by the Women in Liberia mass action for peace, the popular uprisings in the Tunisia and Egypt, and the gatherings of tens of thousands in Wisconsin, Ohio, Florida, Michigan and beyond. These are wonderful nonviolent examples of courage, dedication, discipline, and commitment. Unity and interconnections are also exemplified. While the mass action and popular uprisings in Liberia, Egypt and Tunisia nonviolently work for human rights denied by the dictatorships, U.S. protesters are nonviolently defending rights that had been won in long, hard struggles and are now under severe attack. The goals are different. The method, nonviolent action to achieve social change, is the same. These nonviolent actions bring new hope for greater freedom, justice and democracy to millions of people.



(Continued on page 5)

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In both good times and harsh times, we at Michigan Peace Team seek a way forward grounded in nonviolent action, adherence to the truth, unitive thinking, and compassion. With all the love in our hearts, we grieve the explosion of violence in our world today. At the same time AND with the same love, we dance with joy over the recent popular nonviolent movements.



The circumstances and issues of the day bring each and every one of us to a new defining moment. What are your questions? If you are wrestling with the grip that violence has on our country and

beyond, connect with us. We've discovered that the best way to reduce and eliminate violence is to work in peace teams. **Know that we would be delighted to have you join us at Michigan Peace Team!**

References:

¹ Kurlansky, Mark. (2006). *Nonviolence: The History of a Dangerous Idea*. [Forward by the Dalai Lama]

² Mendel, Noah, (2009). "Can a Comic book about Martin Luther King Change the Middle East?" George Mason University's History News Network <http://www.hnn.us/articles/80834.html>

³ Zunes, Stephen. "Weapons of Mass Democracy: Nonviolent Resistance Is the Most Powerful Tactic Against Oppressive Regimes." 2009. <http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/learn-as-you-go/weapons-of-mass-democracy> Also see Gene Sharp , *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, 1973.

Liz Walters is an IHM Sister, and she is on the staff at MPT. Liz coordinates MPT's Education toward Empowerment Program and helps to organize the domestic peace teams. She is a life long peace activist. Over the years she has been on MPT peace teams to Haiti, the West Bank, Gaza, Juarez, Mexico and Cairo, Egypt..

Being Part of MPT is Life-Giving—Join us!

As people experience their lives being stressed by violence, unemployment, eviction, debt, and malnutrition, the peace movement is responsible to ensure that people understand the power of nonviolence. Where people are rising up, may the way be nonviolent.

Our MPT Mission:

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

Our MPT 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 participants



MPT Nonviolence Training



MPT Outreach and Education - the vision and practice of nonviolence



MPT Domestic Peace Teams



MPT International Peace Teams

From Tears to Transformation ...

MPT Joins March for Neighborhood Peace Zones by Kim Redigan



It's time to grieve. It's time to heal. It's time to put the "neighbor" back in the "hood." Thus the call went out across the city of Detroit inviting people to join a Mothers' Memorial Day March organized by Detroit Peace Zones for Life (PZL) on Saturday, May 28 at Brigard Boulder Park on the far eastside of Detroit. Peace Zones for Life organizer Sandra Hines says, "This was a day to ask the question: 'How can we create peace in our families, our neighborhoods, and our city? This was a day for those who *give* life to *bring* life back to the city."

Led by Cora Mitchell, whose 15-year-old son, Robert was tased and killed by Warren police on Good Friday, 2009, adults and children from the neighborhood and beyond participated in a powerful day of healing and transformation as a first step in organizing neighborhood peace zones in Detroit and surrounding communities. After the loss of her son, Ms. Mitchell has called for reconciliation rather than retribution and justice rather than revenge. Ron Scott from PZL calls Mitchell "the Rosa Park of the Peace Zones for Life," a fitting description for a woman whose faith and spirit have allowed her to transform her tears of grief into actions of transformation for other families in Detroit.

Peace Zones for Life (PZL) is an outgrowth of the Detroit Coalition Against Police Brutality and a project to which Michigan Peace is deeply committed. MPT's involvement in the Mothers' Memorial Day March is only the first step. MPT will partner with PZL in neighborhood peacemaking initiatives, including nonviolence trainings that will help prepare Neighborhood Peace Builders to organize conflict resolution centers where neighbors can resolve their conflicts among themselves before having to call the police and Peace Circles where people can explore peace within themselves, their families, their neighborhood, their city, and their world. "We need safe spaces where we can resolve differences," says Scott. "People need to develop relationships with each other and trust each other and then people will take care of each other. Today's march is a step in that direction."

Despite the cloudy skies early in the day, by late morning the sun was shining brightly as participants gathered at the park's pavilion, where an art center for children had been set up, a mural asking neighborhoods to "picture peace" was posted, and the bar-b-que sizzled for an after-march picnic. The morning began with the soulful music of jazz great Angie Smith and a prayer by Rev. Bill Wylie-Kellermann followed by an activity involving several balls of yarn that illustrated the interconnectedness of all present. After a few talks, including the moving words of Cora Mitchell and taking the "Restoring the Neighbor Back to the Hood" pledge (see below), marchers took to the neighborhood streets bearing PZL banners and children's peace signs calling for peace in the neighborhood.



The march itself was powerful, especially when marchers gathered on the lawn of the abandoned home in front of which Robert Mitchell was killed. After a long moment of silent prayer, Cora Mitchell hung a Peace Zones for Life sign on the front of the house. Along the way, the march also passed by Trix Elementary School where another victim of tragic violence, Ayanna Jones, attended classes before being killed in a police raid at her home just over a year ago. Marchers chanted, "Peace Zones for Life" and "Put the Neighbor Back in the Hood" and passed out PZL posters to interested neighbors.

Upon returning to the picnic site, food was served and people were asked to commit to one or more actions of a ten-point program developed by PZL. The ten points include:

Tears to Transformation (continued from page 6)

I will . . .

1. Say hello to ten people a day.
2. Text a peace message to my friends each day.
3. Recruit young people to become Peace Builders.
4. Join a Peace Circle.
5. Text or call friends and invite them to join a Peace Circle.
6. Clean up around my home.
7. Write a peace song, poem, prayer.
8. Train to become a Peace Builder.
9. Distribute Literature about peace in my neighborhood.
10. Report what I've done for peace today on the PZL website.

Please see the PZ: YouTube video released on the day of the march:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2QVtgRqxBCI>

Restoring the Neighbor Back to the Hood Pledge

I pledge allegiance to do my part in restoring the neighbor back to the hood.

I pledge to develop myself, my family and my household to the greatest extent possible of being a shining example of being a husband, father, son, brotha, wife, mother, daughter, and sister in my neighborhood.

I will learn all that I can in order to give my best to improve the quality of my neighborhood.

I will work diligently to honor my family in my neighborhood with good deeds and treat my neighbors as my extended family.

I will keep myself mentally sound, spiritually grounded and physically fit; building a strong body, mind, and spirit that will exemplify positivity and productivity in my neighborhood.

I will unselfishly share my time, knowledge, resources and wisdom with my neighbors (young and old) in order to build and maintain a healthy neighborhood.

I will do my part to keep my neighborhood clean and safe.

I will discipline myself to direct my energies thoughtfully and constructively to maintain peace, harmony, and love in my neighborhood.

I will train myself to never hurt or allow anyone to harm someone in my neighborhood for an injustice cause or through negative behaviors of stealing, gun violence, verbal abuse, police brutality, selling drugs, rape or any other social ill that works to destroy my neighborhood,

This is my pledge to do my part by being a caring neighbor in my neighborhood by working to keep my neighborhood a peace zone instead of a war zone. (written by Yusif Shakur)

Kim Redigan is a mother of four wonderful children. By profession Kim is a high school teacher and she is highly regarded in peace and social justice communities across the State of Michigan. Kim has served on three MPT International Peace Teams to the West Bank and Cairo, Egypt and on many domestic peace teams. In addition she is a presenter for MPT, Co-Chair of MPT's Signature Event, and a member of MPT's Education toward Empowerment Committee, Newsletter Working Group, and Training Committee.



Clarity of Nonviolence: Here Is My Point

by Peter Dougherty

I grant that most people on earth do not believe in total Nonviolence, sometimes referred to as "pacifism." The concept means that we just do not do violence to people, other creatures, or the earth. It also means that we commit to embracing positive compassion for all. It likewise means that we tenaciously seek to know and live the truth as best we can.

My main mentor, Jesus of Nazareth, taught nonviolent love. The Greek translation of the Aramaic word is Agape. He taught and practiced love of enemies, even as *he confronted* his violent adversaries and got killed for it. The bumper sticker captures his challenge well: "When Jesus said 'love your enemies,' I'm pretty sure he meant 'don't kill them.'"

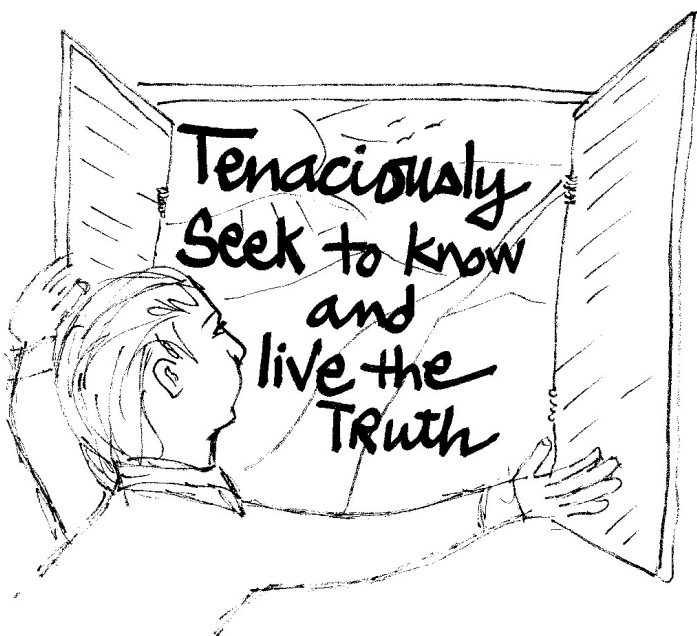
The Buddha, Nobel Laureate Mairead Corrigan, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, the Dalai Lama, Dorothy Day, and so many great people, have lived this commitment to total nonviolence.

Many think of this as naive. Most truly wonderful, loving people will say that we should be as nonviolent as possible, but that there are cases where we must resort to violence in order to responsibly protect human lives and values.

I totally understand this. After all, I am a human living in the mess of life - my own and others' - on this planet.

But here's what happens. What starts out as an exception expands through circumstances and rationalizations, and ends up with violence accepted as the norm.

In contrast, once we accept nonviolence as a committed way



of life, a light goes on that makes many things clear about the deception of violence.

Let's take war, for example. Aeschylus said: "In war, truth is the first casualty." Creating lying propaganda is a necessary part of warfare. We must turn an ordinary person who shuns killing into a killing machine. We must demonize the enemy, or people won't get behind the war effort. We must glorify war to make it palatable. We must hide the body count and numbers of critically wounded. In praying that we win the war, we are in fact praying that our soldiers sufficiently destroy the enemies' bodies, homes, infrastructure and seats of power, so that they will finally give up. And then we do mental gymnastics to avoid being conscious that this is what we are in fact deciding to do in our war.

Violence subtly and not so subtly seduces us. We become addicted to it in so many ways, unaware that this is so. We more and more depend on it to save us. Conversely, when we reject the violent option, we can better "see" how it seduces, because we have stepped outside the rules of the game and can have a clearer perspective.

Nonviolence is not being deluded into thinking that we are better than others. On the contrary, it is being painfully honest with our own failings and complicity with violence, while being committed to the struggle to live truth and compassion more and more fully.

A life commitment to nonviolence makes us less susceptible to the entrapment of violence.

Like other once unthinkable radical ideas, e.g., women are equal to men; people of color are equal to whites, we must boldly plant the idea and then nurture the conviction that we must end all violence on the planet.

I believe that as more people reject the use of violence in seeking:

1. to transform ourselves,
 2. to build cooperative and healing nonviolent communities, and,
 3. to employ nonviolent methods to overthrow the systems of domination and greed -
- we then have a better chance of ending the cycle of violence and creating a world community of peace.

Peter Dougherty is co-founder of Michigan Peace Team and he is on the MPT staff. Over the years, Peter participated in 25 international peace teams and hundreds of domestic peace teams. Peter envisions a world where it becomes easier to love and a lot harder to hate. It's a world where learning nonviolence means that we dedicate our hearts, mind, time, and resources.

A Different Kind of Power

by Jasiu Milanowski

Because I have been drawn to the work of M.K. Gandhi for decades, I have been re-visiting some of the exceptional people that Gandhi attracted to the independence campaign in India, notably Vinoba Bhave. If you do not know of him, please spend some time getting acquainted with his life story and accomplishments. Not only a scholar who wrote several books, he initiated the "Bhoodhan" in 1951, the land gift movement that redistributed acreage to the landless poor of India. His several years of walking up and down and across India also touched the gangs and bandits of a region of the subcontinent known as the Chambal Valley. This is an area that "officialdom" was too frightened to enter. However, Vinoba, with the honor of being Gandhi's "spiritual" heir and his loving appeal of gentle...

gentler...gentlest, convinced them to renounce their lives of terror and violence, thus dropping their weapons at his feet in the 1960's. I wrote him in the 1970's with a letter addressed to Vinoba Bhave, (no address, just India) and he got it.

Vinoba advocated revolution and people's politics, not governance by politicians. If you have ever attended a MPT basic nonviolence session, we give a number of successful examples of people power that I equate with Vinoba's stress on people's politics. Let me guide you away from Vinoba momentarily and inform you about a fine writer and outstanding nonviolent activist - Starhawk. She summarizes it briefly and simply. She says there are three kinds of power - Power Over, Power With, and Power from Within.

My commentary after much reflection is absolute agreement with this addition. Because of my strong principles against doing harm to anyone and my resistance to war making, I decided fifty years ago to surrender my U.S. citizenship when this county was attempting to obliterate the people of Vietnam. I personally am done with the Power Over mentality. It is not only hurtful and stupid, but the end result is Hiroshima or something worse, maybe chemical or biological war. I not only object and resign and refuse but I will actively interfere with anyone's intention to harm or kill others!

Regarding **Power With People**, many societies, including our own, have not explored nearly enough what we can do

in working with others as equals. My suspicion is that this is the very essence of being fully human.

As to **Power from Within**, I met a few people, who, although unaware of it, projected profound inner strength and were not aware of it, including Dorothy Day, Dr. King, Cesar Chavez, Dave Dillinger, Ammon Hennacy, Walter Brueggemann, Hosea Williams, Phil Berrigan, A. J. Muste, a couple of Quakers, Thich Nhat Hanh, a few Gandhians, and some others. Perhaps you have met someone who has that Power from Within. Although I never met her, from what I read about Rosa Parks, she was gifted with that special quality.

Before I return to Vinoba's non-violence, I feel compelled to give you my meaning of revolution, which is not about some foolish

nonsense to execute anyone...in fact it is just the opposite. Here's Jasiu Milanowski's definition: Revolution is a new way of life for everyone.

Vinoba urges abandonment of government by politicians. He says that we have become deluded by a false notion that governments are our saviors. Vinoba writes, "People imagine that they cannot do without government, that they would be lost without one. I can understand that they cannot do without agriculture or handicrafts that they cannot get on without love and culture, music and literature but governments do not fall into this category."

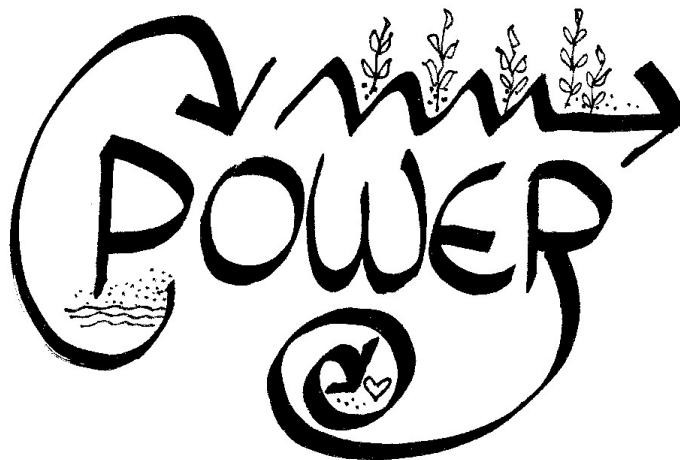
Vinoba presents us with a novel suggestion and questions.



WSF: Another World is Possible

“All the politicians, administrations and bureaucrats should be given a leave of absence. Would any of the everyday work of the world come to an end? Would the farmer no longer milk cows? Would the gardener no longer cultivate vegetables? Would men and women stop getting together and having babies?” If we insist that we are human beings and that we do not need government to poke and guide us, then we can manage our own affairs, destroying the popular fantasy that governance is indispensable.

Continued on page 10



Power (continued from page 9)

Vinoba makes a couple of other points that I believe are worthwhile. One is a question: "Vinoba, is it true that you desire no government at all?" His reply? "I want self government." And then he details his two main ideas: One, "Never allow any outside force to exercise control over your own self; two, do not coerce anyone else. No submission. No exploitation." He explains that this comes about in our mind and heart by strengthening our conscience. He continues to expand on his ideal, which is very close to what H. D. Thoreau writes in "Civil Disobedience," as well as Leo Tolstoy, [The Kingdom of God is Within You](#).

The goal would be to have no army, police, prisons or penalties. Humans would attend to their own affairs, listening respectfully to one another and be guided by moral considerations.

My earthling sermonette is that we continue to reject violence and war making, governments, lying, capitalism, greed nationalism, power over anyone, and that we cling to Truth, Love, Simplicity, Nonviolence, the Sermon on the Mount and standing up for each other.

Please call me at home if you have any comments that you would care to clarify or discuss. [evenings 616 399-4642]

Jasiu Milanowski is co-founder of Michigan Peace Team and has served as a trusted member of the Core Community since the inception of MPT. Because of his lifetime work as a hands-on nonviolent activist and resister, Jasiu is a renowned peacemaker. Throughout his life, he has worked side by side with many of the great peacemakers that we read about and study.

On Second Thought, from Tom Lumpkin

Nancy Ayotte, a member of the MPT Newsletter Working Group invited Tom Lumpkin to write for this newsletter. In response to Nancy, while sharing his need to decline, Tom also offered two poignant points about the work at hand. We shared these with you The conversation continues!

Dear Nancy,

I was pleased to be invited to do an article for the MPT newsletter. But, after giving it some very serious thought for 24 hours, I've decided to decline. I feel my day-to-day responsibilities are stretching me to my present attention and energy limits.

Recently I was given a Merton quote from a good friend who obviously felt it applied to me. Part of it goes like this:

There is a pervasive form of modern violence which the idealist fighting for peace by nonviolent methods most easily succumbs: activism and over-work....To allow oneself to be carried away by a multitude of conflicting concerns, to commit oneself to too many projects, to want to help everyone in everything is to succumb to violence....The frenzy of the activist neutralizes his/her own work, because it kills the root of inner wisdom which makes work fruitful.

Having said that, I do admit to wondering about a theological/biblical question. Given in our day the growing number of "successful" nonviolent acts that have produced more or less immediate fruits (like the Arab Spring), yet still living within a worldwide individualistic mentality that regards domination as the way to security (like the national

celebration over the killing of bin Laden), how will the reign of God ultimately arrive? In an evolving, more Teilhardian way, as humanity grows into a perspective that equates security with being connected to everything else and it becomes "natural" to think in nonviolent ways? Or, [in some other way] in the face of human refusal to see our interrelatedness and continue to stress our separateness and the consequent necessity to dominate?

Seems to me you can find biblical/theological reasons for both. But it's interesting to me to think about it- What IS the meaning of living nonviolently in this present age? Part of an evolving creation? Or a prophetic protest to the more or less sustained sin of the powers and principalities, which we will battle till the very end? Pretty abstract stuff, eh?

And I certainly have no answers!

Tom Lumpkin is an outstanding peace maker and a life-long scholar-activist. Also, he is a priest, a member of Detroit Peace Community, and founding member of Day House, the Detroit Catholic Worker Community.



Nonviolent Action in Juarez, Mexico by Julie Slowik

Michigan Peace Team is connected and committed to the people of Juarez, Mexico. In response to an invitation from the local community, MPT sent peace teams to Juarez in 2009 and in 2010. There we learned first hand that this community suffers intensely under the extreme violence delivered by the cartels and as a result of corruption in the government. However, the spirit of the people is not crushed. Presently a nonviolent movement is growing and people are engaging in nonviolent action. This movement is inspired by Javier Sicilia, one of Mexico's most renowned poets. Recently a powerful nonviolent action culminated in Juarez. Here is a description from Julie Slowik:



Dear Friends,

Six hundred people formed The Caravan for Peace with Justice and Dignity, arriving in Juarez during the night of June 9, 2011, after an eleven day journey, in 17 buses and 25 cars from Cuernavaca, Mexico City and Chihuahua. A tremendous welcome from hundreds of Juarences greeted them at the entrance of the city. The poet and writer, Javier Sicilia, whose son was killed and who is an inspiration for so many, got off the bus with many others and hugged the people. They all then proceeded to a baseball field in the neighborhood of Las Villas de Salvacar where the 15 youth were killed a year ago. There, it seemed, that another thousand people were waiting to greet them. As the visitors entered the field, they raised their posters and shouted out: "You are not alone, Juarez. We are with you!" Several mothers from Juarez talked of their grief at the violence, forced disappearance and/or death of their beloved children. About midnight Sicilia, a humble man, in his gentle but weary voice knew the words to speak.

The following day at the University hundreds of people (especially the youth) gathered to share at round tables on various themes based on the Citizen Pact which was to be signed that evening. There at the Benito Juarez Monument Sicilia shared his experience of the Caravan, travelling from state to state, visiting the victims of violence along the way: Mexico is suffering. Mexico is grieving, Mexico is demanding justice and peace from the authorities to fulfill their responsibility for which they were elected. In unity we stand.

Before leaving the city, Javier Sicilia went over the border to El Paso to meet with the many victims of violence who had escaped with their lives from Juarez, giving them his support, comfort and hope.

We are grateful for your support and prayer for the safety of our people of Juarez at this special time, and for all of Mexico. We continue our journey here with hope, knowing we are not alone in the struggle for justice.

Julie Slowik, IHM

Julie Slowik is an IHM Sister. She is an advocate for economically oppressed people. Also she is a peace, social justice, and sustainability activist. For many years Julie has lived and worked in Juarez, Mexico. Julie served on two MPT peace teams, one to Chiapas, Mexico and one to the West Bank..

"If we have walked and arrived here in silence it's because our pain is so great and so profound, and the horror that causes it so immense, that there are no words to describe it," said Javier Sicilia. "We still believe that it is possible for the country to be reborn and rise from ruin and show the agents of death that the sons and daughters of this country are standing up."



Free internet photos of the march

<http://freeinternetpress.com/story.php?sid=30110>,
Speech in Mexico City

Facebook, Conflict, Resolution

by Emily Barone



What's on Facebook? A video on the effects of Japan's earthquakes on its nuclear plants, and consequent potentially radioactive windborne particles of ash. An article on the concept of *panem et circus* as it relates to the British royal wedding. A diatribe of comments calling for the long-form certificate of authentic-

ity of Donald Trump's hair. Conspiracy theories and political farce converge on a Facebook group called "The (D) vs. (R) Illusion."

Yet the common strain of thought binding this community is neither the will to expose shadow governments nor to espouse political rhetoric: it is the will to augment the learning process of party loyalty that pervades chat sessions and wall posts on this new internet teaching tool. And what is being taught here? What replacement does this group provide, after debunking the wild mind-ride of ass and elephant? The group proposes nothing more or less than a compulsive pursuit of the truth. Sometimes under the dubious safety of the anonymity that the internet promises, members pose fearless questions to those in power: A government under whose control? Political maneuvers and economic agreements for the benefit of whom? For how long has this information been known or publically accessible? To what purpose does that action lead?

The methodology of this pursuit of truth could not be more straightforward. Some one member of the group posts an opinion on an event or issue, backed by and linked to a specific article or resource. Other members then post their opinions and supporting data or links, and, as the argument around the issue continues, information is shared. This is the group's research model, and, occasionally, it generates positive results quickly. On the rare thread in which consensus is reached after five comments, every user of the interface gains a new insight, or finds affirmation for their preexisting worldviews.

It is a far more regular occurrence, however, that threads will continue for hundreds of comments and explore disjointed tangents, as was recently the case on a comment thread pertaining to historical data on, and conflict resolution in, Israel/Palestine. Somehow, rather than culminating

in a discussion of the feasibilities of a one- or two- state solution, the conversation dwindled into unconstructive, quasi- elitist banter questioning the validity of statements made by individuals in the group who had not earned a college degree. On a microcosmical level, this is political inquiry refined to its basest elements; genuine interest and *ad hominem*.

The forms and frequency of this sort of exclusivity ought not be ignored when individuals are seeking to transcend America's false dichotomy of 'left' and 'right.' Our instincts tell us to replace one expression of power with another. "If I am not superior because I am a liberal, then I am superior because I have an advanced degree." "If I am not in the right because I am a conservative, then I am in the right because I follow the mandates of my faith." However, this method has little effect on political power parity, as it merely reconstructs the party system in a new image. Replacing one social institution for another does not repair the system of superimposed power dynamics. Rather, that conflict resolution dynamic which names and actively pursues a common goal will wear down a dominance- based establishment.

It is the fascination with active peacekeeping agreements that keeps this author quietly observing The (D) Vs. (R) Illusion Facebook group. Just as we cannot live in a constant state of socio- political conflict with our neighbors, we cannot live in said state with those whom we continually encounter in the online community. Though threads which present conflict may result in a stalemate of exhaustion, the eventual result of sharing information in this forum is a mutual respect based on cooperative effort, even the cooperative effort of debate. Through member-participatory site moderation, the group shares the responsibility for maintaining the quality of conversation, and views that responsibility as more essential to the group's continued existence than their individual loyalties. In the same way, individuals can work for peace by renouncing distractions from their goals, whether those goals are an end to war, an improved governing structure, or an excellent caliber of shop talk.

http://www.facebook.com/home.php?sk=group_117287418346165

Emily Barone is a mother of a wonderful daughter. She is a peace activist. She is a professor of philosophy and social justice at University of Detroit Mercy and at Marygrove College. In addition Emily is highly qualified in the field of social networking and in the use of technology to promote social change.

Obtaining Skills for a Nonviolent Future!

by Kellie Brandt and Peter Kalleward

The recent successful protests in Egypt and Tunisia led to overthrows of oppressive dictators in a revolutionary manner not often seen in the ever-turbulent Middle East. The protests were carried out in an incredibly organized fashion based on values of peaceful revolution carried out through active non-violent methods grounded in the belief that non-violence is the only way to create sustained peace. The organization of the protests and the methods which were used proved to be extremely effective; however, there have been instances in which disorganized and poorly executed social action have only added confusion to already chaotic environments. Organization and a base of knowledge about effective non-violent practices are imperative to creating an



arena for success and the possibility for lasting peace.

Through our outstanding Nonviolence Trainings Michigan Peace Team has a long and impressive history of providing individuals and groups with the knowledge and necessary skills to be effective in social change. Seminars are offered within our office quarterly and are constantly scheduled outside the office with faith-based and secular based organizations throughout Michigan and across the country. Michigan Peace Team offers trainings tailored specifically to the needs, backgrounds and experience levels of the participants. The Nonviolence Trainings are conducted by experienced and knowledgeable trainers who provide valuable skills from their breadth of experience. Participants will learn to make decisions through consensus, creating an inclusive atmosphere where each individual's opinions and limits are respected. The trainings also provide knowledge of nonviolent communication skills preparing trainees to verbally deescalate potentially aggressive individuals and situations. In addition to concrete skills, participants acquire a level of cultural sensitivity necessary in emotionally charged circumstances.

Finally, the attendees will have the chance to practice all the new skills they've mastered by taking part in role plays conducted by the trainers to simulate being a part of a peace team in a possibly violent situation. Among these skills, Michigan Peace Team trainers employ a multitude of additional methods to instill complete confidence in the trainees' ability to live a nonviolent lifestyle and participate in nonviolent action.

The desire for social change has existed as long as people have been hierarchically ruled, leaving their basic human rights violated. This has fueled extremely bloody and violent revolutions as well as peaceful and nonviolent uprisings. Violent action brings momentary relief from the pain inflicted by a ruling class; however, complete and lasting success and peace can only result from the absence of violence. Michigan Peace Team has long been committed to nonviolence and is dedicated to the education of individuals



interested in learning a more peaceful course in the struggle against violence infecting communities around the world.

Kellie Brandt and Peter Kalleward are members of MPT's Intern community. Their work this past semester has been extraordinary. We will miss these two wonderful young people very much as they move on in their lives and professions.



The Glorious History of Gospel Nonviolence by John Dear, SJ

Reprinted with John Dear's permission; Originally printed in the National Catholic Reporter on May 17, 2011

There is no reason to continue this senseless war in Afghanistan. We should end it immediately. That's what many people across the country are now saying.

There are only 100 Al Qaeda members left in Afghanistan, Jim Wallis wrote this week, but we still have over 100,000 American soldiers there.

"As the debate on the deficit heats up," Jim wrote, "we need to say again and again that the more than \$100 billion a year that is spent on the war is no longer sustainable. Every American should know these numbers: 100 terrorists; 100,000 troops; \$100 billion -- it just isn't adding up anymore. There are no more excuses for delaying a withdrawal of U.S. troops."

He's right. Everyone should call or write their congressional representatives and the White House to demand an immediate end to this terrible war.

This is our Easter duty -- to work as best we can for the end of war and the transformation of the culture of death into a new culture of justice, nonviolence and peace.



This week, an extraordinary new anthology on Christian peacemaking was just published which will help us with this work. It chronicles two thousand years of the Christian witness of nonviolence. I urge everyone to get it, study it, teach it, and promote it in churches and schools everywhere. It will not only encourage our efforts to stop our senseless wars; it will inspire us to join the holy

Christian lineage of peacemaking.

With essays by 116 leading Christian voices over the centuries, this book reminds us that Christianity is all about nonviolence as a way of life. Thousands, millions, have gone before us living lives of peace in discipleship to the nonviolent Jesus. This is the norm.

What we see today -- from our Republican Party bishops who support war and nuclear weapons to the millions of Catholics who support our wars and weapons -- is an aberration.

The testimonies in this book are astonishing. From the confessors and martyrs of the early church, to the voices of medieval figures like St. Benedict and St. Francis, as well as Erasmus, the Lollards, Anabaptists, and Quaker abolitionists, up to Jane Addams, Muriel Lester, Howard Thurman, Dr. King, Thomas Merton, Dorothy Day and the Berrigans, we hear a clarion call to end war and make peace, and see

an eye-popping new vision of Gospel nonviolence. This call, this vision and this history need to be reclaimed and renewed.

"You can kill us, but cannot do us any real harm," St. Justin (100-165 CE) wrote in his famous letter to the Roman emperor before being killed.

We who once killed each other not only do not make war on each other, but in order not to lie or deceive our inquisitors, we gladly die for the confession of Christ. We who were filled with war and mutual slaughter and every wickedness have each through the whole earth changed our warlike weapons -- our swords into plowshares, and our spears into implements of tillage, and now we cultivate piety, righteousness, philanthropy, faith, and hope which we have from God through the One who was crucified.

"I am committed to serve my Lord," St. Maximilian told his judge in the year 295, according to the court record, just before being killed for refusing to enlist in the Roman military. "I cannot serve in an army of this world. I am a Christian."

"Our country is the world, our countrymen and women are all humankind," William Lloyd Garrison, the great abolitionist, wrote in 1838. "We can allow no appeal to patriotism, to revenge any national insult or injury. The Prince of Peace, under whose stainless banner we rally, came not to destroy, but to save, even the worst of enemies. He has left us an example, that we should follow his steps."

"I am opposed to war because I am a believer in Christianity," Frederick Douglass wrote in 1846.

I am opposed to war because I am a lover of my race. The first gleam of Christian truth that beamed upon my dark mind after having escaped the clutches of those who held me in slavery was accompanied by the spirit of love. I felt at that moment as if I were embracing the whole world in the arms of love and affection. I could not have injured one hair of the head of my worst enemy; although that enemy might have been at that very time imbruing his hands in the blood of a brother or a sister. I believe all who have experienced this love, who are living in the enjoyment of this love, feel this same spirit, this same abhorrence of injuring a single individual, no matter what his conduct happens to be.

It was of such resistance as this that our Savior was speaking," the brilliant Universalist minister Adin Ballou wrote in 1843.

(continued from page 14)

"His obvious doctrine is: Resist not personal injury with personal injury. It bears on all humankind in every social relation of life... It is [our] bounded duty, by all such benevolent resistance, to promote the safety and welfare, the holiness and happiness, of all human beings. A true Christian...cannot kill, maim, or otherwise absolutely injure any human being. He cannot participate in any lawless conspiracy, mob, riotous assembly.... He cannot be a member of any association which approves of war, capital punishment or any other absolute personal injury. He cannot be an officer, private, or chaplain in the army, navy or militia of any nation. He cannot be an officer, prosecutor, agent or elected official of any government.... Faith in the inherent superiority of good over evil, truth over error, right over wrong, love over hatred, is the immediate moral basis of our doctrine.

"It seems to me that it should be the special duty of those who love and honor the name of Jesus to be opposed to war," Lucretia Mott, the great abolitionist and feminist, said in an 1869 speech. "If we can do away with the practice of taking life, it will be a great advance in the world."

"If war is right, then Christianity is false, a lie," John Haynes Holmes preached in New York City on the eve of World War I. "When there comes a call, I shall refuse to heed. When the system of conscription is adopted, I shall have to decline to serve. If this means imprisonment, I will serve my term. If this means persecution, I will carry my cross. No order of president or governor, no law of nation or state, no loss of reputation, freedom or life, will persuade me or force me to this business of killing."

"These extraordinary documents, which bear witness to the Christian commitment to peace across time, clarify that nonviolence is not a mere 'exception' -- it is at the very heart of what it means to be a follower of Christ," my friend Stanley Hauerwas of Duke University writes in his forward.

He continues:

In the early church, Christians did not even find it necessary to declare they were nonviolent -- exactly

because the way of nonviolence could not be distinguished from what it meant for them to be Christian. To worship Jesus, to follow Jesus, was to assume a way of life that altogether precluded the question of whether one might need to kill; it simply did not come up.

Nonviolence was not some further implication that might be drawn from fundamental Christian convictions -- nonviolence was constitutive of the Christian conviction that Jesus is Lord.

Christians committed to nonviolence were, and are, anything but passive. Indeed, it was Christians committed to nonviolence that took the lead, for example, in challenging the presumption that Christians could own slaves.

"The documents gathered in *Christian Peace and Nonviolence*," Hauerwas concludes, "are the start of the kind of historiography we desperately need if we are to provide an alternative to the presumption that violence is inevitable."

I thank Michael Long for this great contribution to the growing literature on nonviolence, and I hope everyone will find new inspiration from *Christian Peace and Nonviolence: A Documentary History*, as I have, to carry on the Easter duty of ending war and making peace.

John Dear, SJ is a priest, peace activist, grass roots organizer, lecturer, retreat leader, and author/editor of 20 books on peace and nonviolence, including *A Persistent Peace*. He has served as the director of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and after 9/11, as a coordinator of chaplains for the Red Cross at the New York Family Assistance Center. He has traveled the war zones of the world, been arrested 75 times for peace, and given thousands of lectures on peace across the country. Archbishop Desmond Tutu has nominated John for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Calling It What It Is by Barbara Nolin

Teddy Roosevelt said, "Walk softly and carry a big stick." THREATENING is my word for that. Will we ever forget the HUGE crowd of dissenters who gathered in the square of Egypt's capitol - peacefully? They had no sticks! They met day after day, voicing their displeasure with their leaders. There is more power in that than in any kind of 'big stick' ...

There is another kind of extremism, which I call verbal violence. It grieves me to see our political poles in a tug-of-war (!) using very provocative language, or silence - also provocative. Oh, that we, in the U.S. may find a way to listen to each other, and to work through our differences.. May I live my life daily in a nonviolent manner, thus bringing me strength and peace within ...

Barbara Nolin is a mother of a wonderful family of children. She is a Methodist minister. She is also a school teacher. As a member of the MPT Newsletter Working Group Barbara generously shares her time, talents and wisdom. Barbara's daughter is on the national Witness for Peace Board, so both mother and daughter have deep roots in International peace team work.



creating a non-violent alternative to
militarism and violence through
empowered peacemaking

Michigan Peace Team
808 W. Barnes Ave
Lansing, MI 48910
Phone: 517 484-3178
Website: michiganpeaceteam.org

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

Website:

michiganpeaceteam.org

International Peace Team Blogs:

<http://MPTinPalestine.Blogspot.com>

<http://MPTinJuarez.Blogspot.com>

MPT Newsletters, 2008-2011, are available online

<http://michiganpeaceteamnewsletters.blogspot.com>



MPT 2011 Newsletter Working Group

Nancy Ayotte	Kim Redigan
Paula Marie Deubel	Annette Thomas
Barbara Nolin	Liz Walters

Newsletter Artwork

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

MPT Core Members

Judith Carlson	Mary Ellen Gondeck
Mary Pat Dewey	Jasiu Malinowski
Kassy Fineout	Paul Pratt
Mary Ann Ford	Sheri Wander

MPT Staff and Email Addresses

Peter Dougherty	cpeterdougherty.mpt@gmail.com
Mary Hanna	maryhanna.mpt@gmail.com
Martha Larsen	mlarsen.mpt@gmail.com
Nicole Rohrkemper	nicoler.mpt@gmail.com
Liz Walters	elizabethwalters.mpt@gmail.com

Weekly MPT Volunteers

Margaret Beahan	Charlene Jamison
Berti Ellis	Layman Risper
Joyce Jackson	Mark Zussman

MPT Summer Interns

Danny Hirschel-Burns
Mari Shibahara

Dear Friends of MPT,

We deeply appreciate all that you are and do on behalf of Michigan Peace Team. Your commitment, involvement, gifts of time, energy, talents, financial contributions, and most of all your friendship fill us with gratitude.

Gratefully,

Your MPT Core Members and Staff:

Judy, Mary Pat, Kassy, Mary Ann, Mary Ellen, Jasiu, Paul, Sheri, Peter, Mary, Martha, Nicole, and Liz

HELP US CONTINUE THE DREAM!

If you are able to make a financial contribution to help support the vision and mission of Michigan Peace Team at this time of financial need at MPT, there are four easy ways to do this:

1. CHECK: send Payable to Michigan Peace Team via postal mail
2. NETWORK FOR GOOD: donate via MPT's web site
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4. CREDIT CARD: call the MPT office at 517 484-3178 to request a return envelop and credit card donation form

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